



Ordinary Meeting

Tuesday, 13 May 2025

ATTACHMENTS UNDER SEPARATE COVER

- CL01** DA 141/2024 - Review Of Determination Of Refusal To Grant Consent - Free-Standing Digital Advertising Structure
- CL03** GRALC Survey Results and Recommendation on Operating Status
- CL04** Review of Council Policies - Customer Service & Use of Council Footpaths
- CL06** Western Riverina Regional Drought Resilience Plan
Minutes of the General Managers Recruitment Committee Meeting held on 28 April 2025



ATTACHMENTS UNDER SEPARATE COVER

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Draft Conditions of Consent

Administrative Conditions

The development must be carried out in accordance with the following conditions of consent.

(1) Approved Development

Development consent has been granted for Review of Determination - Free-standing billboard digital sign at Lot 101 DP 1115198, 10-12 Yambil Street GRIFFITH.

It is advised that the proposed development has been assessed in regards to the provision of the Griffith Local Environmental Plan 2014 and is considered to be a Free-standing Billboard digital sign.

The development must be implemented in accordance with Development Application No. 141/2024(2) accepted by Council on 28 February 2025 and the below mentioned plans and/or documents, except where amended in red on the attached plans or modified by the conditions of this consent.

Drawing / Plan	Date Accepted by Council	Prepared or Drawn By
Site Plan, Drawing No. A02, Issue No. 01 (25/22751)	28 February 2025	Gawk Outdoor
Floor Plan, Elevations & Perspective, Drawing No. A03, Issue No. 01 (25/22751)	28 February 2025	Gawk Outdoor
Proposed Perspective View #01 – Southbound Traffic, Drawing No. A04 (25/22751)	28 February 2025	Gawk Outdoor

Document	Date Accepted by Council	Prepared or Drawn By
Statement of Environmental Effects (25/23087)	28 February 2025	Gawk Outdoor

If there is any inconsistency between the approved plans and documents referred to above, the conditions shall prevail.

(2) Approved signs

This consent includes consent to erect the following signs:

- Free-standing digital billboard sign.

A separate application shall be lodged and approval gained for any other signs or for any changes to the approved signs, unless approval is not required by virtue of the provisions of current relevant legislation.

All signs covered by this consent shall conform to the standards specified in the table to this condition.

Table of Sign Design Specifications	
Type of Finish	As shown on the approved plans.
Dimensions	As shown on the approved plans.
Illumination	Refer to Condition (26).
Number of Attachments	As shown on the approved plans.
Wording and Colour	As shown on the approved plans.
Location	All signage shall be contained wholly within the property boundaries. No part of the fence, or its footings, shall encroach onto the road reserve or adjoining properties unless otherwise approved.
Materials of Construction	As shown on the approved plans.

All signs covered by this consent shall conform to the standards specified in the table to this condition.

(3) Construction Certificate (Building Works)

In accordance with the provisions of Part 6, Divisions 6.2 and 6.3 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979 a person must not carry out building works, including associated excavation works (as applicable) until such time as:

- (a) A *Construction Certificate* has been obtained from either Griffith City Council or an *Accredited Certifier* holding the appropriate accreditation under the Building Professions Act, 2005;
- (b) A *Principal Certifier* has been appointed; and
- (c) The person with the benefit of the development consent has given at least two (2) days notice to Griffith City Council and the *Principal Certifier* of the person's intention to commence the erection of the building.

Note 1: Griffith City Council can issue your *Construction Certificate* and be appointed as your *Principal Certifier* for the development to undertake inspections and ensure compliance with development consent and relevant building regulations. For further details contact Council on 1300 176 077.

Note 2: Should the plans submitted with the Construction Certificate differ substantially from the plans approved as part of the development consent then a Section 4.55 modification of consent will be required to be made to Council.

(4) Provision of Services

The applicant is to be responsible for all amplification, extension and adequate provision for connection to services at their own expense. The work is to be in accordance with Council's

Engineering Guidelines – Subdivisions and Development Standards and relevant authorities' specifications.

(5) Lapsing of Consent

In accordance with Section 4.53 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979 this consent is valid for a period of five (5) years from the date of consent.

Note 1: Development consent for the purpose of the erection of a building or the subdivision of land or the carrying out of a work does not lapse if building, engineering or construction work relating to the development is lawfully and physically commenced on the land to which the consent applies before the date on which the consent would otherwise lapse.

Note 2: Development consent for the purpose of the use of the land, building or work the subject of the consent does not lapse if it is actually commenced the date on which the consent would otherwise lapse.

(6) Damage to Council property

If any damage is occasioned to Council property during construction and associated works, the cost of repairs will be recoverable. It is therefore requested that any damage which is obvious before works commence be immediately notified to Council to avoid later conflict.

(7) Existing Services

The applicant must check that the proposed works do not affect any Council, electricity, telecommunications, gas or other services. Any required alterations to services will be at the developer's expense.

(8) Tree Preservation

The applicant is advised that the land is subject to Council's Tree Policy and the requirements of that policy are to be strictly adhered to. Should the applicant/owner require advice in this regard they are to contact Council's Parks and Gardens Department.

(9) National Construction Code

All building work must comply with and be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Building Code of Australia.

All plumbing and drainage works must comply with and be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Plumbing Code of Australia.

(10) Aboriginal Heritage

If any Aboriginal object is discovered and/or harmed in, or under the land, while undertaking the proposed development activities, the proponent must:

1. Not further harm the object.
2. Immediately cease all work at the particular location.
3. Secure the area so as to avoid further harm to the Aboriginal object.

4. Notify the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment as soon as practical on 131555, providing any details of the Aboriginal object and its location.

5. Not recommence any work at the particular location unless authorised in writing by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment.

In the event that skeletal remains are unexpectedly encountered during the activity, work must stop immediately, the area secured to prevent unauthorised access and NSW Police and the Department contacted of Planning, Industry and Environment.

(11) Other Cultural Heritage

Should any cultural artefacts, archaeological relics or any object having interest due to its age or association with the past be located during the course of works, all works are to cease immediately and notification shall be provided to the Office of Environment and Heritage in accordance with the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*. Work shall not recommence in the area until this is authorised by the Office of Environment and Heritage.

Note. Depending on the significance of the object uncovered, an archaeological assessment and excavation permit under the Heritage Act 1977 may be required before further the work can continue.

(12) Disability Discrimination Act

The applicant/owner is advised that this approval does not guarantee compliance with the provisions of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and the applicant should therefore consider their liability under the Act. In this regard, the applicant is advised that compliance with the requirements of the National Construction Code of Australia and *Australian Standard 1428.1 - Design for Access and Mobility* does not necessarily satisfy the objectives of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*. The applicant/owner is requested to give consideration to providing access and facilities for people with disabilities in accordance with *Australian Standard 1428* Parts 1, 2, 3 and 4 - Design for Access and Mobility, which may be necessary to satisfy the objectives of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*.

Prior to the issue of a Construction Certificate

Prior to commencing construction work, you will need a Construction Certificate for building works issued by Griffith City Council or an Accredited Certifier. Before a Construction Certificate can be issued, compliance with the following conditions is to be demonstrated.

(13) Payment of building and construction industry long service levy

Prior to the issue of a Construction Certificate, the applicant is to ensure that the person liable pays the long service levy as calculated at the date of this consent to the Long Service Corporation or Council under section 34 of the Building and Construction Industry Long Service Payments Act 1986 and provides proof of this payment to the certifier.

Prior to Commencement of Works

The following conditions need to be met prior to the commencement of works. The necessary documentation and information must be provided to the Principal Certifying Authority (PCA), as applicable.

(14) Protection of adjoining areas

A temporary hoarding or temporary construction site fence must be erected between the work site and adjoining lands before the works begin and must be kept in place until after the completion of the works if the works:

- (a) could cause a danger, obstruction or inconvenience to pedestrian or vehicular traffic, or
- (b) could cause damage to adjoining lands by falling objects, or
- (c) involve the enclosure of a public place or part of a public place.

(15) Notification of Commencement

Prior to commencing work the person having the benefit of the consent has:

- (a) given at least 2 days notice to the council, and the principal certifier if not the council, of the person's intention to commence the erection of the building, and
- (b) if not carrying out the work as an owner-builder, has:
 - i appointed a principal contractor for the building work who must be the holder of a contractor licence if any residential building work is involved, and
 - ii notified the principal certifying authority of any such appointment, and
 - iii unless that person is the principal contractor, notified the principal contractor of any critical stage inspections and other inspections that are to be carried out in respect of the building work.

(16) Signs on site

A sign must be erected in a prominent position on any site on which building work or demolition work is being carried out:

- (a) showing the name, address and telephone number of the principal certifier for the work, and
- (b) showing the name of the principal contractor (if any) for any building work and a telephone number on which that person may be contacted outside working hours, and
- (c) stating that unauthorised entry to the work site is prohibited.

Any such sign is to be maintained while the building work, or demolition work is being carried out, but must be removed when the work has been completed.

Note: This does not apply in relation to building work or demolition work that is carried out inside an existing building that does not affect the external walls of the building.

During Construction

The following conditions of consent must be complied with at all times during the demolition, excavation and construction of the development.

(17) No obstruction of public way

The public walkway must not be obstructed by any materials, vehicles, refuse, skips or the like, without prior approval of Council.

(18) Shoring and adequacy of adjoining property (if applicable)

If the development involves an excavation that extends below the level of the base of the footings of a building, structure or work on adjoining land (including any structure or work within a road or rail corridor), the person having the benefit of the development consent must, at the person's own expense:

- (a) protect and support the building, structure or work from possible damage from the excavation, and,
- (b) where necessary, underpin the building, structure or work to prevent any such damage.

The condition does not apply if the person having the benefit of the development consent owns the adjoining land or the owner of the adjoining land has given consent in writing to that condition not applying.

(19) Maintenance of site

All materials and equipment must be stored wholly within the work site unless an approval to store them elsewhere is held.

Waste materials (including excavation, demolition and construction waste materials) must be managed on the site and then disposed of at a waste management facility.

Copies of receipts stating the following must be provided to the consent authority on request:

- (a) the place to which waste materials were transported,
- (b) the name of the contractor transporting the materials,
- (c) the quantity of materials transported off-site and recycled or disposed of.

Any run-off and erosion control measures required must be maintained within their operating capacity until the completion of the works to prevent debris escaping from the site into drainage systems, waterways, adjoining properties and roads.

During construction:

- (a) all vehicles entering or leaving the site must have their loads covered, and
- (b) all vehicles, before leaving the site, must be cleaned of dirt, sand and other materials, to avoid tracking these materials onto public roads.

At the completion of the works, the work site must be left clear of waste and debris.

(20) SafeWork NSW

The developer is required to comply with any and all requirements of the SafeWork NSW.

(21) Required documentation

For the duration of any work on site, the builder must maintain a copy of the specification, stamped approved plans, copy of Development Consent (Notice of Determination) and Construction Certificate on site.

(22) Hours of Work

The principal certifier must ensure that building work, demolition or vegetation removal is only carried out between:

7.00am to 6.00pm on Monday to Saturday.

The principal certifier must ensure building work, demolition or vegetation removal is not carried out on Sundays and public holidays, except where there is an emergency.

Unless otherwise approved within a construction site management plan, construction vehicles, machinery, goods or materials must not be delivered to the site outside the approved hours of site works.

Note: Any variation to the hours of work requires Council's approval.

(23) Survey of Building Location

A survey report, prepared by a registered and practising Land Surveyor is required to verify the siting of the building in relation to adjacent boundaries. This survey shall be undertaken prior to work proceeding past the completion of footings and before concrete is poured. A copy of this report shall be submitted to Council **prior to the issue of the Occupation Certificate**.

Prior to the issue of the Occupation Certificate

An Occupation Certificate must be obtained from the Principal Certifying Authority (PCA) prior to occupation of the new building, part of the building, or a change of building use. Prior to issue of an Occupation Certificate compliance with the following conditions is to be demonstrated.

(24) Survey of Structure Location

The proposed sign is to be contained wholly within the property boundaries. No part of the sign shall encroach onto the road reserve or adjoining properties. A survey report, prepared by a registered and practising Land Surveyor is required to verify the siting of the structure in relation to the adjacent boundary. This survey shall be undertaken prior to work proceeding past the completion of footings and before concrete is poured. A copy of this report shall be submitted to Council **prior to the issue of the Occupation Certificate**.

Demolition Management

Demolition must be carried out in accordance with the following conditions.

nil

On-Going Requirements

The following conditions or requirements must be complied with at all times, throughout the use and operation of the development.

(25) Outdoor lighting

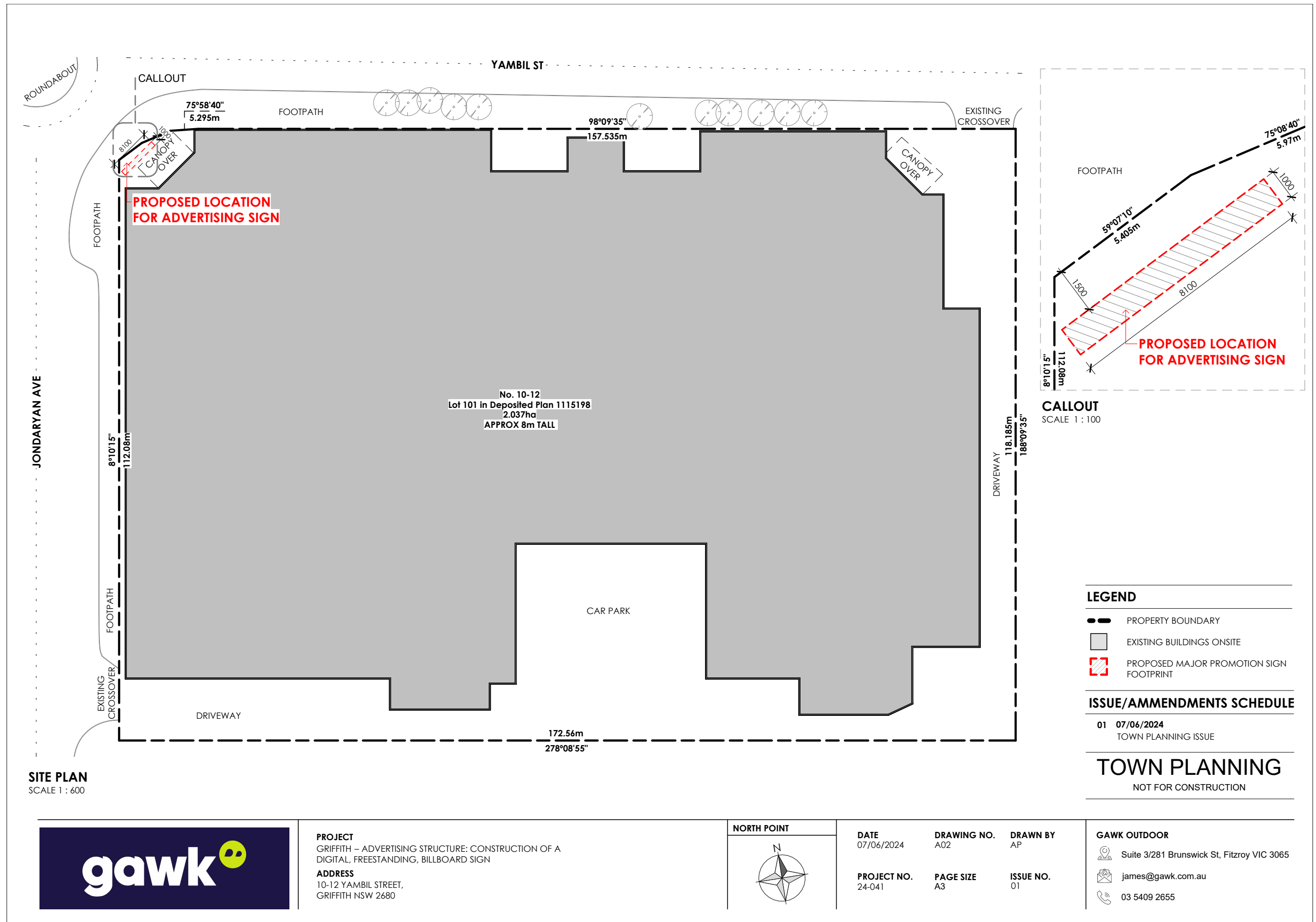
Any outdoor display and/or security lighting is to be so located or shielded so that no additional light is cast on adjoining land or that it will distract traffic.

(26) Operational Management Plan

The person with the benefit of the development consent must ensure that all the requirements in the Operational Management Plan are complied with as follows:

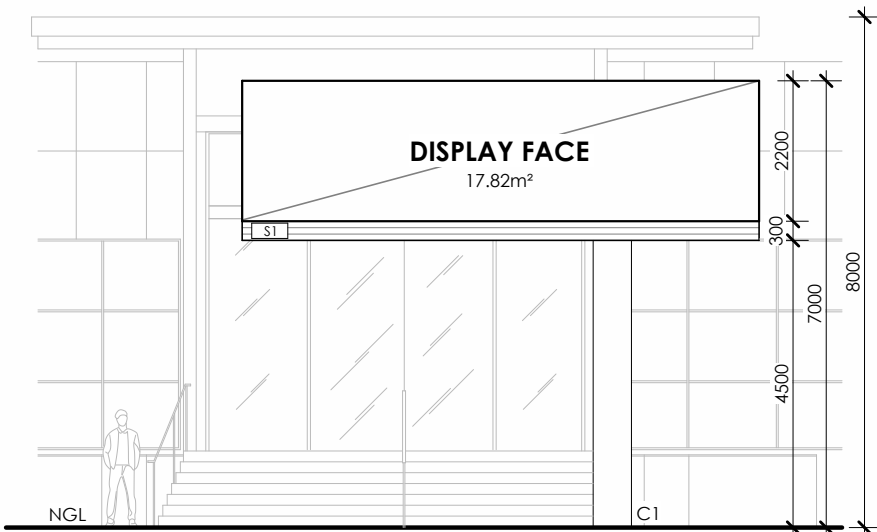
1. All content is to be static images, no moving
2. No advertisement must be displayed for less than 30 seconds.
3. The signs operational hours will be 4am – 11:59pm.
4. During the operation of the sign, the maximum average luminance and threshold increment values as specified in below must not be exceeded:
 - a. Maximum average luminance:
 - i. Full sun on face of signage: No limit
 - ii. Daytime luminance: 4000 cd/m²
 - iii. Morning and evening twilight and overcast weather: 400 cd/m²
 - iv. Night time: 200 cd/m²
 - b. Threshold increment max %:
 - i. Night time: 15%
 - c. Adaptation luminance:
 - i. Night time: 5
5. The transition from one advertisement to another must be instantaneous.
6. The sign must not display content, images or text:
 - a. Giving the illusion of continuous movement.
 - b. Capable of being mistaken for traffic signals or traffic control devices, including red, amber or green circles, octagons, crosses or triangles.
 - c. With a flashing background, flashing text, flashing images, blinking or fading elements that create the illusion of movement.
 - d. Containing any animation.
 - e. Capable of being interpreted as projections beyond the face of the advertising screen such as through 3D technology.
 - f. Containing video, movie or television broadcasts.
7. The sign operates with a maximum of 10 advertisers each week.
8. A permanent 1 in 10 slot is allocated to Griffith City Council.
9. A minimum of 70% of all content displayed over a 12 month period must come from businesses who operate within Griffith City Council.
10. In the event that traffic accidents are shown to have occurred as a direct result of the installed signage, and such causation is supported by expert evidence, the permit holder shall, upon request by the relevant authority, remove the sign.

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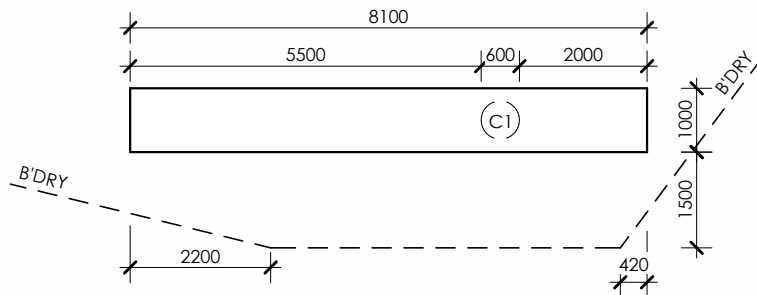




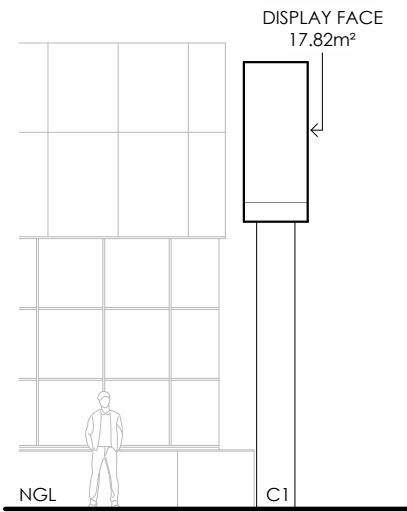
EXISTING NORTH-WEST ELEVATION
SCALE 1 : 100



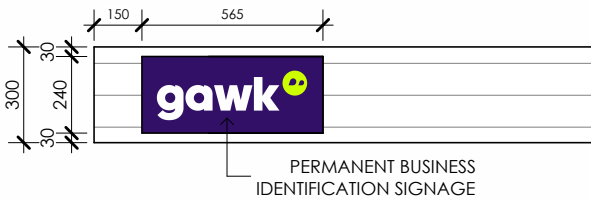
NORTH-WEST ELEVATION
SCALE 1 : 100



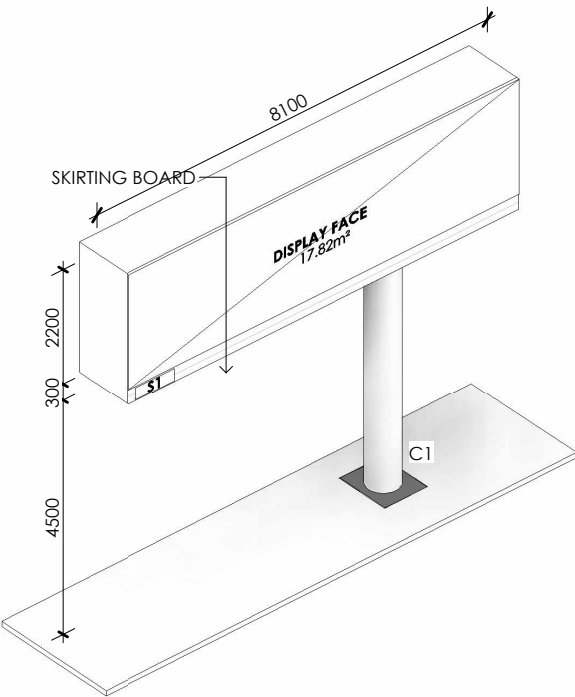
FLOOR PLAN
SCALE 1 : 100



NORTH-EAST ELEVATION
SCALE 1 : 100

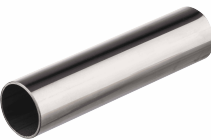


S1 - SIGNAGE DETAIL
SCALE 1 : 20



PERSPECTIVE

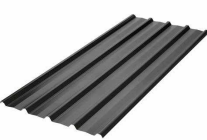
MATERIALS BOARD



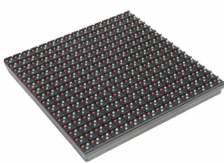
C1
PROPOSED COLUMN -
POWDERCOAT BLACK
FINISH



BLACK PAINT
PROPOSED BLACK PAINT
FINISH TO ALL FEATURES,
TRIMS AND LIGHTING



SKIRTING BOARD
PROPOSED COLORBOND
SKIRTING BOARD WITH
NIGHT SKY FINISH



LED SCREEN
DISPLAY

LEGEND

- C1 PROPOSED COLUMN - POWDERCOAT BLACK FINISH
- NGL NATURAL GROUND LINE
- S1 PERMANENT SIGN 1 - REFER TO DETAIL

ISSUE/AMMENDMENTS SCHEDULE

01 07/06/2024
TOWN PLANNING ISSUE

TOWN PLANNING
NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION



PROJECT
GRIFFITH – ADVERTISING STRUCTURE: CONSTRUCTION OF A
DIGITAL, FREESTANDING, BILLBOARD SIGN

ADDRESS
10-12 YAMBIL STREET,
GRIFFITH NSW 2680

NORTH POINT



DATE
07/06/2024

DRAWING NO.
A03

DRAWN BY
AP

PROJECT NO.
24-041

PAGE SIZE
A3

ISSUE NO.
01

GAWK OUTDOOR

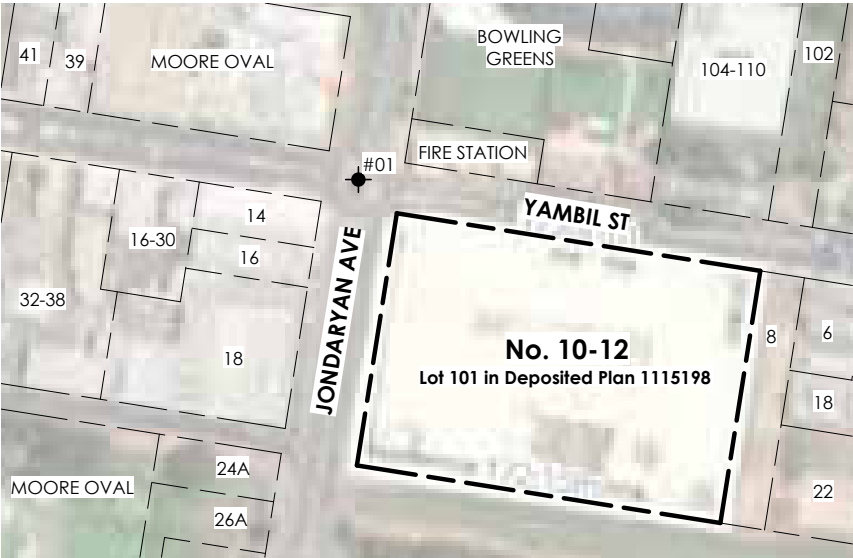
Suite 3/281 Brunswick St, Fitzroy VIC 3065

james@gawk.com.au

03 5409 2655



EXISTING PERSPECTIVE VIEW #01 - SOUTHBOUND TRAFFIC



PERSPECTIVE VIEW REFERENCE
SCALE 1 : 3000



PROPOSED PERSPECTIVE VIEW #01 - SOUTHBOUND TRAFFIC

GENERAL NOTES

PROPOSED PERSPECTIVE VIEW IS AN ARTISTS IMPRESSION OF THE PROPOSAL ONLY. SIZE AND SCALE ARE REFERENCED ON THE FLOOR PLANS AND ELEVATIONS.

ALL DRAWINGS TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE SUPPLIED TOWN PLANNING REPORT

REFER TO THE TOWN PLANNING REPORT FOR THE WRITTEN STATEMENT REGARDING THE METHODOLOGY DURING THE PREPARATION OF PERSPECTIVE VIEWS

LEGEND

#00 PERSPECTIVE VIEW - LOCATION IN WHICH PHOTOGRAPHIC VIEWS WERE TAKEN

ISSUE/AMMENDMENTS SCHEDULE

01 07/06/2024
TOWN PLANNING ISSUE

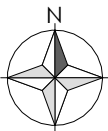
TOWN PLANNING
NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION



PROJECT
GRIFFITH – ADVERTISING STRUCTURE: CONSTRUCTION OF A DIGITAL, FREESTANDING, BILLBOARD SIGN

ADDRESS
10-12 YAMBIL STREET,
GRIFFITH NSW 2680

NORTH POINT



DATE
07/06/2024

DRAWING NO.
A04

DRAWN BY
AP

PROJECT NO.
24-041

PAGE SIZE
A3

ISSUE NO.

GAWK OUTDOOR

Suite 3/281 Brunswick St, Fitzroy VIC 3065

james@gawk.com.au

03 5409 2655



PLANNING PERMIT APPLICATION

PROJECT Proposed Digital Billboard

LOCATION 10-12 Yambil St, Griffith NSW 2680

DATE August 29, 2024



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Gawk
A Suite 3, 281 Brunswick St, Fitzroy VIC 3065
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1



2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Overview of Gawk

Gawk is a family-run business that develops, owns and operates outdoor advertising billboards throughout VIC, SA & NSW—primarily in regional areas. The company was founded by James & Luke Course—who have extensive experience in Outdoor Advertising, Town Planning and Managing Projects. The business was founded to ensure that local and regional businesses have access to Outdoor Advertising to grow their businesses.

2.2 Outdoor Advertising Industry

While traditional forms of media (radio, television, print) have been in decline for the past decade, Outdoor has been flourishing is the only traditional media in growth. Our business has been established to emulate the ingrained relationships local communities have had with local radio, TV and print outlets. We have high ambitions to continue the regionally operated media businesses, in a media format that is continually growing.

2.3 Advertising Content

At Gawk we pride ourselves on helping local businesses grow using outdoor advertising. Companies within a small radius to our advertising signs will always take preference over large nationwide advertising campaigns. Typically, at least 50% of the advertising content is for businesses located within a 5km radius of the sign. Road safety messages are also very common across regional billboards.

Gawk operates over 20 digital billboards across Victoria and South Australia. We have a track record of prioritising local businesses as advertisers. Over 75% of the advertising content on electronic signs has historically been local businesses, and another 15% being government advertising.

Advertising content is governed by the Australian Advertising Standards Bureau—which has a code of ethics in addition to industry specific controls for sensitive industries such as alcohol. The code of ethics is strictly obeyed and does not allow for religious, racist, sexually explicit or offensive advertising content.

2.4 Community Benefits

Our billboards help grow local businesses. Advertisements often prompt travellers to stop in that town which puts money in the local economy when motorists may have not otherwise stopped. In addition to the immense benefits for advertiser's Gawk provides value to our landlords from which it leases property. Our landlords receive fixed rent payments each year throughout our lease term which can provide stability and increase their property value. Additionally, wherever possible we use local contractors for construction and ongoing installation of billboard skins.

Gawk

A Suite 3, 281 Brunswick St, Fitzroy VIC 3065

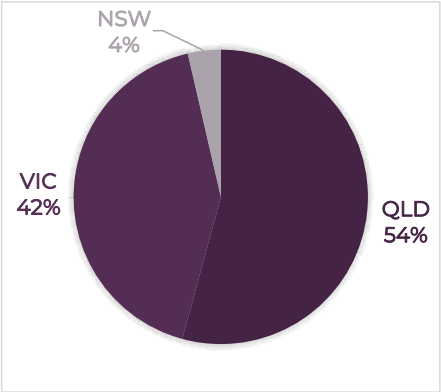
E james@gawk.com.au

P 0400 096 182



2.5 Digital Billboards

As technology has evolved, outdoor advertising has embraced LED technology. In regional areas of QLD and VIC, there has been significant development of digital signage to service the outdoor advertising needs of businesses. A key driver in the uptake of digital billboards is the accessibility and utilisation by all advertisers in the market. Historically, there have been print and installation costs for advertising on billboards in excess of \$2,000. The ability to remotely upload content removes a key barrier to entry, meaning it is economical to book advertising space for as little as a week. Digital billboards provide equal opportunity all scales of businesses to utilise the space. There are currently three digital billboards in regional NSW, comparatively to over 30 in both QLD & VIC. It is our ambition to equalise those quantities and provide opportunities to NSW businesses that previously haven't existed.



Digital Billboards (Eastern Seaboard)

2.6 Competition

In any industry, a competitive landscape drives accountability in pricing and service. In QLD & VIC there is a vibrant competitive landscape between local players in the outdoor market. NSW is the only regional market in Australia where a monopoly (over 98% market share) exists.

oOh! Media are the largest outdoor provider in Australia (\$592m revenue), which mainly focuses on capital city markets. As such, their service and investment in regional areas is sparse, which is reflected in the uptake of digital billboards in regional NSW. We aim to shake up the market in Regional NSW, providing more cost-effective and flexible advertising space to local businesses.

In regional Victoria, we invest over \$2m a year into the regional markets we operate. This money goes to local landlords, regionally based employees and regionally located suppliers. We have two regional offices and an expanding local workforce of 15 full-time staff.

Our goal is to develop a business in NSW of a similar scale to our current Victorian operation. The short-medium-term goal includes a local NSW based workforce and offices, which will align to our network of sites.

OPERATOR	SITES	MARKET SHARE
QLD		
BISHOPP	1500	48%
PARADISE	1500	48%
TAYCO	50	2%
JAM	100	3%
Total	3150	100%

VIC		
GAWK	100	36%
TOM	30	11%
oOh!	150	54%
Total	280	100%

NSW		
oOh!	1500	98%
CVO	20	1%
GAWK	5	0%
Total	1525	100%



2.7. Digital Billboard Approvals

In response to the evolving advertising trends mentioned previously, the approval of more digital advertising signs in Regional NSW has gained momentum. This shift reflects the current demand we are seeing across the industry for digital advertising and the benefits that come with this formatting style. Below shows current digital advertising signs and permits in regional NSW.

Site	Location	Zoning	Size & Style	Council Policy
Coffs Harbour Supersite (Wall)	39 Grafton St	E2	12.66m x 3.35m Supersite Wall Mounted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signage is to relate to the use of the building • Signage is not to contain advertising promoting products or services not related to the approved use of the building or site
Singleton Super8 (Wall)	127 John St	MU1	8m x 2.08m Super8 Wall Mounted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should not exceed 20m² • Should not be more than 8m in height • Should generally relate to an approved use of the site
Singleton Super8 (Wall)	159 John St	MU1	8m x 2.08m Super8 Wall Mounted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should not exceed 20m² • Should not be more than 8m in height • Should generally relate to an approved use of the site
Lismore Super8 (Wall)	123 Woodlark St	E2	8m x 2.08m Super 8 Wall Mounted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loose language about relating to the property they are on • Advertising billboards should

Gawk

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				generally not be greater than 6m ² , but definitely not exceed 18m ²
Armidale Portrait (Wall)	24 Dumaesq St	E2	7.2m x 6.4m Portrait Wall Mounted Removed some signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signage must relate to the lawful use of the building Electronic signs must be within the CBD (plus some other restrictions)
Port Macquarie 6m x 3m (Wall)	109 Gordon St	E2	6m x 3m Poster Wall Mounted Existing LED Screen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signs primarily identifying products or services are not acceptable
East Maitland Portrait (Wall)	1 Molly Morgan Dr	E2	7.2m x 6.4m Portrait Wall Mounted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signs relate to the controls outlined in SEPP 64
Beresfield (Thornton) Super 8 (Freestanding)	219 New England Hwy	E4	8m x 2.08m Double Sided Super 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital signage is typically not supported in Newcastle LGA unless it can be demonstrated to be appropriate for a particular site and circumstances Should not exceed 20m²
Rutherford Super 8 (Freestanding)	8/11 Kyle Street	E4	8m x 2.08m Super 8 Freestanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signs relate to the controls outlined in SEPP 64

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3. SITE SELECTION

When seeking a site in an area there are numerous factors that are considered. Gawk seeks to work within the planning policies and frameworks within the council and avoids sites that have planning overlays which discourage major promotion signs. Properties in commercial and industrial areas along major highways and arterial roads are typically what Gawk looks for.

Properties owned by local property owners and small businesses are prioritised over large national investors. When choosing the exact location on the property, we seek an area that is currently unused and will not impact the day-to-day use of the property. It is also important to ensure the location where the sign will be located does not inhibit any development or future plans for the property. This collaboration is important to us as having a positive relationship with our property owners is something we pride ourselves on.

During the site selection process, Gawk focuses on areas outside the realm of residentially utilised and zoned properties. We ensure there is always an extended visual and spatial barrier between the proposal and any potentially effected residential properties. The major focus is to identify areas with a built form character where the size and scale of the proposed sign will be justified by the surrounding context of the proposed site.

4. SITE DESCRIPTION & EXISTING CONDITIONS

4.1 Site Description

The Subject Site at 10-12 Yambil St is currently an E1 Local Centre zoned lot and is owned by F & L Violi Pty Ltd. The property is owned and occupied by Griffith Central shopping mall, which extends across the corner property at the intersection of Jondaryan Ave and Yambil St. The site currently houses a typical large-scale shopping centre building that is positioned at the centre of the property and extends to a height of 8m. The site at 10-12 Yambil St is a rectangular shaped lot. The main frontage to Yambil St is 157m in length, and the overall site area is approximately 2.037ha. The specific area of the proposed sign in this report is on the portion of the land referenced as 101. The corner frontage to the intersection of Jondaryan Ave and Yambil St is approximately 10m.

There are two driveways on the Subject Site providing vehicular access off Yambil St and Jondaryan Ave. These driveways, located on the south-western and north-eastern corners of the Subject Site, provide access to underground parking beneath the shopping centre as well as a parking lot at the building's rear. These driveways are also used to access delivery and storage areas serving the shopping centre's retailers, as noted by the large roller doors at the rear of the building.

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There is no street parking on Jondaryan Ave, which is indicated by the no stopping and bus zone signage in front of the property on the footpath. There is street parking on Yambil St in front of the shopping centre, which is indicated by the parking signage directly in front of the property on the footpath, as well as the painted car parking lines on the road.

The main built form on the Subject Site is a large single-story shopping centre. It is constructed of concrete, with modern brick feature walls. The building has two main entrances, at the intersection of Yambil St and Jondaryan Ave on the north-western corner, and on Yambil St at the north-eastern corner. The built form has been rendered in neutral cream, grey and brown tones of the type consistently used for commercial buildings of this purpose and scale. The building features large glass windows and automatic doors on the ground floor that allow access internally to the built form. A secondary entrance is inset into the built form midway along Yambil St between the two main entrances, and this has smaller glass windows and entrance doors covered by a concrete canopy and accessed via a small concrete stairway. The eastern and southern sides of the built form have entrances to the underground parking as well as roller doors for truck access and loading.

The north-western corner of the building at the intersection of Yambil St and Jondaryan Ave is one of the main entrances to the shopping centre. The property boundary here extends well past the building. The entryway features large glass windows and a separate canopy construction that shelters a stairway leading to automatic doors. It is constructed with similar concrete panelling to the rest of the building, as well as painted in a similar colour scheme and with brick feature panels on each side. The separate canopy construction extends over this corner entryway on the north-western corner of the built form and is held up by metal poles. It is in front of this exterior canopy that the proposed freestanding monopole advertising sign will be sited. There is currently pre-existing signage on the exterior canopy that will be removed to make way for the development of this proposed sign.

There is currently signage on the Subject Site, mainly for usage as business identification. On the north-western entryway where the proposal will be sited, as well as the canopy signage that will be removed as part of the proposal, there is signage in the glass windows identifying the shopping centre. Along the western boundary of the Subject Site on Jondaryan Ave, there is wall signage for various businesses within the shopping centre. There is also a pole sign that extends above the building's roofline that identifies the shopping centre and several key retailers including Ritchies IGA, Target and Cotton On. Further business identification for Target department store in the form of the brand logo positioned on the south-eastern corner.

This signage along the western side of the property is targeted at south-bound traffic along Jondaryan Ave as well as traffic traversing the roundabout at the intersection of Jondaryan Ave and Yambil St. Along the northern boundary of the Subject Site on Yambil St, there is additional wall signage for various businesses within the shopping centre as well as more awning signage at the entryways

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featuring the Griffith Central logo. There are also large letters on the brick feature wall that spell out "Griffith Central". Business identification signage in corporate colours for Chemist Warehouse is also prominent in the windows of the entrance to that store. The north-eastern corner entrance features similar window and canopy signage to the north-western entrance. Another similar pole sign to the one on the western boundary is located on the eastern boundary. This is directed at east and west-bound traffic along Yambil St. All signage currently present is used to promote the businesses that are on the Subject Site.

The site is largely covered by the built form, asphalt driveways and brick walkways surrounding the premises. The topography of the site is generally flat, with an even gradient throughout the property boundaries.

The proposed advertising sign will be located on the north-western boundary facing onto the intersection of Yambil St and Jondaryan Ave. It will be targeted at eastbound traffic along Yambil St and southbound traffic along Jondaryan Ave,

A copy of the certificate of title and associated title plan are attached as part of this town planning submission.



Figure 1 – Aerial Photograph of Subject Site

4.2 Surrounding Context



Figure 2 – Aerial Photograph of Surrounding Area

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The locality characteristics are:

The northern boundary abuts Yambil St, beyond which is 11 Jondaryan Ave an E1 Local Centre zoned property currently occupied by Griffith Fire Station, with a built form on the property, which then extends to Griffith Tourism Hub (information centre) at the next boundary.

To the east beyond the drainage reserve is 6 Yambil St with E1 Local Centre zoning. This property is occupied by a commercial built form.

To the south is Main Canal and Bridge Rd, and across the road is 2 Bridge Rd, occupied by The Southside Griffith Leagues Club, which sits on Mixed Use zoning.

The western boundary abuts Jondaryan Ave. Beyond is 10 Yambil St, which has E1 Local Centre zoning and is occupied by Mackay's Furniture One, a furniture store.

The site is surrounded by commercial properties, which are aesthetically relative of the zonings. The immediate area surrounding the Subject Site is predominately commercial in nature.

Further, in both directions along the Yambil St and Jondaryan Ave, is a robust commercial theme. The site is located within a central commercial area in Griffith. Traffic heading eastbound on Yambil St would have just passed Office Choice Griffith (office supply store), Ray White Griffith (real estate) and Griffith Exies Club (RSL). Meanwhile, traffic heading westbound would have just passed Griffin Plaza (shopping mall, including major retailers such as Coles and The Reject Shop), Woolworths Griffith (supermarket) and Griffith Tyres and More (tyre shop).

Most residential properties in this area are located on the other side of the railway line to the north and out of view of the Subject Site. The closest residential properties are located east at 2-14 Bonegilla Rd and are out of view of the Subject Site, which is over 200m away.

In its wider context, the site sits within a robust transport corridor, where there is a strong commercial theme for 1km west along both sides on Yambil St and 450m east along the southern side of Yambil St.

The built forms surrounding the Subject Site are generally commercial in nature with the interest and differentiation displayed through business identification signage in the area. The surrounding commercial context is of similar size and scale to the Subject Site, with other large shopping malls in the immediate vicinity.

A strong commercial character is evident to all traffic along this stretch of Yambil St, which is set up as a commercial hub for a range of businesses including retail and automotive serving Griffith.

The commercial theme continues to the west to Kookora St and to the east to Crossing St, where there is more of a mixed usage.

Throughout this context, many properties display different forms of freestanding and wall-mounted business identification signage. The articulation to the

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aesthetic of each of the properties through this corridor comes from the advertising signage displayed, a trait which is typical of the commercial zoning.

All of the surrounding context has a strong frontage to Yambil St, with the surrounding advertising signage projecting to east and westbound traffic.

The appropriate zoning and the robust commercial context were key factors in choosing this site for this development. The absence of any heritage issues in the immediate context was also an important factor.

5. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

5.1 Description of Proposed Development

The proposal seeks approval for the erection and display of an electronic, freestanding advertising sign on the property at 10-12 Yambil St, Griffith including the display of third-party advertising within the proposed advertising area specified on the attached town planning documentation.

The proposed electronic advertising sign (as detailed in the attached town planning package) proposes one 17.82m² display face. The sign will primarily be viewed by eastbound traffic on Yambil St. It will also be visible to southbound traffic on Jondaryan Ave, as well as all traffic traversing the roundabout at the intersection of these roads.

In addition to this display face, there will be a permanent 0.25m² 'Gawk' business identification sign on the skirting board to the left of the display face. Therefore, the total advertising area will be 18.11m². Refer to the town planning documentation for further details.

5.2 Design Response

The proposal is carefully sited and designed, to ensure that it has a clear relationship with the built form on the Subject Site. It is sited with the built form's overall height of 8m. The sign will sit within the height of the existing built form, ensuring that the key landmark on site will remain the built form, thereby ensuring that the design harmoniously integrates into the designated space. Any view to the proposed sign from the public realm will always include this built form context, which helps frame the view. The framing effect of the built form also helps mitigate any potential concerns the sign might dominate the streetscape or its surrounds.

The sign meets the breadth of performance measures of SEPP64, in relation to façade coverage and sign spacing (highlighted in Section 6). The strict coherence of the sign against all planning policies and the sign's content (third-party) combine for an application which clearly results in net community benefit.

The Subject Site currently sits within the character of its surrounding contexts, located centrally within the commercial precinct. There is the additional presence

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of a mixture of signage in the area, including freestanding and wall-mounted business identification signage.

The proposed development provides a modern and innovative outcome for the total advertising area on the Subject Site. The proposed works include provisions to remove the existing 3m² business identification sign.

In essence, the application updates the existing site conditions to modernise the signage with the latest technology.

Additionally, the proposed development includes a provision to remove the existing business identification sign on the north-western corner canopy façade. The proposed sign will be the only major sign on the north-western corner of the building elevation.

The application gives council the opportunity to regulate the advertising space with further conditions, over a set lifespan (via a permit expiry). The approval of this application, with stringent permit conditions will have a positive effect on the visual appearance of the site and surrounds.

The decision of this application will be influenced by the SEPP64. The consideration largely lies in the assessment of context, and its residential sensitivities. We submit that these sensitive are nominal in the sign's direct context, due to the commercial presence in the streetscape of the shopping centre and other shopfronts.

All surrounding properties have a consideration for the transport corridor they are located within. Properties residentially zoned are typically located away from the commercial hub meaning they are not impacted by developments on commercial properties in this precinct—such as this one.

All surrounding properties have a consideration for the robust commercial and retail precinct. Almost all properties are designed to be visible and prominent for passing traffic. This is reinforced by the frequency of signage in the area—a clear theme which can be viewed in Appendix 5.

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6. STATUTORY PLANNING CONTROLS

6.1 Zoning

The Subject Site is situated within the E1 Zone: Local Centre; therefore, the following items are relevant to the proposal outlined in this application:

- To provide a range of retail, business and community uses that serve the needs of people who live in, work in or visit the area.
- To encourage investment in local commercial development that generates employment opportunities and economic growth.
- To enable residential development that contributes to a vibrant and active local centre and is consistent with the Council's strategic planning for residential development in the area.
- To encourage business, retail, community and other non-residential land uses on the ground floor of buildings.
- To ensure that the density of commercial development reflects the needs of the local community and the capacity of the existing road and transport network.
- To generally conserve and enhance the business centre precincts by ensuring that new development integrates with the distinct urban scale, character, cultural heritage and landscape setting of the precincts.
- To enable development for residential purposes if adequate amenity is provided for residents of residential buildings and the land is not required for commercial use.

The proposed advertising sign is not a prohibited use, nor is it permitted without consent. It therefore falls under the category of developments which are permitted with consent, via the callout in Section 3: "any other development not specified in item 2 or 4".

Figure 3 – Zone Controls of the Site & Surrounds

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7. STATEWIDE PLANNING POLICIES

7.1 State Environmental Planning Policy (Industry and Employment) 2021

Chapter 3 Advertising and signage

Part 3.1 Preliminary

3.1 Aims, Objectives etc

(1) The Chapter aims -

(a) to ensure that signage (including advertising):

(i) is compatible with the desired amenity and visual character of an area, and

(ii) provides effective communication in suitable locations, and

(iii) is of high quality design and finish, and

(b) to regulate signage (but not content) under Part 4 of the Act, and

(c) to provide time-limited consents for the display of certain advertisements and

(d) to regulate the display of advertisements in transport corridors, and

(e) to ensure that public benefits may be derived from advertising in and adjacent to transport corridors

(2) This Chapter does not regulate the content of signage and does not require consent for a change in the content of signage.

The ambit of Chapter 3 of SEPP (Industry and Employment) has been considered in all factors of the proposed sign. We submit that the approval of the proposal, with the inclusion of the suggested permit conditions (see Section 9 of this report) will ensure all provisions have been considered in the decision.

3.8 Prohibited advertisements

(1) Despite the provisions of any other environmental planning instrument, the display of an advertisement is prohibited on land that, under an environmental planning instrument, is within any of the following zones or descriptions

Environmentally sensitive area

Heritage area (excluding railway stations)

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Natural or other conservation area

Open space

Waterways

Residential (but not including mixed residential and business zone, or similar zones)

Scenic protection area

National park

Nature reserve

(2) This section does not apply to the following –

(a) the Mount Panorama Precinct

(b) the display of an advertisement at a public sporting facility situated on land zoned public recreation under an environmental planning instrument, being an advertisement that provides information about the sponsors of the team or organisations using the sporting facility or about the products of those sponsors.

The Subject Site falls within E1 Zone – Local Centre. Third-party signage is not prohibited but will be performance assessed against the breadth of SEPP (Industry and Employment), and local DCP policies.

3.12 Duration of consents

(1) A consent granted under this Part ceases to be in force –

(a) on the expiration of 15 years after the date on which the consent becomes effective and operates in accordance with section 83 of the Act, or

(b) is a lesser period is specified by the consent authority, on the expiration of the lesser period.

(2) The consent authority may specify a period of less than 15 years only if –

(a) before the commencement of this Part, the consent authority had adopted a policy of granting consents in relation to applications to display advertisements for a lesser period and the duration of the consent specified by the consent authority is consistent with that policy, or

(b) the area in which the advertisement is to be displayed is undergoing change in accordance with an environmental planning instrument that aims to change the nature and character of

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development and, in the opinion of the consent authority, the proposed advertisement would be inconsistent with that change, or

(c) the specification of a lesser period is required by another provision of this chapter.

We accept a 15-year permit expiry. This gives council the opportunity to review the surrounding environment after this set time.

3.18 Location of certain names and logos

(1) The name or logo of the person who owns or leases an advertisement or advertising structure may appear only within the advertising display area.

(2) If the advertising display area has no border or surrounds, any such name or logo is to be located –

(a) within the advertisement, or

(b) within a strip below the advertisement that extends for the full width of the advertisement.

(3) The area of any such name or logo must not be greater than .025 square metres.

(4) The area of any such strip is to be included in calculating the size of the advertising display area.

A modest logo plate will be displayed identifying our company on the skirting board below the display face.

3.21 Freestanding advertisements

(1) The consent authority may grant consent to the display of freestanding advertisement only if the advertising structure on which the advertisement is displayed does not protrude above the dominant skyline, including any buildings, structures or tree canopies, when viewed from ground level within a visual catchment of 1 kilometre.

(2) This section does not prevent the consent authority in the case of a freestanding advertisement on land within a rural or non-urban zone, from granting consent to the display of the advertisement under section 3.13.

The proposal meets the requirement of Section 21. The dominant skyline in relation to the sign is the built form on the property, which is the main feature of the visual space along Yambil St and Jondaryan Ave. The commercial theme of the area means that the shop fronts on either side of the surrounding roads are a natural focal point that dominates the view lines of passing traffic.

The small stature of the sign (6.5m tall) compared to the large adjacent built forms (8m) create significant difference in height and will ensure that the sign will not become the key focal point of the property.

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Part 3.4 Miscellaneous

3.28 Advertising design analysis

(1) A council, in preparing an advertising design analysis for an area or locality for the purposes of section 3.13., 3.17 or 3.19, is to include an analysis of the following –

- (a) the existing character of the area or locality, including built forms and landscape*
- (b) the key positive features of the existing character of the area or locality,*
- (c) the desired future character of the area or facility,*
- (d) the role of outdoor advertising.*

(2) In undertaking an advertising design analysis (not being an advertising design analysis referred to in section 3.12(2)(a)), the council must consult with the advertising industry and local businesses.

We would like to acknowledge these assessments of 3.28; however, we are not required to respond to them at this time.

Schedule 5 Assessment criteria

Schedule 1 Assessment criteria

1. Character of the area

- *Is the proposal compatible with the existing or desired future character of the area or locality in which it is proposed to be located?*
- *Is the proposal consistent with a particular theme for outdoor advertising in the area or locality?*

2. Special areas

- *Does the proposal detract from the amenity or visual quality of any environmentally sensitive areas, heritage areas, natural or other conservation areas, open space areas, waterways, rural landscapes or residential areas?*

3. Views and vistas

- *Does the proposal obscure or compromise important views?*
- *Does the proposal dominate the skyline and reduce the quality of vistas?*
- *Does the proposal respect the viewing rights of other advertisers?*

4. Streetscape, setting or landscape

- *Is the scale, proportion and form of the proposal appropriate for the streetscape, setting or landscape?*
- *Does the proposal contribute to the visual interest of the streetscape, setting or landscape?*
- *Does the proposal reduce clutter by rationalising and simplifying existing advertising?*
- *Does the proposal screen unsightliness?*
- *Does the proposal protrude above buildings, structures or tree canopies in the area or locality?*

5. Site and building

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- *Is the proposal compatible with the scale, proportion and other characteristics of the site or building, or both, on which the proposed signage is to be located?*
- *Does the proposal respect important features of the site or building, or both?*
- *Does the proposal show innovation and imagination in its relationship to the site or building, or both?*
- 6. Associated devices and logos with advertisements and advertising structures**
- *Have any safety devices, platforms, lighting devices or logos been designed as an integral part of the signage or structure on which it is to be displayed?*
- 7. Illumination**
- *Would illumination result in unacceptable glare?*
- *Would illumination affect safety for pedestrians, vehicles or aircraft?*
- *Would illumination detract from the amenity of any residence or other form of accommodation?*
- *Can the intensity of the illumination be adjusted, if necessary?*
- *Is the illumination subject to a curfew?*
- 8. Safety**
- *Would the proposal reduce the safety of any public road?*
- *Would the proposal reduce the safety for pedestrians or bicyclists?*
- *Would the proposal reduce the safety for pedestrians, particularly children, by obscuring sightlines from public areas?*

Design Assessment Criteria

Character of the Area

The existing character of the area can only be defined as commercial. The commercial character provides a framework for the approval of this application. SEPP64 & the Griffith City Council DCP both support applications for third-party advertising within a commercial area.

The existing character of the area is commercial. The directly impacted area around the sign (approx. 80m of visibility) does not impact any residentially utilised properties. The OMA governs appropriate content for third-party signage near school grounds, ensuring no unhealthy foods or alcohol can be displayed.

The assessment framework provides for third-party signage in commercial locations, as the amenity and character are robust. The assessment framework provides for a third-party sign in the proposed location. The location of the proposed sign within the existing built form elevation, ensures any potential adverse impacts are mitigated.

The outdoor advertising theme is clearly present with all properties zoned commercially along this stretch of Yambil St. The Subject Site sits centrally within this surrounding context, with a visual buffer to any more sensitive uses. The signage theme projects out into the streetscape from the Subject Site until

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Kookora St around 1km west and Crossing St around 450m east. The proposed freestanding sign fits with the rhythm and spacing of signage along this stretch of Yambil St.

Special Areas

The property has no sensitive areas in close proximity to the sign.

Views and Vistas

The signs location, housed in front of the existing building, ensures that the sign does not impact on any existing views/or vistas. The only potential negative impacts the sign could have, are limited to the effectiveness of the business identification signage on the Subject Site. The property owner has made a commercial decision to utilise their property for this type of signage. No nearby signage (on other properties) has its visibility impacted by the proposed sign.

Streetscape, Setting or Landscape

The proposed sign is proportionate to both its adjoining built forms on the Subject Site, and the signage character of the area. SEPP 64 highlights the importance of the overall height comparatively to the built form. The top of the proposed sign sits below the top of the existing building currently occupying the Subject Site.

The proposal introduces innovation, colour and vitality to an under-utilised space in the streetscape. The digital nature ensures the rationalisation of third-party signage is achieved in the area (multiple businesses can advertise each week (10 businesses per week)).

Site and Building

The existing site and building does not display any special characteristics which require consideration in design or siting for the proposed sign. The proposed sign relates to the surrounding signage character, where facades are typically covered with wall-mounted, awning fascia and pole business identification signage, often in corporate colouration). The proposed sign considers this context via its size and scale, then articulates its presence through innovation (LED).

Associated devices and logos with advertisements and advertising structures

A modest logo plate will be displayed identifying our company on the skirting board below the display face.

Illumination

The proposed sign will be operated in accordance with AS 4282-2019: Control of the obtrusive effects of outdoor lighting. The operating system has the ability to be remotely adjusted and includes a brightness measurement device which automatically adjust the screen to suit the external environment. We have the ability to input the figures in Table 6: Luminance levels for digital advertisements, to ensure these brightness levels are met.

The proposed operating hours for the sign are: 4am – 11:59pm (20 hours a day). These are the standard operating hours across the industry. As no sensitive uses are in close proximity to the site, we feel these standard operating hours are acceptable.

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Road Safety
Section 2 and 3 are responded to below.

Statement of Environmental Effects

Statement of environmental Effects (SEE)

Summary Statement: An overview of the outdoor advertising proposal.

Details of proposed sign location: Local Government Area (LGA); zone in the relevant Local Environmental Plan (LEP); permissibility and planning controls related to the specific site; location of existing buildings, structures and vegetation in proximity to the sign; surrounding land use including any trends in changing land uses.

Description of the proposed sign: Information on the size of the sign, whether it is static, illuminated or non-illuminated, a variable message sign, contains moving parts or other details including:

a) Site details: Plans showing site location; setbacks from affected boundaries; proximity to easements, powerlines or mains; proposed modifications to existing structures, buildings or vegetation. (nb: Detailed drawings and surveys, with elevations showing height above ground level, will be required before obtaining a construction certificate).

b) Colour photographs and photo-montages – current panoramic colour photographs of the location of the proposed site are required including when viewed from ground level within a visual catchment of 1 kilometre of the site and all critical viewpoints. Photographs should show any traffic control devices located within 100m of approaches to the proposed site, and any traffic control devices that would be visible beyond the proposed site. Accurate perspective photomontages of the proposed sign, at human eye level from the driver's perspective, taken from critical viewing points in advance of the sign in each approach direction are required. Where view corridors or vistas are impacted by the proposed sign a photomontage should be included clearly demonstrating the sign's impact.

c) Proposed management and maintenance regime – including regime for on-going access to the sign to change the display, graffiti management and landscape management. Where landscaping is proposed, a landscape management plan should include plant species selection including finished height relative to the sign, any proposed lopping or removal of existing trees, ongoing vegetation maintenance and any other landscaping components

- Assessment of the advertising proposal in or adjacent to a transport corridor – when the Minister for Planning is the consent authority – The SEE must outline how the proposal meets the following:*

a) any relevant provisions in SEPP 64]

b) general land-use compatibility (Section 1.4)

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c) design criteria for transport corridors outlined in the Guidelines including an assessment of the context of advertising within the site identifying the character, quality and features of an area (Section 2)

d) road safety considerations in the Guidelines (Section 3)

e) Public Benefit Test for advertising in the Guidelines (Section 4)

Statement of environmental Effects (SEE)

- *Justification of the proposal – The SEE must provide a justification for erecting the advertisement in the proposed location. The justification must take into consideration the assessment criteria in Schedule 1 of the SEPP and any mitigation or management measures to be employed by the proponent in minimising the potential impacts of the proposed advertisement. When the Minister for Planning is the consent authority or for signs on bridges or signs requiring the concurrence of RTA, the justification of the proposal should also consider public benefits.*

Summary Statement: The proposal seeks the approval of a freestanding single-sided super 8, electronic advertising structure. The sign includes one 17.82m² digital display face; displaying static images, seen by traffic travelling eastbound and southbound (as detailed in the attached town planning package).

Details of proposed sign location: The Subject Site is located within Griffith City Council. The land is located within E1 Zone – Local Centre. Development within Local Centre zoning, and this specific area must also consider the local Griffith DCP (and Development Guide No. 10 Advertising Signage). The visual appearance of the area is reflective of the zoning, the Subject Site, and other E1 zoned properties along this corridor all project out into the streetscape with their built forms and signage. The area has no other special characteristics in terms of landscape buffers, or heritage areas which require extra consideration.

Description of the proposed sign:

Site details: Find the attached town planning documentation, which includes:

- A01: cover page
- A02: site plan
- A03: floor plan & elevations
- A04: perspective views

Colour photographs and photomontages: The photomontages are provided for traffic travelling east. Traffic travelling west won't be exposed to any views to the proposed sign, as the proposal faces away from traffic in this direction.

Proposed management and maintenance regime—24-hour access is granted with the property owner for ongoing maintenance. We have remote control, and monitoring to the screen, which enables a first check for issues. We then have a service agreement in place with a local electrician, who has agreed turnaround times for issues (generally no more than 48

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hours). We have assessed the area as having no ongoing vegetation management, which gets reviewed annually.

Justification of the proposal: The proposal reflects a development of comparable height, and scale comparatively to its surrounding built and signage context. The digital nature introduces the latest innovation to this type of signage and provides advertising opportunities which currently are not available in Griffith (the existing static advertising signs have been highlighted, however, digital advertising signs have much greater capabilities). The establishment of the sign would assist the competitive landscape and drive the advertising price down for advertising signs in the region (our pricing is always substantially cheaper than national operators).

Transport Corridor Advertising and Signage Guidelines 2017

Part 2 Design Issues

2.4 Sign Clutter Controls

In assessing advertising proposals, the consent authority is to have regard to clutter:

- a) Multiple advertisements on a single block of land, structure or building should be discouraged as they contribute to visual clutter.*
- b) Where there is advertising clutter, consideration should be given to reducing the overall number of individual advertisements on a site. Replacement of many small signs with a larger single sign is encouraged if the overall advertising display area is not increased.*
- c) In rural areas, and along freeways and tollways, no more than one advertising structure should be visible along a given sightline.*

The proposal meets the above policies on sign clutter. The Subject Site was specifically chosen due to its unique characteristics.

Under the proposed development, we are removing one business identification sign. This existing sign being removed is smaller than the proposed sign (approx. 3m²). The increased advertising area on the lot is not considered to be an issue, due to the proposed sign being the only example of signage housed within this specific lot of land.

The characteristics of this site, and streetscape are unique, and they provide for the proposed sign. The ability to assess the potential for clutter is made simple by the existing site conditions and the proposed removal of the existing sign in this part of the Subject Site. These changes will ensure that the overall advertising display space is not significantly increased. Further, the majority of other existing signage on the Subject Site faces in a different direction to the proposal.

Other advertising signs have been accepted in similar contexts by other councils:

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Stockland Green Hills Shopping Centre, East Maitland

This shopping centre features a similar sized electronic promotion sign to this proposal. This location along with the presence of other business identification signage is fitting for the nature of the built forms' use being a shopping centre.



Armidale Plaza, Armidale

This specific location displays a different sized electronic promotion sign to this proposal, but similarly, there is other wall-mounted signage in the vicinity. The nature of the built form, being utilised as a plaza (shopping centre), allows for multiple signs like the ones shown above.

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2.5 Site-specific and structural criteria

Advertising structures should meet the following site-specific criteria:

- a) The advertising structure should demonstrate design excellence and show innovation in its relationship to the site, building or bridge structure.*
- b) The advertising structure should be compatible with the scale, proportion and other characteristics of the site, building or structure on which the proposed signage is to be located.*
- c) The advertising structure should be in keeping with important features of the site, building or bridge structure.*
- d) The placement of the advertising structure should not require the removal of significant trees or other native vegetation.*
- e) The advertisement proposal should incorporate landscaping that complements the advertising structure and is in keeping with the landscape and character of the transport corridor.*
 - *The development of a landscape management plan may be required as a condition of consent.*
 - *Landscaping outlined within the plan should require minimal maintenance.*
- f) Any safety devices, platforms, lighting devices or logos should be designed as an integral part of the signage or structure on which it is to be displayed.*
- g) Illumination of advertisements must comply with the requirements in Section 3.3.3.*
- h) Illumination of advertisements must not cause light spillage into nearby residential properties, national parks or nature reserves.*

We have highlighted the design and innovation displayed by the proposed sign. We don't see the need for additional landscaping measures due to the current paved nature of the area and current lack of landscaping.

The proposed development does not include further provisions for maintenance or platforms. This is due to the limited upkeep which occurs to these signs, with any maintenance works being completed via ladders and temporary safety equipment.

2.5.4 Freestanding advertisements criteria

Freestanding advertisements must comply with the requirements of SEPP 64 Clause 23 and Clause 19 including:

- (a) The advertising structure must not protrude above the dominant skyline, including any buildings, infrastructure or tree canopies, when*

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viewed from ground level within a visual catchment of 1km. Note: This impact should be measured from the vehicle approach location and any other critical viewpoints.

(b) For freestanding advertisement greater than 45sqm that requires consent from local council, a DCP must be in force that has been prepared on the basis of an advertising design analysis for the relevant area or precinct.

(c) Where the sign is in a transport corridor a landscape management plan may be required as part of the DA approval for a freestanding advertisement. This may include requirements to provide appropriate vegetation behind and adjacent to the advertising structure to minimize unintended visual impacts. Landscaping should include trees, shrubs and ground covers to provide adequate screening, softening, colour, soil stabilization and weed reduction.

The proposed sign is framed by its position in a robust commercial area and within the property boundaries of a large shopping centre. The height of the built form (8m) is higher than the proposed height of the sign (6.5m). The height of the built form, and the surrounding glass and concrete structure and separate canopy projecting the built form assists in framing views to the sign and will always dominate the skyline.

The proposed 17.82m² sign falls below the 45m² toggle for an individual DCP to be prepared. Instead, the proposal must meet the provisions of Clause 19 and 23. As highlighted above, we do not believe there is a need for any additional landscaping measures.

Clause 19:

The consent authority must not grant consent to the display of an advertisement with an advertising display area greater than 45 square meters unless a development control plan is in force that has been prepared on the basis of an advertising design analysis for the relevant area or precinct.

The proposed 17.82m² sign falls below the 45m² toggle for an individual DCP to be prepared.

Clause 23: Freestanding Advertisements

(1) The consent authority may grant consent to the display of a freestanding advertisement only if the advertising structure on which the advertisement is displayed does not protrude above dominant skyline, including buildings, structure or tree canopies, when viewed from ground level within a visual catchment of 1 kilometre.

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(2) This clause does not prevent the consent authority, in the case of a freestanding advertisement on land within a rural or non-urban zone, from granting consent to the display of the advertisement under clause 15.

The proposal meets the requirement of Section 23. The dominant skyline in relation to the sign is the built form on the property, which is the main feature of the visual space along Yambil St and Jondaryan Ave. The commercial theme of the area means that the shop fronts on either side of the surrounding roads are a natural focal point that dominates the view lines of passing traffic.

The small stature of the sign (6.5m tall) compared to the large adjacent built forms (8m) create significant difference in height and will ensure that the sign will not become the key focal point of the property.

2.5.8 Digital Signs

Table 3: Digital Sign Criteria

Criteria	Applies to signs less than 20sqm	Applies to signs greater than or equal to 20sqm
a. Each advertisement must be displayed in a completely static manner, without any motion, for the approval dwell time as per criterion (d) below.	✓	✓
b. Message sequencing designed to make a driver anticipate the next message is prohibited across images presented on a single sign and across a series of signs.	✓	✓
c. The image must not be capable of being mistaken: i. for a prescribed traffic control device because it has, for example, red, amber or green circles, octagons, crosses or triangles of shapes or patterns that may result in the advertisement being mistaken for a prescribed traffic control device. ii. as text providing driving instructions to drivers.	✓	✓
d. Dwell times for image display must not be less than: i. 10 seconds for areas where the speed limit is below 80 km/h ii. 25 seconds for areas where the speed limit is 80 km/h and over.	✓	✓
e. The transition time between messages must be no longer than 0.1 seconds, and in the event of image failure, the default image must be a black screen.	✓	✓
f. Luminance levels must comply with the requirements in Section 3 below.	✓	✓
g. The images displayed on the sign must not otherwise unreasonably dazzle or distract drivers without limitation to their colouring or contain flickering or flashing content.	✓	✓
h. The amount of text and information supplied on a sign should be kept to a	✓	✓

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<i>minimum (e.g. no more than a driver can read at a shirt glance).</i>		
<i>i. Any sign that is within 250m of a classified road and is visible from a school zone must be switched to a fixed display during school zone hours.</i>	✓	✓
<i>j. Each sign proposal must be assessed on a case-by-case basis including replacement of an existing fixed, scrolling or tri-vision sign with a digital sign, and in the instance of a sign being visible from each direction, both directions for each location must be assessed on their own merits.</i>	✓	✓
<i>k. At any time, including where the speed limit in the area of the sign is changed, if detrimental effect is identified on road safety post installation of a digital sign, RMS reserve the right to re-assess the site using an independent RMS-accredited road safety auditor. Any safety issues identified by the auditor and options for rectifying the issues are to be discussed between RMS and the sign owner and operator.</i>	✓	✓

**lines l, m, n, and o. only apply for signs greater than 20sqm.*

The above digital sign criteria have been accommodated within our suggested permit conditions (Section 9 of this report). The proposed sign does not fall within 250m of a school zone, which removed the requirement for fixed messages during these times.

The speed limit is 50km/h along this stretch of road, so we have proposed a min. 10-second dwell time for images.

Part 3 Advertisements and road safety

3.1 Road Safety Objectives

Table 4: Road Safety Assessment Criteria

1. Would the proposal reduce the safety for any public road?
2. Would the proposal reduce the safety for pedestrians or bicyclists?
3. Would the proposal reduce the safety for pedestrians by obscuring sightlines from public area?

The proposal does not reduce the safety of public roads, pedestrians, or bicyclists. Proven studies (which are available on the OMA's website) indicates that when signage operates within state regulations regarding dwell time, transition time, luminance and content, it does not impact driver awareness or safety. Therefore, the safety of drivers on the road remains uncompromised. By adhering to these standards, the proposal maintains a safe environment for all road users, including pedestrians and bicyclists.

3.2.1 Road Clearance

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Ensuring advertising signage is located an appropriate distance from the road minimises the risk of collision between an errant vehicle and a sign. The following road clearance criteria apply to all advertising signage:

- a. The advertisement must not create a physical obstruction or hazard. For example:

 - i. Does the sign obstruct the movement of pedestrians or bicycle riders? (e.g. telephone kiosks and other street furniture along roads and footpath areas)?*
 - ii. Does the sign protrude below a bridge or other structure so it could be hit by trucks or other tall vehicles? Will the clearance between the road surface and the bottom of the sign meet the appropriate road standards for that particular road?*
 - iii. Does the sign protrude laterally into the transport corridor so it could be hit by trucks or wide vehicles?**
- b. Where the sign supports are not frangible (breakable), the sign must be placed outside the clear zone in an acceptable location in accordance with Austroads Guide to Road Design (and RMS supplements) or behind an RMS-approved crash barrier.*
- c. Where the sign is proposed within the clear zone but behind an existing RMS-approved crash barrier, all its structures up to 5.8m in height (relative to the road level) are to comply with any applicable lateral clearance specified by Austroads Guide to Road Design (and RMS supplements) with respect to dynamic deflection and working width.*
- d. All signs that are permitted to hang over roads or footpaths should meet wind loading requirements as specified in AS 1170.1 and AS 1170.2. All vertical clearances as specified above are regarded as being the height of the sign when under maximum vertical deflection.*

The sign does not create a physical obstruction or hazard, as it is located away from public roads and footpaths, with no nearby hazards such as telephone boxes or street furniture. It does not protrude below a bridge or any other structure, nor does it extend laterally into the transport corridor. Additionally, the sign is constructed with a robust framing that ensures it is not likely to be frangible, further enhancing its safety.

3.2.2 Line of sight

To maximise visibility of the road and minimise the time a driver's attention is directed away from the road, the following criteria apply to all advertising signage:

- a) An advertisement must not obstruct the driver's view of the road, particularly of other vehicles, bicycle riders or pedestrians at crossings.*
- b) An advertisement must not obstruct a pedestrian or cyclist's view of the road.*
- c) The advertisement should not be located in a position that has the potential to give incorrect information on the alignment of the road. In this context, the location and arrangement of signs' structures should not give visual clues to*

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the driver suggesting that the road alignment is different to the actual alignment. An accurate photomontage should be used to assess this issue.

d) The advertisement should not distract a driver's attention away from the road environment for an extended length of time. For example:

i. The sign should not be located in such a way that the driver's head is required to turn away from the road and the components of the traffic stream in order to view its display and/or message. All drivers should still be able to see the road when viewing the sign, as well as the main components of the traffic stream in peripheral view.

ii. The sign should be oriented in a manner that does not create headlight reflections in the driver's line of sight. As a guideline, angling a sign five degrees away from right angles to the driver's line of sight can minimise headlight reflections. On a curved road alignment, this should be checked for the distance measured back from the sign that a car would travel in 2.5 seconds at the design speed.

The proposed sign falls on private land, on a straight stretch of road, without any nearby traffic hazards. The road curative and the roundabout located at the corner of Yambil St and Jondaryan Ave means that sign is organically located in drivers' field of view, with a relatively short viewing time. Vehicle access to the Subject Site is only provided at the north-eastern and south-western corners of the property, meaning the sign, located on the north-western corner, is not visible to traffic entering the property. The nearest intersection, Yambil St and Jondaryan Ave, is adjacent to the proposed sign but drivers would always be able to view the road while the sign is in their vision, as well as the main components of the traffic stream within the roundabout, which is in front of drivers while the sign is in their line of sight.

3.2.3 Proximity to decision making points and conflict points

It is important that drivers are not distracted near decision making points or conflict points to allow concentration to be focused on the driving task where the driver's attention requirements are greater.

Decision making points include areas in which merging, diverging, turning and weaving traffic manoeuvres take place. Conflict points are locations such as intersections or pedestrian crossings where crash risk is greater.

To minimise distraction near decision making points and conflict points, and ensure there is sufficient distance for a driver to recognise, react and, if required, stop safely before reaching one of these points, the following criteria apply to all advertising signage:

a) The sign should not be located:

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i. less than the safe sight distance from an intersection, merge point, exit ramp, traffic control signal or sharp curves

ii. less than the safe stopping sight distance from a marked foot crossing, pedestrian crossing, pedestrian refuge, cycle crossing, cycleway facility or hazard within the road environment

iii. so that it is visible from the stem of a T-intersection.

b) The placement of a sign should not distract a driver at a critical time. In particular, signs should not obstruct a driver's view:

i. of a road hazard

ii. to an intersection

iii. to a prescribed traffic control device (such as traffic signals, stop or give way signs or warning signs)

iv. to an emergency vehicle access point or Type 2 driveways (wider than 6-9m) or higher.

The sign's location and design meet the requirements of Section a & b. The sign is located on a monopole in front of the built form at the property's boundary and is replacing an existing advertising sign.

The location and design ensures it does not have the potential to distract or obstruct driver's view at a critical time.

The sign's location also fall outside of the safe sight distance to a roundabout. Austroads 'Guide to Road Redesign Part 4B: Roundabouts

Highlights the criterion 2 sight distance as being the upper limit to signage setback requirements. The calculation at the limit of the road (50mk/h approach) would require a 55m sight distance. The sign's location after the roundabout, and not before (for traffic heading south) ensures that the location of the sign would not impact on the key decision making point for drivers entering the roundabout. The significant setback of the sign and the built form (5.5m), and the height of the sign also attributes to the sign's limited impact on drivers attention before entering the roundabout.

3.2.4 Sign Spacing

A highly cluttered visual field makes it difficult to locate and prioritise driving-critical information, e.g. regulatory and advisory signs and traffic control devices.

The proposed site should be assessed to identify any road safety risk in relation to visual clutter and the proximity to other signs.

Additional criteria for digital signs:

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a) Sign spacing should limit drivers view to a single sign at any given time with a distance of no less than 150m between signs in any one corridor. Exemptions for low speed, high pedestrian zones or CBD zones will be assessed by RMS as part of their concurrence role.

There are traffic control signs alerting northbound drivers on Jondaryan Ave and westbound drivers on Yambil St to the upcoming roundabout at the intersection of Yambil St and Jondaryan Ave. These signs fall approximately 15m away from the proposal. However, they are targeted at drivers travelling in the opposite direction to traffic targeted by the proposal and would not be viewed with the proposed sign as a backdrop.

Images of some of these signs are showed below:



3.3 Sign design and operation criteria

Signs that display information that is contrary to, or competing with, prescribed traffic control devices or make locating prescribed traffic control devices difficult, have the potential to distract and confuse motorists. Therefore, the following criteria apply to all advertising signage:

- a) The advertisement must not distract a driver from, obstruct or reduce the visibility and effectiveness of, directional signs, traffic signals, prescribed traffic control devices, regulatory signs or advisory signs or obscure information about the road alignment.*
- b) The advertisement must not interfere with stopping sight distance for the road's design speed or the effectiveness of a prescribed traffic control device. For example:*
 - i. Could the advertisement be construed as giving instructions to traffic such as 'Stop', 'Halt' or 'Give Way'.*
 - ii. Does the advertisement imitate a prescribed traffic control device?*

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iii. If the sign is in the vicinity of traffic lights, does the advertisement use red, amber or green circles, octagons, crosses or triangles or shapes or patterns that may result in the advertisement being mistaken for a traffic signal?

Additional criteria for digital signs and moving signs:

a) The image must not be capable of being mistaken:

i. for a rail or traffic sign or signal because it has, e.g. red, amber or green circles, octagons, crosses or triangles or shapes or patterns that may result in the advertisement being mistaken for a traffic signal

ii. as text providing driving instructions to drivers.

b) The amount of text and information supplied on a sign should be kept to a minimum (e.g. no more than a driver can read at a short glance).

The above policies have been included with our suggested permit conditions (Section 9).

3.3.2 Dwell time and transition time

Signs which change advertising content are more likely to distract a driver than signs with content that is static. In locations where digital and moving signs are assessed to be appropriate, the minimum dwell time and maximum transition time set out in the criteria must be applied. Longer dwell times may be necessary in more complex locations.

Dwell time criteria for digital signs:

a) Each advertisement must be displayed in a completely static manner, without any motion, for the approved dwell time as per criterion (b) below.

b) Dwell times for image display must not be less than:

i. 10 seconds for areas where the speed limit is below 80km/h.

ii. 25 seconds for areas where the speed limit is 80km/h and over.

c) Any digital sign that is within 250 metres of a classified road and is visible from a school zone must be switched to a fixed display during school zone hours.

d) Digital signs must not contain animated or video/movie style advertising or messages including live television, satellite, Internet or similar broadcasts.

The transition time between messages must be no longer than 0.1 seconds, and in the event of image failure, the default image must be a black screen

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As previously identified, the 10-second dwell time is applicable to this application and is a suggested permit condition.

Table 6: Luminance Levels for Digital Advertising			
<i>Luminance means the objective brightness of a surface as measured by a photometer, expressed in candelas per square meter (cd/sqm). Levels differ as digital signs will appear brighter when light levels in the area are low. Unless provided below, luminance levels should otherwise comply with the recommended values of AS4282 Control of the Obtrusive Effects of Outdoor Lighting.</i>			
Lighting condition	Zone 1 (cd/sqm)	Zone 2 & 3 (cd/sqm)	Zone 4 (cd/sqm)
Full sun on face of signage	No limit	No limit	No limit
Daytime luminance		6000	6000
Morning and evening twilight and inclement weather	700	700	500
Nighttime	350	350	200

Our operating system for the digital display allows for on the ground feedback (surrounding environment brightness measurement), as well as remote adjustments. The default brightness management will incorporate the above maximum luminance calculations, with the ability to update and refine these amounts over the signs permitted lifespan.

3.4 Road Safety review of new or modified signs
RMS may review the crash history of any new or modified advertising signs after a three-year period to determine whether the sign has had an adverse effect on road safety. If RMS is of the opinion that a sign is a traffic hazard, RMS may direct the owner or occupier of the land on which the sign is situated or the person who erected the sign to screen, modify or remove the sign, regardless of whether or not the design is the subject of a development consent under the Act or a consent under the Roads Act 1993.

We acknowledge that RMS reserves the right to review the crash history of the sign to assess any potential adverse effects on road safety after a set period. However, we have confidence in the safety of our sign, which complies with state planning operations and regulations. We believe that our sign will not negatively impact the safety of traffic along Yambil Street or Jondaryan Avenue.

3.5 Road safety review of digital signs
At any time, including where the speed limit in the area of the sign is changed, if a detrimental effect is identified on road safety post installation of a digital sign, RMS reserve the right to re-assess the site using an independent RMS-



accredited road safety auditor. Any safety issues identified by the auditor and options for rectifying the issues are to be discussed between RMS and the sign owner and operator.
An electronic log of a digital sign's operational activity must be maintained by the operator for the duration of the development consent and be available to the consent authority and/or RMS to allow a review of the sign's activity in case of a complaint.

As noted above, we acknowledge that RMS reserves the right to review the operation and road safety of the sign after consent is given.

We also agree to maintaining an activity log of the digital signs operation as outlined in the above clause.

3.6 Road safety guidelines for sign content

SEPP 64 does not regulate the content of advertisements and signs, and does not require consent for a change in content. It is recommended that advertisers follow RMS advisory guidelines with respect to sign content of advertisements to be displayed along road corridors

We submit, that including rigorous permit conditions relating to prohibited content, minimum dwell times, maximum brightness etc., mitigates any potential road safety issues. RMS reserve the right to review permits based on updated traffic conditions or road safety studies. The approval of the proposed sign, with the suggested conditions, ensures that the sign will operate in accordance with today's latest safety guidelines.

4.2.3 Advertising approved by councils

Fees and council revenue In addition to the standard development application fees, the applicant may be required to provide an upfront fee or an annual fee (payable to the council) for the duration of consent of the advertisement (generally 15 years). In this instance, no other additional fee is to be charged against the development under the Local Government Act 1993. The council may not require the proponent to pay a fee if it is satisfied that adequate public benefits will otherwise be provided for (see below under the heading 'In-kind contributions')

In-kind contributions

In some instances, the proponent may negotiate with council to provide in-kind contributions rather than a fee. In-kind contributions may include on-ground works to improve local amenity such as pedestrian bridges, pedestrian refuges, landscaping, graffiti management, safety lighting or other works provided as part of the installation of the advertising structure.

Other types of in-kind contributions may also be negotiated with councils including the use from time to time of the advertising structure for promotion

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of community programs, events, public safety programs or other appropriate public purposes

The community benefits of the proposed sign have already been highlighted. Summarised below:

Local Content: Our prioritisation on local content for the advertising space.

We are happy to incorporate conditional approval highlighting at least 50% of content must be from local businesses (operating within Griffith City Council).

Enhanced Competition: The current outdoor advertising landscape in Regional NSW is the least competitive in the whole of Australia. Allowing other players (us) into the market will help drive services and price for local businesses in the region.

Local Suppliers: Annual rent for the billboard to the property owner, ongoing sign maintenance and installers.

Charity Content: We always source local charities to take any unsold space for the sign.

Regional Media: Outdoor advertising is growing substantially, while all other traditional media is slowly losing revenue (Print, Radio & TV). These strong local media outlets are becoming less financially viable. Our business is attempting to replicate the style of these strong local businesses, in a growing media segment. The goal is to eventually establish local offices and have flourishing local team.

As the proposed application is so strong, our view is that additional measures are not required to ensure the approval of this application. We are always open to conversations around how councils see signs of this nature operating and working best for them. In Victoria, local councils are one of our biggest advertising segments. So, we are always open to suggestions.

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8. LOCAL PLANNING POLICIES

Griffith Local Environment Plan 2014 – Land Use Table

Zone E1 Local Centre: Objectives of zone

- To provide a range of retail, business and community uses that serve the needs of people who live in, work in or visit the area.
- To encourage investment in local commercial development that generates employment opportunities and economic growth.
- To enable residential development that contributes to a vibrant and active local centre and is consistent with the Council's strategic planning for residential development in the area.
- To encourage business, retail, community and other non-residential land uses on the ground floor of buildings.
- To ensure that the density of commercial development reflects the needs of the local community and the capacity of the existing road and transport network.
- To generally conserve and enhance the business centre precincts by ensuring that new development integrates with the distinct urban scale, character, cultural heritage and landscape setting of the precincts.
- To enable development for residential purposes if adequate amenity is provided for residents of residential buildings and the land is not required for commercial use.

The addition of an electronic advertising sign in front of the built form at 10-12 Yambil St aligns with Griffith City Council's vision for development for land designated Zone E1 Local Centre.

This proposed single-sided, freestanding digital advertising sign has the potential to have a very positive effect on the local area and the businesses that may use this development, a key requirement laid out in this policy. It would also have an impact on the employment in the local area, as any resources used during the construction and installation of our advertising sign would be done through local businesses first (for traffic management, landscaping, electrical, etc.).

The proposal also reflects the policy's focus on ensuring that new development integrates with the existing character of the area. The current streetscape surrounding the intersection of Yambil St and Jondaryan Ave has a strong signage character. Traffic in the commercial area surrounding the Subject Site from Kookora St to the west and Crossing St to the east is exposed to substantial freestanding, awning fascia and wall-mounted business identification and promotion signage, in an array of colours. The existence of such an extensive signage context means that the proposed sign will have a strong relationship with the streetscape throughout its permitted lifespan.

Further, the existing character of this retail centre has clearly been influenced by the zoning policies, with residential properties typically located away from this commercial hub.

Development Guide No. 10 – Advertising Signage

What standards do I need to comply with?

You will be required to comply with the provisions of the State Environmental Planning Policy No. 64: Advertising and Signage.

Council policies (Advertising – Signs) & (Advertising – Sandwich Board Signs) also regulate advertising signage within the Griffith Local Government Area. Copies of these policies are available from Council's Customer Service.

The provisions of SEPP 64: Advertising and Signage have been comprehensively discussed within our responses to that policy in Section 7 of this report.

Council Policy Advertising – Signs

2. Policy Objective

To protect public safety and safeguard against unsightly signs.

3. Policy Statement

3.1 Council shall require permits for the erection of advertising structures and the fee for such permits shall be in accordance with Council's Revenue Policy.

Council shall impound advertising sign boards located on footpaths when a request by Council's authorised officer to remove such sign has been ignored.

3.3 Council shall not permit advertising signs upon the median strips in Banna Avenue.

3.4 Where a permit is used, the proponent is to hold a current minimum \$20 million public indemnity cover, indemnifying Council, in order to minimise Council's liability.

The proposal meets the provisions laid out in Griffith City Council's policy regarding Advertising – Signs. The clear direction of this policy statement is to ensure that development is practical and low impact, particularly in relation to impact on the streetscape at the pedestrian level. The proposed sign is a freestanding monopole located within the Subject Site's property boundaries and as such would have minimal impact in this regard. The objective of the proposed development is to introduce colour and modernisation to the pre-existing building elevation, which is a typical shopping centre construction with some existing business identification signage. Given the limited policy on signage of this nature, we revert back to the SEPP 64 guidelines, to which this proposal

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presents as an acceptable outcome. The sign employs a high level of consideration for the policies relating to third-party signage, and electronic signs.

The key points are summarised below:

- The proposal does not substantially add to the overall signage on the Subject Site.
- It integrates with the existing built form and height of pre-existing advertising on the site.
- The proposal includes provisions for a range of local business, community events and charity advertising.
- The approval of this application allows council to regulate the third-party advertising sign with strict permit conditions to ensure that road safety is prioritised and introduce an expiry date, allowing for a review of the Subject Site and surrounds after a fixed term.

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9. SUGGESTED PERMIT CONDITIONS

We suggest the following conditions be applied to the proposed sign:

1. The signage approved by this permit expires 15 years from the date of issue.
2. No advertisement must be displayed for less than 10 seconds.
3. The transition from one advertisement to another must be instantaneous.
4. The sign must not display content, images or text that could:
 - a. Create the illusion of continuous movement.
 - b. Be capable of being mistaken for traffic signals or traffic control devices, including red, amber or green circles, octagons, crosses or triangles, or shapes or patterns that may result in the advertisement being mistaken for a prescribed traffic device.
 - c. Be capable of being mistaken as an instruction to a road user, including the working stop, give way, slow down, turn left or turn right.
 - d. Contain a flashing background, flashing text, flashing images, blinking or fading elements that create the illusions of movement.
 - e. Contain any animation.
 - f. Be capable of being interpreted as projections beyond the face of the advertising screen such as through 3D technology.
 - g. Consist of present time or other contemporary update information relating to news, weather, or time.
 - h. Contain video, movie or television broadcasts.
5. Unless with the further written consent of the Responsible Authority, the electronic signage of the sign hereby approved must not operate between 12am and 4am.
6. The signage hereby permitted must not contain any flashing or intermittent flashing light.

We are open to additional permit conditions which seek to address:
Additional In-Kind Content

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10. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we submit that:

- The proposal seeks the approval for the development of a single-sided freestanding digital advertising sign at 10-12 Yambil St. The proposed sign includes one 17.82m² digital display face, seen by traffic travelling southbound and eastbound (as detailed in the attached town planning package).
- The proposed development includes provisions to remove one existing sign. The consolidation of signage on the site is supported by SEPP 64 and the Griffith City Council DCP.
- The Subject Site is the most suitable for the proposed sign in all of Griffith. It is located in the heart of the commercial precinct and is not in close proximity to any sensitive uses or zoning.
- The proposal is clearly supported by the local policies in the Griffith City Council planning scheme—whether evaluating the location or design of the sign.
- The proposed sign will primarily be used to advertise local businesses. This can have very positive impacts on the local economy.
- The proposal employs a high level of consideration to the provisions and policies set out in the Griffith City Council's policies and SEPP 64.
- The proposal does not open the floodgates for similar approvals in Griffith. Instead, the unique property (being one of the largest built forms in the commercial precinct) provides the singular opportunity for such signage to be erected at an appropriate scale to the building it is housed on.

Overall, we conclude that the proposed development is consistent with the relevant state and local planning policies. The development also addresses the strategic directions and policy objectives of Griffith City Council.





11. APPENDIX 1 – COPY OF TITLE



FOLIO: 101/1115198

SEARCH DATE	TIME	EDITION NO	DATE
8/8/2024	10:43 AM	30	18/4/2024

LAND

LOT 101 IN DEPOSITED PLAN 1115198
AT GRIFFITH
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA GRIFFITH
PARISH OF JONDARYAN COUNTY OF COOPER
TITLE DIAGRAM DP1115198

FIRST SCHEDULE

F & L VIOLI PTY LTD (T AP364889)

SECOND SCHEDULE (25 NOTIFICATIONS)

- 1 RESERVATIONS AND CONDITIONS IN THE CROWN GRANT(S)
- 2 LAND EXCLUDES MINERALS - SEE MEMORANDUM V579388
- 3 A1523747 LEASE TO CM LEASING SERVICES PTY LTD (SEE AP654607 AQ18060) OF SHOP T16 GRIFFITH CENTRAL SHOPPING CENTRE, GRIFFITH. EXPIRES: 9/2/2021. OPTION OF RENEWAL: 7 YEARS.
AQ18061 VARIATION OF LEASE A1523747 OPTION OF RENEWAL: MODIFIED.
- 4 A1523748 LEASE TO TARGET AUSTRALIA PTY LTD OF TARCET, GRIFFITH CENTRAL SHOPPING CENTRE, GRIFFITH. EXPIRES: 29/10/2022. OPTION OF RENEWAL: 10 YEARS.
- 5 AM727058 LEASE TO ALDY FASHION PTY LTD OF SHOP T6, GRIFFITH CENTRAL SHOPPING CENTRE, GRIFFITH. EXPIRES: 11/7/2023.
- 6 AM727064 LEASE TO NARTEL ENTERPRISES PTY LTD OF SHOP T15 GRIFFITH CENTRAL SHOPPING CENTRE, GRIFFITH. EXPIRES: 16/11/2026.
- 7 AN208551 LEASE TO SUBWAY REALTY PTY LTD OF SHOP T13, GRIFFITH CENTRAL SHOPPING CENTRE, GRIFFITH. EXPIRES: 29/10/2027.
- 8 AN490561 LEASE TO OKAN ONCU OF SHOP T14B, GRIFFITH CENTRAL SHOPPING CENTRE, GRIFFITH. EXPIRES: 17/5/2023.
- 9 AN490562 LEASE TO CGMT PTY LTD OF SHOP T26A, GRIFFITH CENTRAL SHOPPING CENTRE, GRIFFITH. COMMENCES: 1/8/2018. EXPIRES: 30/7/2024.
- 10 AN736682 LEASE TO SPECSAVERS PTY LTD OF SHOP T3, GRIFFITH CENTRAL SHOPPING CENTRE, GRIFFITH. EXPIRES: 21/6/2025.
- 11 AN831533 LEASE TO ELNART PTY LTD OF SHOP T23 & STORAGE ST11, GRIFFITH CENTRAL SHOPPING CENTRE, GRIFFITH. EXPIRES: 11/9/2026.

END OF PAGE 1 - CONTINUED OVER

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NEW SOUTH WALES LAND REGISTRY SERVICES - TITLE SEARCH

FOLIO: 101/1115198

PAGE 2

SECOND SCHEDULE (25 NOTIFICATIONS) (CONTINUED)

- 12 AP754201 LEASE TO FIONA JONES OF SHOP T19A GRIFFITH CENTRAL SHOPPING CENTRE, GRIFFITH. EXPIRES: 15/11/2024.
- 13 AP944317 MORTGAGE TO GEMI 169 PTY LTD
- 14 AQ18057 LEASE TO BRADLEY GREGORY COOMBE & MICHAELA JAYNE ELLEVSEN OF SHOP T11B, GRIFFITH CENTRAL SHOPPING CENTRE, GRIFFITH. EXPIRES: 6/6/2025. OPTION OF RENEWAL: 3 YEARS.
- 15 AQ18058 LEASE TO FLIGHT CENTRE TRAVEL GROUP LIMITED OF SHOP T26B, GRIFFITH CENTRAL SHOPPING CENTRE, GRIFFITH. EXPIRES: 29/10/2023.
- 16 AQ18062 LEASE TO CROSS COAST TRADING PTY LTD OF SHOP JDD5 (B), GRIFFITH CENTRAL SHOPPING CENTRE, GRIFFITH. EXPIRES: 25/6/2024. OPTION OF RENEWAL: 5 YEARS.
- 17 AQ18064 LEASE TO LEETON HEALTH AND BEAUTY PTY LTD OF SHOP T19, GRIFFITH CENTRAL SHOPPING CENTRE, GRIFFITH. EXPIRES: 14/1/2025. OPTION OF RENEWAL: 5 YEARS.
- 18 AQ18066 LEASE TO S & E LOWE FAMILY TRUST OF SHOP T15, GRIFFITH CENTRAL SHOPPING CENTRE, GRIFFITH. EXPIRES: 19/4/2023. OPTION OF RENEWAL: 3 YEARS.
- 19 AQ300392 LEASE TO SATNAM SINGH HAIR OF BASEMENT CAR PARK BAYS NUMBERED 330, 331, 332, 359, 360 & 361, GRIFFITH CENTRAL SHOPPING CENTRE, GRIFFITH. EXPIRES: 28/2/2025. OPTION OF RENEWAL: 5 YEARS.
- 20 AQ805002 MORTGAGE TO GI 214 PTY LTD
- 21 AR856658 MORTGAGE TO SJWG PROPERTY PTY LTD, ALKIRA PTY LTD, FONTWEALTH CAPITAL PTY LTD, DOUGLAS BRUCE EDWARDS, DMSH HOLDINGS PTY LTD, MDSLASH PTY LTD, HHN PTY LTD, LISA MARGARET LIPMAN, CSMARTDESIGN PTY LTD, H&M HOMES PTY LTD, J LAI INVESTMENTS PTY LTD, PROVERBS 1311 HOLDINGS PTY LTD, LIN HING ENTERPRISES PTY LTD & CHARLES BERNARD PTY LTD
- 22 AS522867 LEASE TO ELISE MCINTOSH & TIMOTHY LUKE MCINTOSH OF SHOP K6 GRIFFITH CENTRAL SHOPPING CENTRE, GRIFFITH. EXPIRES: 29/10/2025.
- 23 AS522876 LEASE TO BOOST JUICE PTY LTD SHOP T14A GRIFFITH CENTRAL SHOPPING CENTRE, GRIFFITH. EXPIRES: 26/8/2025.
- * 24 AS710922 CAVEAT BY ELIAS SHAMOON
- * 25 AT988403 CAVEAT BY TARGET AUSTRALIA PTY LTD

NOTATIONS

UNREGISTERED DEALINGS: NIL

*** END OF SEARCH ***

Griffith

PRINTED ON 8/8/2024

* Any entries preceded by an asterisk do not appear on the current edition of the Certificate of Title. Warning: the information appearing under notations has not been formally recorded in the Register. InfoTrack an approved NSW Information Broker hereby certifies that the information contained in this document has been provided electronically by the Registrar General in accordance with Section 96B(2) of the Real Property Act 1900.

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Received: 08/08/2024 10:43:32

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PLAN FORM 2
SOUNDING AND SCALE ONLY.

FOR SIGNATURES,
SEALS AND
CERTIFICATIONS
SEE FORM
DP1115108

OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR-General / Sri Lanka Survey / Sri Lanka Survey

Department of Land Approval

1. Name of the project: **YAMBL STREET**

2. Location: **YAMBL STREET, JONDARYN**

3. Scale: **1:1000**

4. Date: **10/12/2007**

5. Drawing No: **DP1115108**

6. Project No: **101**

7. Survey No: **101**

8. Plan No: **101**

9. Section No: **101**

10. Sub-section No: **101**

11. Block No: **101**

12. Lot No: **101**

13. Sub-lot No: **101**

14. Plot No: **101**

15. Area: **101**

16. Volume: **101**

17. Weight: **101**

18. Length: **101**

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20. Height: **101**

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22. Distance: **101**

23. Time: **101**

24. Temperature: **101**

25. Pressure: **101**

26. Humidity: **101**

27. Wind Speed: **101**

28. Wind Direction: **101**

29. Cloud Cover: **101**

30. Visibility: **101**

31. Air Quality: **101**

32. Noise Level: **101**

33. Vibration: **101**

34. Radiation: **101**

35. Magnetic Field: **101**

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13. APPENDIX 3 – PERSPECTIVE VIEWS WRITTEN STATEMENT

Prepared By:	James Course
Qualification:	Advanced Diploma of Building Design (Architectural) <i>Including: BUIL5922 – Undertake site survey and analysis to inform design process</i>
Software:	Adobe Photoshop Creative Cloud <i>Informed by: Site features and measurements plan prepared in Autodesk Revit 2018</i>
Methodology:	Relevant data obtained from site measure up performed by James Course in conjunction with topographical maps from various online sources: <i>https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/spatialviewer/#/find-a-property/address &</i>
Perspective View 01:	Camera: iPhone 8 Type: Digital Lens Size: 27mm Angle: Landscape – Parallel to ground Date: 27/05/2024 Time: 07:15am Height Above Ground: 1600mm Modified elements: Nil Assumptions: Height and Length are relative to the documented site features plan; however definitive accuracy cannot be guaranteed.

14. APPENDIX 4 – SURROUNDING SIGNAGE & BUILT FORM



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15. APPENDIX 5 – BRIGHTNESS

Luminance Level

The sign will be installed with a two-way brightness sensor, which is programmed with the following settings:

LUMINANCE LEVELS FOR DIGITAL ADVERTISEMENTS		
Lighting Condition	Dimming Level to achieve compliance	Max Permissible Luminance (cd/m2)
Full Sun on face of Signage	100 %	No Limit
Day Time Luminance (typical sunny day)	85.7%	6000
Morning and Evening	10 %	700
Twilight and Overcast Weather		
Nighttime	5%	350

The dimming % is based on a maximum calibrated screen brightness of 7000 cd/m2. The above adjustments have been calculated to comply with the maximum allowable veiling luminance of 0.25 cd/m2.

Maintenance & Display Issues

We have several systems in place to help mitigate any potential issues, as well as rectification measures in place. As follows:

- Operating System: Is set up with remote access, which can be shot off via our online portal.
- Switchboard: It set up (through a different system), where we can turn the power supply on/off to the whole billboard at any stage.
- Screen: The individual LED panels have background sensors which report any malfunctions or content issues.
- Camera: We also install a camera, which is a secondary failsafe. This is reviewed against scheduled content to ensure it aligns.

These measures ensure we catch any potential issues early and can rectify them through a few different solutions.

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Operational Management Plan

DA: 141/2024

Address: 10 Yambil St, Griffith, NSW

1. All content is to be static images, no moving
2. No advertisement must be displayed for less than 30 seconds.
3. The signs operational hours will be 4am – 11:59pm.
4. During the operation of the sign, the maximum average luminance and threshold increment values as specified in below must not be exceeded:
 - a. Maximum average luminance:
 - i. Full sun on face of signage: No limit
 - ii. Daytime luminance: 4000 cd/m²
 - iii. Morning and evening twilight and overcast weather: 400 cd/m²
 - iv. Night time: 200 cd/m²
 - b. Threshold increment max %:
 - i. Night time: 15%
 - c. Adaptation luminance:
 - i. Night time: 5
5. The transition from one advertisement to another must be instantaneous.
6. The sign must not display content, images or text:
 - a. Giving the illusion of continuous movement.
 - b. Capable of being mistaken for traffic signals or traffic control devices, including red, amber or green circles, octagons, crosses or triangles.
 - c. With a flashing background, flashing text, flashing images, blinking or fading elements that create the illusion of movement.
 - d. Containing any animation.
 - e. Capable of being interpreted as projections beyond the face of the advertising screen such as through 3D technology.
 - f. Containing video, movie or television broadcasts.
7. The sign operates with a maximum of 10 advertisers each week.
8. A permanent 1 in 10 slot is allocated to Griffith City Council.
9. A minimum of 70% of all content displayed over a 12 month period must come from businesses who operate within Griffith City Council.
10. In the event that traffic accidents are shown to have occurred as a direct result of the installed signage, and such causation is supported by expert evidence, the permit holder shall, upon request by the relevant authority, remove the sign.

Share your thoughts on the outsourcing of the Gym at GRALC

SURVEY RESPONSE REPORT

02 December 2024 - 07 April 2025

PROJECT NAME:

Griffith Regional Aquatic Centre Gymnasium Survey



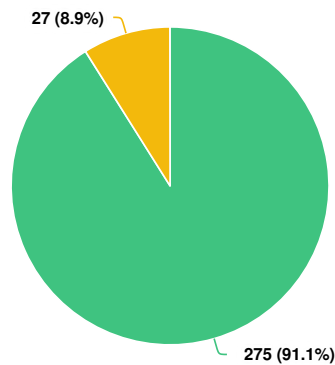
Share your thoughts on the outsourcing of the Gym at GRALC : Survey Report for 02 December 2024 to 07 April 2025



SURVEY QUESTIONS

Share your thoughts on the outsourcing of the Gym at GRALC : Survey Report for 02 December 2024 to 07 April 2025

Q1 Given the gymnasium operations currently provides a break-even / modest surplus result each year, is Council the preferred option to provide the service or should Council investigate or explore outsourcing the gym operations to a private/commercial operator on a lease basis?



Question options

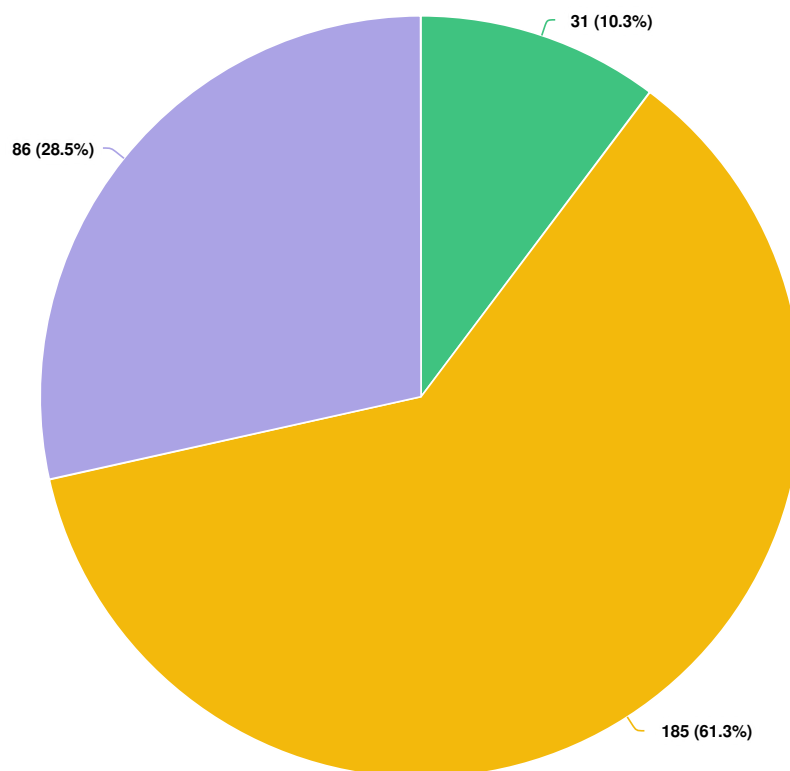
- Retain under Council operation ● Explore the outsource model

Mandatory Question (302 response(s))

Question type: Radio Button Question

Share your thoughts on the outsourcing of the Gym at GRALC : Survey Report for 02 December 2024 to 07 April 2025

Q2 | How many times per week do you use the gymnasium facility?



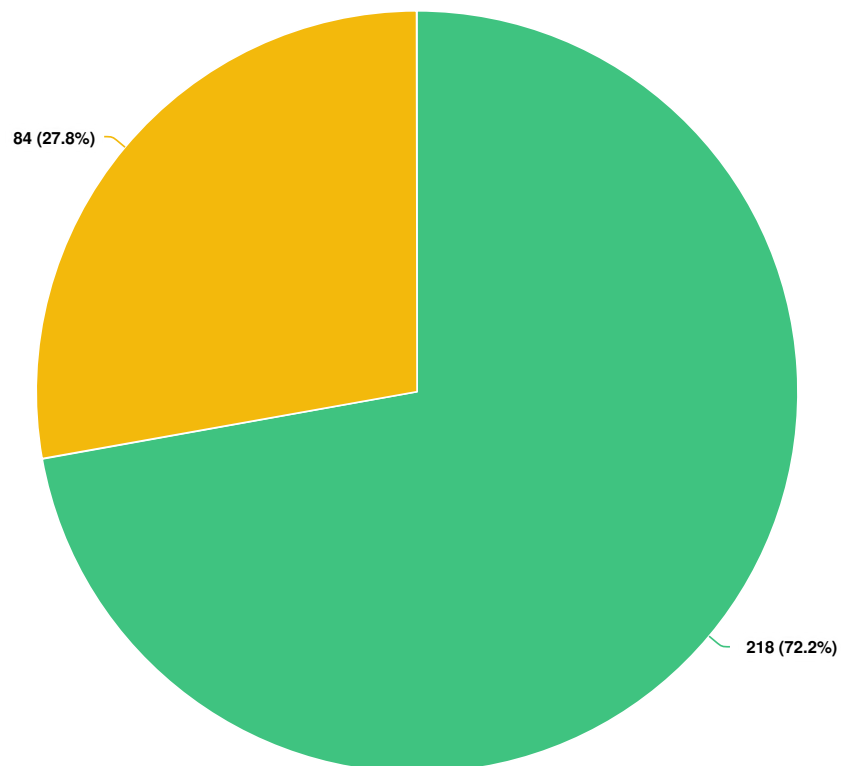
Question options

☐ Less than 1 per week ☒ 2 - 5 times per week ☐ more than 5 times per week

*Mandatory Question (302 response(s))
Question type: Radio Button Question*

Share your thoughts on the outsourcing of the Gym at GRALC : Survey Report for 02 December 2024 to 07 April 2025

Q3 Are you a Fitness Club member?



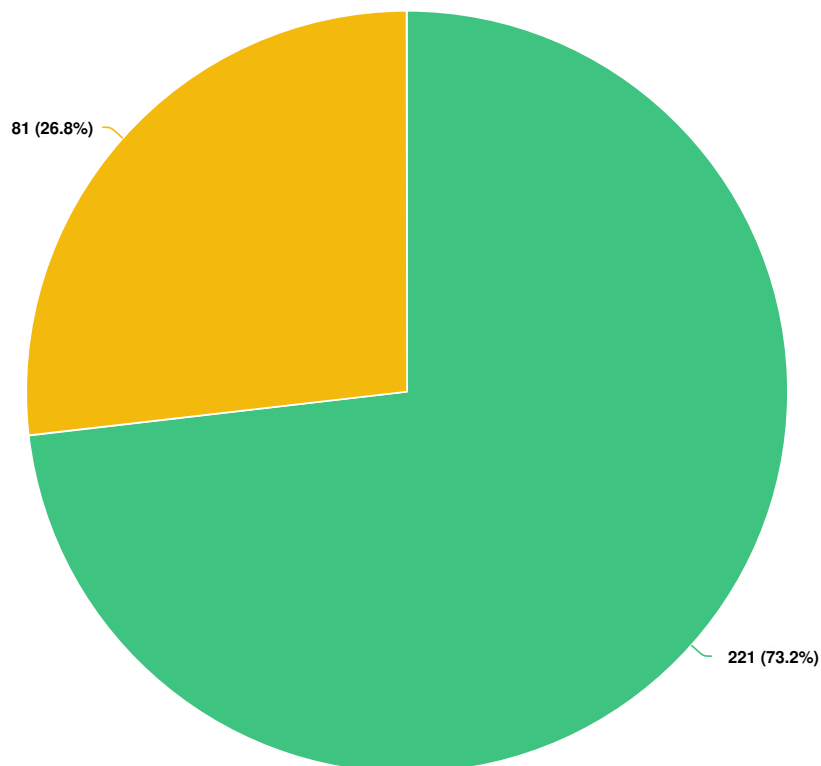
Question options

● Yes ● No

*Mandatory Question (302 response(s))
Question type: Radio Button Question*

Share your thoughts on the outsourcing of the Gym at GRALC : Survey Report for 02 December 2024 to 07 April 2025

Q4 Do you utilise the pool as part of your membership?



Question options

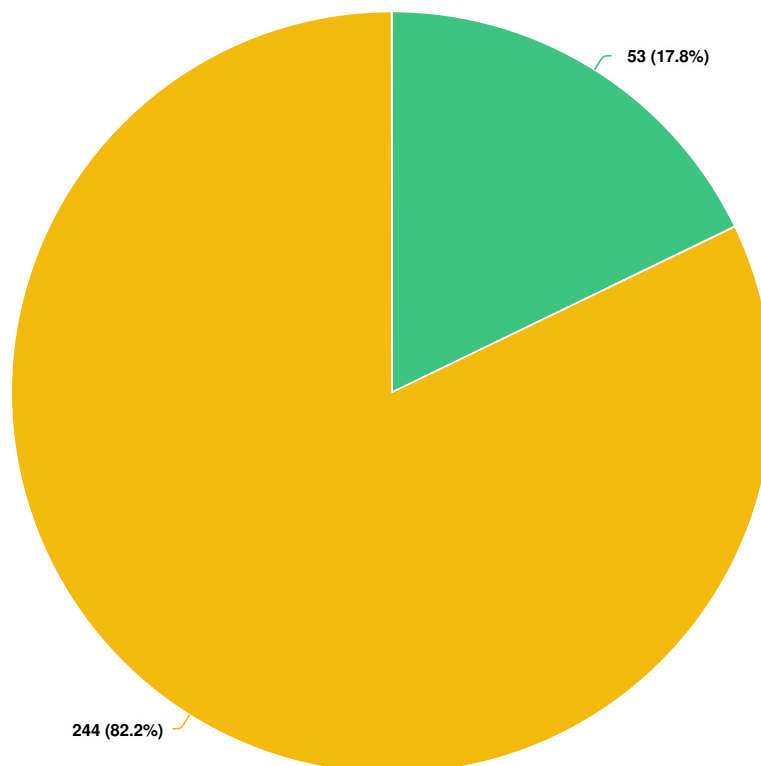
● Yes ● No

Mandatory Question (302 response(s))

Question type: Radio Button Question

Share your thoughts on the outsourcing of the Gym at GRALC : Survey Report for 02 December 2024 to 07 April 2025

Q5 | Would you continue to use the GRALC aquatic facilities if the gymnasium was outsourced to a private operator eg separate memberships would be required?



Question options

● Yes ● No

*Optional question (297 response(s), 5 skipped)
Question type: Radio Button Question*

Share your thoughts on the outsourcing of the Gym at GRALC : Survey Report for 02 December 2024 to 07 April 2025

Q6 | Do you have anything else you would like to add?

Anonymous

2/26/2025 12:20 PM

Gym provides me with an allround option for my fitness when combined with the pools. Leave as is please

Anonymous

2/26/2025 02:32 PM

Please keep everything the same. No need to change anything at this wonderful facility. Great staff, friendly faces, great classes. Definitely will be disappointed to see any of this change.

Anonymous

2/26/2025 03:25 PM

Even though the gym may not make as much profit as it may want to, it gives other council employees the opportunity to utilise a gym membership without having to spend any costs. And for more patrons to want to come to the gym, equipment NEEDS to be updated. The workers inside the gym do an amazing job assisting everyone and making them feel welcomed. It is the equipment that lets the gym down

Anonymous

2/26/2025 04:06 PM

Please keep all current staff

Anonymous

2/26/2025 05:07 PM

I would like the gym to stay owned by council

Anonymous

2/26/2025 05:13 PM

People who have been coming for years are going to be hating on the council for changing the facility when people are use to their own routines and the aquatic centre offers a reasonable price for both the gym and pool together. Seperate memberships would not make sense and only cost us members more.

Anonymous

2/26/2025 05:21 PM

I support buisness

Anonymous

2/26/2025 05:24 PM

Outsourcing will increase prices very detrimental to people's health

Anonymous

2/26/2025 05:26 PM

I am currently with fitness passport so I would continue to use the gym regardless. Thanks.

Anonymous

The gym is very popular a great council Service and if it was separate

Share your thoughts on the outsourcing of the Gym at GRALC : Survey Report for 02 December 2024 to 07 April 2025

2/26/2025 05:43 PM

from the pool I would imagine it would be the only profitable part of the centre maybe separate gym from pool memberships

Anonymous

2/26/2025 05:43 PM

Please also consider the seniors and students who attend the gym because of affordability and being a family friendly environment.

Anonymous

2/26/2025 06:46 PM

I would only continue to use the facility if it retained the Fitness Passport option.

Anonymous

2/26/2025 06:56 PM

Body pump classes are full and a private operation may not offer these classes which I have been attending for years and I feel that the council should offer these facilities to the community to improve the health of the community at a reasonable price. A private operator would not offer the health facilities to the community at a cost the average person could afford .

Anonymous

2/26/2025 06:58 PM

Change for changes sake is not worth doing. In my experience outsourcing has never worked in any area whether health, aged care, child care as the primary focus becomes profit and service etc canes a far second. Council has a responsibility to it rate payers but is the current arrangement makes a small surplus or even a minor loss it is part of providing a service to the residents of Griffith.that should continue. As an aside a spin class on Thursday afternoon is possible would be great.

Anonymous

2/26/2025 09:07 PM

The facility is really good and I reckon is serving very well the community. It is a social and friendly place where everyone can afford. Private the facility will exclude those that can't afford removing one of the few options available for aquatic recreation.

Anonymous

2/26/2025 09:18 PM

The fitness club is a great gym and provides a safe/friendly environment to all. Fitness instructors host great classes. I participate in body pump each Monday, Wednesday and Friday nights. I Would hate to see any instructor lose their job. Prices of this facility are fairly cheap compared to other gyms of Griffith which makes it fairly affordable especially when combining the pool and gym memberships together. I Would not change a thing about this wonderful facility

Anonymous

2/27/2025 07:18 AM

We did not need another gym. The infrastructure required to upgrade the facility for a separate entrance and security for safety not letting people out of the windows/door overlooking the pool would be

Share your thoughts on the outsourcing of the Gym at GRALC : Survey Report for 02 December 2024 to 07 April 2025

enormous and ultimately the rate payers would pay the bill so I don't think this is a small idea.

Anonymous

2/27/2025 07:22 AM

The Aquatic centre is a public facility & although making a profit is a positive outcome the provision of the facility should be retained by council. I believe the facility will deteriorate under private lease & the cost to use would more than likely rise prohibiting use by parts of the community.

Anonymous

2/27/2025 07:51 AM

Believe the current status provides an essential community service at affordable value and this would be jeopardised by this change

Anonymous

2/27/2025 08:27 AM

Extend gym opening hours on weekends in winter.

Anonymous

2/27/2025 09:24 AM

The gym room (the multiple equipment room) is very small compared to other gyms. Limited room, hence why lots of people prefer Livefit etc it's very cramped. Bathrooms are always messy, however that happens when pool people need to go to the bathroom but the team is great in cleaning it up. Perhaps one bathroom for just gym people? One idea, 24/7 access? Also some places in cities offer 24/7 classes. One room is hooked up to the online platform etc RMP and it's 30/45/60mins classes and it plays on a loop. People can do a class at 8pm if they like. BETTER PARKING. This is tough because of location, but something like the parking lot next to the QUEST would be ideal.

Anonymous

2/27/2025 10:23 AM

Please keep all staff

Anonymous

2/27/2025 10:56 AM

The gym is great but it is definitely out dated, I feel like the equipment we are using hasn't changed for 20yr are and it really shows it's a great facility with great staff but it definitely needs a re-boot because everything is just so out dated and old

Anonymous

2/27/2025 11:34 AM

Everyone will hate on council if things change. Leave everything as it is.

Anonymous

2/27/2025 12:59 PM

This is the cleanest and friendliest gym in town. I appreciate that council provide this facility. I would be concerned that private providers would not be as inclusive of community groups like the

Share your thoughts on the outsourcing of the Gym at GRALC : Survey Report for 02 December 2024 to 07 April 2025

Parkinson's support group, different cultural groups and young people.

Anonymous

2/27/2025 01:50 PM

I come 6 days a week and do 9 gym classes and love all the gym instructors

Anonymous

2/27/2025 02:03 PM

This is a very disappointing outcome to all the hard working staff and valuable members within the fitness club. The gralc gym has been a huge part of the community for over 20 years and the legacy of the gym and the 'community' aspect would die along with the disappointment of many long term members who have used this gym. Leasing the gym is a totally unnecessary response to improve gralc. Having a gym/pool membership is the only point of difference in comparison to other gyms in Griffith. Would be a very devastating outcome if gcc went through with the termination of the fitness club

Anonymous

2/27/2025 02:03 PM

Leave as is please. Great staff.

Anonymous

2/27/2025 02:42 PM

The primary reason for my membership with GRALC is the ability to have pool and gym access under a single membership. Should I no longer have this option, it is likely I would consider membership of a different (larger) gym and no longer retain a membership occasional pool use. I believe this is a common position of many of my fellow members. The likely outcome of this is a loss of revenue to both GRALC and the new gym operator. Moreover, it is incumbent upon Council to provide a compelling financial case for contracting out the gym, including the costs of the current review and implementation of any contract arrangements, both upfront and ongoing. How likely is it that a third-party operator would find the site commercially viable for their business? It is likely the lease would contain burdensome terms given the gym is located in the same vicinity as a public pool. Any operator is likely to look at this as a liability and would likely only agree to a lease that provides favourable (i.e. cheap) rental terms. Is this in the best interest of rate payers? Thank you.

Anonymous

2/27/2025 04:23 PM

Members will be very disgruntled if the council didn't run the fitness side.

Anonymous

2/27/2025 04:29 PM

The Staff and atmosphere is great; no need to change.

Share your thoughts on the outsourcing of the Gym at GRALC : Survey Report for 02 December 2024 to 07 April 2025

Anonymous

2/27/2025 05:43 PM

Been going to the gym for 3 years now and I go 6 days a week and do 9 gym classes and all gym instructors are lovely

Anonymous

2/27/2025 05:59 PM

Like the way it's being managed under GCC staff & services are good. A little bit of maintenance and infrastructure could help attract more clientele especially in the gym & studio floor

Anonymous

2/27/2025 07:08 PM

I love the way it is

Anonymous

2/27/2025 07:50 PM

Please keep Zumba classes

Anonymous

2/28/2025 05:58 AM

Some of the surplus in the facility budget needs to be used to upgrade equipment so our amazing instructors can keep going

Anonymous

2/28/2025 08:26 AM

As a pensioner I am very happy with things the way they are. Great value for money for me.

Anonymous

2/28/2025 08:30 AM

Leve the same thanks

Anonymous

2/28/2025 08:31 AM

Please don't change anything as I am concerned that the prices would dramatically increase and being a senior that would mean me having to stop my exercising

Anonymous

2/28/2025 08:33 AM

Keep as is.

Anonymous

2/28/2025 09:30 AM

Leave everything the same. We like our instructors very much.

Anonymous

2/28/2025 10:32 AM

The gym is a little cramped especially when we are doing body balance and pump classes they are so busy and things like the spin bikes take up so much wasted space it feels like sardines so it would be nice to see the gym expand

Anonymous

2/28/2025 11:26 AM

This is completely unfair to patrons and staff of GRALC losing their jobs.

Share your thoughts on the outsourcing of the Gym at GRALC : Survey Report for 02 December 2024 to 07 April 2025

Anonymous

2/28/2025 01:47 PM

Leave everything the same

Anonymous

2/28/2025 02:02 PM

It is an important community facility

Anonymous

2/28/2025 05:23 PM

It is a wonderful small gym with great staff. Don't wreck it!

Anonymous

2/28/2025 05:29 PM

I am strongly of the view that Council should retain control of the gym as a community service provided it is efficiently managed. Past experience in this and other locations shows private operators reduce services, increase fees and run facilities down leaving rate payers to pick up the tab for upgrades when the lease/licence agreement is terminated.

Anonymous

3/01/2025 09:07 AM

Please leave as is

Anonymous

3/01/2025 09:26 AM

I find it ironic that the council are worried about running a facility at a loss that has been around for 20 years... Given their current rate rise for the average person in Griffith and the cost of so called "fees" when building a multi/single dwelling in this town is beyond ridiculous, I would question what the council does with their surplus money and why they can't cover this "loss" for the sake of the community. Where does all this extra money go given I know for a fact building fees and rates have increased over the last two years. If you expect rate payers to keep up with inflation, lead by example and do the same, don't be gutless and take the easy way out. The gym is a well loved and much needed facility in this town and if you're so out of touch with this community and think the need for a community gym with such a good reputation of this is not in high demand you're clearly not a local and don't use your own council gym 😊 perhaps purchase a membership yourselves!

Anonymous

3/01/2025 09:27 AM

I enjoy it as it is, there is no need to change anything as your solutions will only create more loss for the gym

Anonymous

3/01/2025 12:40 PM

It was private when it opened and that model failed

Share your thoughts on the outsourcing of the Gym at GRALC : Survey Report for 02 December 2024 to 07 April 2025

Anonymous

3/01/2025 04:30 PM

Longer opening hours in the winter on the weekend would be great. Everyone is so friendly as soon as you walk in the door with the admin staff and then the gym instructors are all very nice. It's a very welcoming place to come and workout or swim.

Anonymous

3/02/2025 04:08 PM

This council gym is part of the community. The pool will be silly if it's only owned by council and not the gym. Maybe the council people should stop spending money on un needed vehicles for local workers who live in town and should start thinking about the people who utilise the gym. Council should provide funding to the fitness club as this facility has the highest involvement in the community. Council should be ashamed that they can not even run a gym because of all the money they spend else where and to leave the fitness club staff not knowing what is going to happen.

Anonymous

3/03/2025 08:31 AM

Explore the third party to see if it is viable. If council are no longer running the gym it would be good to see those resources fund out somewhere else and for you to show where. The town is becoming run down so if outsourcing the gym meant you could improve gardens maybe it is worth it. Also gym staff need to be much more visible and present on the gym floor. Too often you find them tucked in their corner scrolling.

Anonymous

3/03/2025 10:18 AM

Do not change anything. Other wise I will go else where.

Anonymous

3/03/2025 10:20 AM

No need to change anything, classes and instructors are great!

Anonymous

3/03/2025 10:21 AM

The community feel and care that the gym atmosphere is partly due to the staff and it would be destroyed by the very different values of privatisation.

Anonymous

3/03/2025 01:00 PM

Don't change anything, the staff is excellent.

Anonymous

3/03/2025 01:26 PM

Concerned if gym outsourced membership and use costs would increase. Great staff at gym. Super friendly and very comfortable to be there. Would like Council to continue running the gym.

Anonymous

3/03/2025 01:45 PM

Concerned cost to use gym would increase a lot

Share your thoughts on the outsourcing of the Gym at GRALC : Survey Report for 02 December 2024 to 07 April 2025

Anonymous

3/03/2025 01:45 PM

Unsure lunch time classes would continue no other gyms offer lunchtime classes

Anonymous

3/03/2025 02:56 PM

The Fitness Club is the only gym i trust as it's a very friendly environment and is always so clean compared to the other gyms of Griffith. There is always an instructor on the floor which makes it a much safer experience using the gym. Other gym's i have been to barely have an instructor on the floor when you need them... which i think is ridiculous!! All gyms should be fully staffed no matter what. I will be super disappointed and angry about losing the fitness club to another "outsource" please do not change a thing. This is a wonderful gym not only to myself but to the community.

Anonymous

3/03/2025 06:37 PM

The reason why i go to the gym is because of The Fitness Club and all the lovely encouraging staff. There is no other gym like this one around Griffith!

Anonymous

3/03/2025 07:37 PM

Keep the facility as is. It's a great resource for the community, promoting health and well being

Anonymous

3/03/2025 07:38 PM

This is a Community facility it should not be privatised!

Anonymous

3/03/2025 07:38 PM

Do not change the current set up

Anonymous

3/03/2025 09:13 PM

It should stay the way it is now.

Anonymous

3/04/2025 06:46 AM

The outsource model would inevitably mean an increase in fees. Unlikely the current set up would appeal to an external provider. Why does council not 'explore' options to improve the gym & ensure it remains viable

Anonymous

3/04/2025 08:42 AM

Pathetic!!!!

Anonymous

3/04/2025 10:28 AM

Leave it the way it is. We are all enjoying it .

Share your thoughts on the outsourcing of the Gym at GRALC : Survey Report for 02 December 2024 to 07 April 2025

Anonymous

3/04/2025 12:28 PM

Dont do nothing.

Anonymous

3/04/2025 05:45 PM

Although a smaller gym compared to others in Griffith this is a benefit that is overlooked as big gyms can be intimidating and a deterrent to many people. It is beneficial for the provision of a healthy future for our town that we cater for all people .this gym provides a very welcoming and friendly option.

Anonymous

3/04/2025 06:02 PM

I think the combination of Gym and pool is a winner. It's one of the main reasons I joined the fitness club. The trainers are great, and that makes a big difference for me.

Anonymous

3/04/2025 06:03 PM

This facility run by local council is excellent. Mostly because of the quality of trainers who are always on the floor with professional help anytime. Griffith needs to promote places like this to attract more people to come here. Having the pool and gym together is fantastic and nothing needs to change.

Anonymous

3/05/2025 07:58 AM

The gym staff are great, keep it as is try to save money in other areas

Anonymous

3/05/2025 12:22 PM

How on earth could council consider leasing this brilliant facility? If it makes a modest profit in a regional area it is doing well. It is a popular facility with excellent staff. Crazy to let such a service become a money making business for someone chasing profit. Crazy!

Anonymous

3/05/2025 12:58 PM

Prefer the simplicity of one operator.

Anonymous

3/05/2025 12:59 PM

Staffing needs to be addressed. Cross over of staffing etc

Anonymous

3/05/2025 01:00 PM

Need to start looking into a sauna facility and upgrade the spa take a leaf out of Kiama pool leisure system.

Anonymous

3/05/2025 01:02 PM

Please please don't do anything... i really do not want to lose my job and so don't my other work colleagues. This is my passion. No other gym in Griffith is like ours... please.

Share your thoughts on the outsourcing of the Gym at GRALC : Survey Report for 02 December 2024 to 07 April 2025

Anonymous

3/05/2025 01:04 PM

I think potentially modifying the gymnasium facilities to 24/7 access would be an excellent idea. The number of increased patrons recently have been noticeable and instead of offering a service that suits some, it would be great for the business to grow like the other competitors and become 24/7. I personally would definitely use the facility more if it were to become 24/7 because I can actually come in before 6am which would align with my work. I don't tend to come as often now as I would like to come after work around 4/5pm but it has become too busy, and I cannot enjoy my workouts anymore at that time.

Anonymous

3/05/2025 01:11 PM

I see the GRALC facility as being an ideal place to do all my exercise without needing to pay twice. It's for the community so leave as is

Anonymous

3/05/2025 01:20 PM

Need to add fitness passport

Anonymous

3/05/2025 01:28 PM

I have fitness passport and use both the gym and the pool for aqua and laps. I previously had 10 visit pass and if I had this again I would like them both to be included. I also like the more community welcoming atmosphere of this facility as opposed to other gyms.

Anonymous

3/05/2025 01:35 PM

I feel we need a council run facility to make fitness available to more people. Don't lease it out.

Anonymous

3/05/2025 01:40 PM

Make a wellness/ Pilates studio

Anonymous

3/05/2025 02:01 PM

Extended hours would be great, rather than going over to livefit when GRALC is closed, even if its until 9pm and earlier on Weekend mornings.

Anonymous

3/05/2025 02:11 PM

I do believe to break even or make a profit, the gym needs extensive money spent to make it competitive with other gyms around, especially the classes. Current pump class is at capacity each evening it is on. You have numbers but need to extend out to make more money.

Anonymous

3/05/2025 03:07 PM

Longer hours - week days and weekends

Share your thoughts on the outsourcing of the Gym at GRALC : Survey Report for 02 December 2024 to 07 April 2025

Anonymous 3/05/2025 03:25 PM	Stop Charging spectator fees to parents bring their kids to the pool for a swim.. This is a ridiculous charge especially when you expect parents to supervise their children when swimming!!
Anonymous 3/05/2025 04:35 PM	The council have to realise that this gym is well run with great classes, great staff and great people that use this facility. It will be a shame to see this place fail. We need it the exact same!
Anonymous 3/05/2025 04:38 PM	The council should be ashamed of how out dated there gym is. It is crap how much funding has gone into everything else but yet the gym hasn't had any Improvements in forever. If they would just step foot into the gym they'd realise how old and outdated all the equipment is. With improvements to the gym Business would boom and the council would make twice as much profit😂😂
Anonymous 3/05/2025 04:46 PM	There are 2 other gyms opening in Griffith. Which I think is ridiculous! The fitness club needs to be promoted way more often as there is no promotion what so ever. Why do council put effort in everything else but not the fitness club? Pathetic! The council people need to make their way to the gym to experience what goes on. They cannot just say they want to lease out the gym without a proper reason. Money cannot be the reason as the gym is at a breakeven point. This is complete rubbish!
Anonymous 3/05/2025 05:22 PM	The point of difference of this facility over all others in the area is that it offers both pool and gym facilities. Upgrade the facility to have a working spa, sauna and plunge pool.
Anonymous 3/05/2025 05:54 PM	Memberships will change which would then mean possibly either losing fitness pass port. Higher Membership fees or needing 2 separate Membership 1 for pool and 1 for gym. Just keep it the way it is
Anonymous 3/05/2025 06:04 PM	GCC employ too many staff for the complex especially the GYM section. It opens up at 10am on a sunday which is really frustrating when the complex needs needs to be open a lot earlier. Its a great complex being run by people out of their depth which is why your are surveying the public.
Anonymous 3/05/2025 06:06 PM	Currently the gym is accessible and inclusive, with a community feel. It would be disappointing if it was taken over by someone and this

Share your thoughts on the outsourcing of the Gym at GRALC : Survey Report for 02 December 2024 to 07 April 2025

was lost.

Anonymous

3/05/2025 06:15 PM

I believe Council should retain operation of the GRALC gym. As a former pool-only member, I would only consider re-joining if a combined pool and gym membership were available. Privatising the gym risks higher fees, reduced services, and a shift in its community-focused culture. It also sends a negative message to all Council staff. When review recommendations are deemed unaffordable, they are often rejected—why should staff well-being be treated differently? Employees are Council's most valuable asset, and we cannot afford to jeopardise morale or limit employment opportunities by outsourcing a service that benefits both staff and the wider community.

Anonymous

3/05/2025 06:26 PM

Gym works in conjunction with the program pool. The gym is used for rehab & NDIS participants. Privatisation will increase costs therefore I won't be using it.

Anonymous

3/05/2025 06:30 PM

Really? Get out of our lives & just leave it alone! How many private gyms in Griffith have gone broke because of their ridiculous high fees?

Anonymous

3/05/2025 07:42 PM

No

Anonymous

3/05/2025 08:00 PM

As a rate payer I am happy with the service provided by council and don't see the need to out source this at all. Keep our money in our community Not many gyms around with quality pool facilities

Anonymous

3/05/2025 08:00 PM

I think it would be a huge mistake if Council Outsourced the gymnasium. We currently have a multipurpose facility. The community deserve to keep this. There is not much else on offer in town

Anonymous

3/05/2025 08:30 PM

Perhaps change the open time to 5am instead of 24 hours. This would give people who start work at 7am an opportunity to exercise before work.

Anonymous

3/05/2025 08:35 PM

I come to the gym just because it includes the pool. I will not come back if things change

Share your thoughts on the outsourcing of the Gym at GRALC : Survey Report for 02 December 2024 to 07 April 2025

Anonymous 3/05/2025 08:39 PM	I will be very angry and disappointed if the gym gets outsourced. Definitely wont be coming back to use the pool if things change. Cannot believe council is thinking about this change.
Anonymous 3/05/2025 09:04 PM	Bring back thump boxing classes
Anonymous 3/05/2025 09:08 PM	Would use more if managed privately
Anonymous 3/05/2025 09:35 PM	Extended creche hours and Saturday creche hours would be utilised by our family
Anonymous 3/05/2025 10:04 PM	How are the water aerobics classes then costed as they currently fall under the gym classes but in the pool???
Anonymous 3/05/2025 10:10 PM	Not every decision regarding council facilities should be based on a financial report. The gym provides our community a place where people go to improve their lifestyle in some manner. I see it as a safe place that is inspiring , creates new friendship , and builds confidence and it so beneficial for mental health . Maybe look at how the overall health of our community is something our council and rate payers invest in . Prevention is better than cure , and our town is limited on available health support Outsourcing would be completely a financial transaction , and as a constant user I would be extremely upset if changes occurred based on seasonal usage of classes resulted in cancellation of the classes . I also think of the staff of the centre and how outsourcing could affect their future ongoing employment. Our centre should be embraced. Thank you
Anonymous 3/05/2025 10:42 PM	I would use the gym a lot more if there were more classes available when the creche was open, or if there were mums and bubs classes as several other gyms have started offering.
Anonymous 3/06/2025 03:54 AM	Please leave the gym under the current structure.
Anonymous 3/06/2025 08:42 AM	If this gets split, it could be having to pay two lots of memberships plus possibly losing another gym that might not accept Fitness passport so in fact the gym will lose fitness passport members. They'll end up going to Underground or Livefit where fitness passport is still accepted.

Share your thoughts on the outsourcing of the Gym at GRALC : Survey Report for 02 December 2024 to 07 April 2025

Anonymous
3/06/2025 08:50 AM

So nice that the gym is a part of the swimming pool - great to have memberships that encompass both pool and gym

Anonymous
3/06/2025 10:32 AM

I feel like council would be better off putting all those funds towards upgrading the gym instead of getting someone else in to run it

Anonymous
3/06/2025 10:47 AM

no

Anonymous
3/06/2025 10:48 AM

no

Anonymous
3/06/2025 11:14 AM

Staff are always helping, the gym is always clean, I always feel welcome attending the facility

Anonymous
3/06/2025 11:44 AM

Council need to retain ownership of the gym. There are many people who use this gym because they don't like the culture of most other gyms and they feel comfortable and relaxed attending this one. If you separate memberships from the gym with the pool it will make it too expensive for users to utilize both. This is the ONE advantage which this facility has over all other gyms! I am looking at joining the Fitness Passport in the near future and will not bother if the gym and pool are separated. I can't afford two separate memberships. Please also remember that there are a lot of people doing it tough financially and to outsource the gym will make it too expensive, which in turn affects people's health and wellbeing. After all, isn't this what it's supposed to be about?

Anonymous
3/06/2025 11:56 AM

I love the gym staff so to remove or change this would be a massive mistake from council!! no other gym in town provides these kind of services so please keep it as it is and maybe just make some upgrades to the equipment cause some machines don't even have weights on them it's just numbers and some machines are a little rusty which is sad to see for such a good center

Anonymous
3/06/2025 12:07 PM

Public gyms and pools like GRALC are an incredibly important service because they represent the community right to access health & wellbeing services, as well as education (swimming) and recreation facilities. Privatising the gym goes against our moral obligations to the community to provide accessible public services.

Share your thoughts on the outsourcing of the Gym at GRALC : Survey Report for 02 December 2024 to 07 April 2025

Outsourcing the gym to a private operator is a poor attempt to make short-term profit, at the loss of our community's respect and council's reputation, which is already struggling. But it also will not benefit council or the community in the long run because privatisation almost always disadvantages the community, particularly when there will no longer be a publicly owned gym. Even with the income generated from a lease arrangement, the benefit to council is minimal, because we would also be handing over all future income generated from the gym and the gym's refurbishment to the private operator. Local government is not a business, it is not supposed to make a profit for the sake of it. While surplus is beneficial, it shouldn't be prioritised at the expense of public community services. GRALC is expensive to run, but the outsourcing is unnecessary if we put work into improving the system we currently provide for actual long-term sustainability, which will then provide greater benefit to council and actually embody our community strategy. It is worth exploring ideas to boost revenue and improve the gym's function as a long-term sustainable council service and asset. Things like extending operating hours, creating fobs to extend or allow 24-hour access, improving marketing, allowing booking or hire, allowing external parties to conduct classes using the gym facility etc, renovation or expansion of facilities, improving creche etc.

Anonymous

3/06/2025 12:08 PM

The membership for all of the facility makes it the difference to any other in Griffith. Please don't change the pool/gym membership set up or I will look at going to a gym closer to me as it will be just the same.

Anonymous

3/06/2025 01:06 PM

Well run facility

Anonymous

3/06/2025 01:25 PM

The staff are amazing and very approachable, different scene to other gyms, the dual pool / gym membership is great

Anonymous

3/06/2025 01:25 PM

Hard to answer question 5, as it would very much depend on things such as opening hours, cost, Fitness Passport availability, classes being offered. Do not support the idea of separating gym and pool memberships - this is what makes GRALC to other gyms/fitness centres in Griffith, it's the point of difference. Not knowing the reasons behind GRALC currently operating on a break-even/modest surplus - operating costs high? insurance? will more members (income) help? - but GRALC could be better promoted as the wonderful facility that is it in order to assist with increasing membership.

Anonymous

A ridiculous proposition

Share your thoughts on the outsourcing of the Gym at GRALC : Survey Report for 02 December 2024 to 07 April 2025

3/06/2025 04:29 PM

Anonymous

3/06/2025 05:36 PM

Have more opening hours of the pool ... especially weekends Private access to the pool using fob key to members - then can you used privately if there are no staff etc

Anonymous

3/06/2025 07:32 PM

Please, no changes. It is a source of great pleasure and staff are amazing - keep everything the same, no changes please

Anonymous

3/06/2025 07:56 PM

Can the gym get some box jump boxes please.

Anonymous

3/07/2025 07:50 AM

Leave everything the same. The fitness club provides an outstanding service for the elderly that other gyms don't provide.

Anonymous

3/07/2025 07:50 AM

We love our gym staff

Anonymous

3/07/2025 07:52 AM

The staff are very lovely and so are the people of the gym. No other gym is like the fitness club

Anonymous

3/07/2025 08:24 AM

This facility is working wonderfully for us seniors so why would we want it to be changed.

Anonymous

3/07/2025 08:27 AM

Why do we need another 24 hour gym when we have 3 soon to be 4 24 hour gyms? Stupid Leave everything how it is!!

Anonymous

3/07/2025 09:26 AM

The facility works perfectly now so I would not like it to change

Anonymous

3/07/2025 09:29 AM

This is a community facility it is not supposed to make council a lot of money, it is supposed to provide access to health, fitness and social activities for the community including those who can't afford expensive private gyms.

Anonymous

3/07/2025 09:32 AM

I am on fitness passport. This is the gym that offers the biggest range of classes to the public including classes for the elderly. If gym went private all these classes would be lost. This is the only place you can do Les Mills. Stupidest idea ever to make it private

Share your thoughts on the outsourcing of the Gym at GRALC : Survey Report for 02 December 2024 to 07 April 2025

Anonymous

3/07/2025 09:35 AM

I come to the gym because it convenient to use the gym

Anonymous

3/07/2025 10:13 AM

I am a very big "gym junkie" and use the fitness club + pool on a daily basis. All staff across the facility are very well mannered especially in the gym. To the lady i see often in the afternoon when i train, she is always so welcoming and always has the biggest smile on her face. It is very hard these days to find people who are actually happy to be at work. It will be such a shame to see this gym come to a change.... Please keep everything the same for the sake of staff and gym members like myself.

Anonymous

3/07/2025 11:13 AM

Visitors from the coast commented, what an amazing set we had here in Griffith.

Anonymous

3/07/2025 12:58 PM

I think outsourcing it would mean Council relinquishing quality control. Besides WHS, Council would have little say in how operations are conducted, and it may or may not be to a high standard. Also, by definition, a commercial operator wants to make a profit, and would not necessarily be inclined to put all profits back into the infrastructure or the business. So, they may let things slide for the sake of profit, and Council has relinquished their right to alter operations. I think if it is cost neutral at present, then leave it with Council, because a commercial operator will be looking for much more than a cost neutral business. There are enough gyms in town that are operated by commercial operators, do we really need another one? I think the Fitness Club more than holds its own amongst its competitors and would hate to see it go commercial.

Anonymous

3/07/2025 02:03 PM

Keep the way it is. It is a fantastic community resource. Love the variety of classes, and the timetable, especially the 'lunchtime' classes. Another positive is that it is reasonably priced, especially considering that you get the use of the entire facility.

Anonymous

3/07/2025 03:18 PM

Great staff at the fitness club

Anonymous

3/07/2025 07:17 PM

Leave everything alone

Anonymous

I love that this gym welcomes older participants at an affordable cost.

Share your thoughts on the outsourcing of the Gym at GRALC : Survey Report for 02 December 2024 to 07 April 2025

3/08/2025 08:59 AM

Anonymous

3/08/2025 11:10 AM

I think it would be to expensive if a private company takes over managing the centre.

Anonymous

3/08/2025 11:12 AM

No I don't use the pool and the private gym would be more expensive

Anonymous

3/08/2025 04:47 PM

I'm Fitness Passport so a member of sorts. Current instructors are excellent.

Anonymous

3/09/2025 10:12 AM

People who choose "out source" are so wrong. This should never be an option! Watch council get hated even more if this facility changes.

Anonymous

3/09/2025 11:13 AM

The aquatic centre provides a wonderful family community centre offering a wide range of activities. Mental and physical health of a community is vital. I see young groups of teenage boys and girls coming for a swim and hanging out together. I would hate to think where they might turn to if the facility changed hands. No doubt private would increase prices in order to make a profit! The library and art gallery and other council run organisations are there for the community. Keep the pool as it is!

Anonymous

3/09/2025 11:14 AM

Keeping the gym operating under the council has several benefits, including: Community Accessibility & Affordability A council-operated gym ensures affordable pricing, making health and fitness accessible to a wider range of residents, including low-income families, seniors, and students. Membership fees can be kept lower compared to privately owned gyms, preventing exclusion due to high costs. Public Health & Well-being A publicly run gym promotes community well-being by encouraging physical activity and reducing health risks such as obesity, heart disease, and mental health issues. It can be integrated with other council health initiatives, such as wellness programs, rehabilitation services, and fitness classes for all age groups. Non-Profit Focus & Community Benefits Unlike private gyms that prioritize profit, a council-run facility can reinvest revenue into equipment upgrades, maintenance, and additional programs. Council-run gyms can cater to specific community needs, such as fitness programs for seniors, people with disabilities, and local sporting groups.

Anonymous

3/09/2025 11:16 AM

I don't understand why you are thinking along these lines? Isn't the pool and gym providing a service to the community and secured by

Share your thoughts on the outsourcing of the Gym at GRALC : Survey Report for 02 December 2024 to 07 April 2025

the rates being paid for these services. Have you forgotten about the service that Council is bound to provide for the community?? Why are we paying rates if the council outsource essential services to the private sector ?? I totally do not understand the logic behind this decision.

Anonymous
3/09/2025 11:18 AM

If the memberships are fair in cost. Can't really make an accurate comment when there is no price table ?

Anonymous
3/09/2025 12:28 PM

Leave it the way it is.

Anonymous
3/09/2025 03:05 PM

The pool and gym are facilities the town needs to have with affordable access for all. Just like other council facilities like the library, they do need to be a profit generating facility

Anonymous
3/09/2025 04:20 PM

Wow cant believe council even thought about this idea. A big NO from me. This is a council facility and it only makes sense that this council facility has a fully operated gym and pool. What nonsense to privatise the gym!!!

Anonymous
3/10/2025 05:54 AM

You have a good facility and a great team who would probably lose their jobs. Just keep it as it is and maintain it

Anonymous
3/10/2025 09:12 AM

Who's idea is this? Ridiculous!! Leave everything alone. Nothing should be privatised. I will not be paying 2 seperate memberships.

Anonymous
3/10/2025 09:21 AM

Promote new classes

Anonymous
3/10/2025 11:10 AM

As a council operated facility, there is the expectation that it should benefit the community as a whole. There are enough privately owned gyms in Griffith - however, perhaps council could adopt a different approach to the management of the facility and bring the memberships into line similar to the privately owned businesses ... ? The pool is added extra, it should be used as a boost to the memberships not a deterrent ..we have an amazing facility - it wouldn't make sense for someone else to benefit from this .. Family incentives introduced to encourage the use of the pool and the lawned areas ... The pool needs to be maintained so it keeps its value - the new change rooms are already showing signs of poor

Share your thoughts on the outsourcing of the Gym at GRALC : Survey Report for 02 December 2024 to 07 April 2025

maintenance - professional cleaners should be incorporated into the maintenance program so that the facility gets a thorough clean each week ... The introduction of electronic touch pads to the pool would benefit the facility, then being able to host a number of carnivals throughout the swimming year program ..

Anonymous

3/10/2025 12:38 PM

Keep up the good work!

Anonymous

3/11/2025 08:16 AM

Lovely staff, all very polite & helpful

Anonymous

3/11/2025 10:24 AM

I would probably not use the gym as the price would rise and therefore I would not be able to afford it. This is not good for seniors as we need to exercise to stay fit and healthy to not be a burden on the health system

Anonymous

3/11/2025 10:27 AM

I am very concerned that if the gym is privatised gentle classes for the elderly will disappear and or increase in price. As we age we need appropriate classes to cater for this elderly group who are keen to maintain and improve mobility and fitness. There is nowhere else in town that caters for our age group.

Anonymous

3/11/2025 07:51 PM

Deep water aqua is great but we need better equipment and the cover on the pool when it is cold

Anonymous

3/11/2025 07:52 PM

The pool equipment needs to be replenished. Lots of people go to these classes and we need the equipment.

Anonymous

3/11/2025 07:52 PM

Need more pool equipment lots of people use these classes and there is not enough equipment

Anonymous

3/12/2025 05:51 AM

Leave it as is

Anonymous

3/12/2025 06:52 AM

The centre provides a one stop shop so to speak. I do aqua classes as well as gym floor and classes. If this was to be separate I would cancel my membership

Anonymous

I would continue to use the pool but if the gym was outsourced I

Share your thoughts on the outsourcing of the Gym at GRALC : Survey Report for 02 December 2024 to 07 April 2025

3/12/2025 12:58 PM

probably would not use it (gym). I currently pay for both gym and pool weekly from my pay and I'm concerned about the increase in cost should the gym be outsourced. I currently use the facilities about twice a week. One for the gym and one for the pool.

Anonymous

3/12/2025 05:38 PM

More 6:15 aqua classes would be great

Anonymous

3/12/2025 06:36 PM

Dont raise the cost

Anonymous

3/13/2025 01:31 PM

As much as I do use the gym a bit it doesn't make a lot of sense to have a council run gym when there are so many private operators in Griffith. I am fitness passport so I use a couple of gyms, the pool is the main attraction for me.

Anonymous

3/14/2025 09:27 AM

This is a great council resource where it would be a major loss to the community to outsource. I do aqua classes 3 times a week, gym classes and gym floor and also utalise the crèche. Come on council look at this as an asset to the community

Anonymous

3/14/2025 11:22 AM

just look at putting in 24 hour access please

Anonymous

3/14/2025 12:22 PM

I think the council do a good job.

Anonymous

3/14/2025 07:08 PM

I think it is good how it is. But i think we need more machines at our gym, if it could possibly be expanded somehow

Anonymous

3/16/2025 06:25 AM

It's a great facility as it is, it's got a friendly atmosphere and being able to use the pool are what is why I got a membership.

Anonymous

3/17/2025 09:05 AM

Don't outsource this facility. Council should take some responsibility for providing community gym and pool services like every other council around. If you outsource this facility I won't use it at all. I use this gym based on the fact my funds are supporting community and that it's a community gym. Only thing that needs to be Improved is the air conditioning in the gym. Firm no to outsourcing. There is enough bs in this town without this now changing hands as well. Firmly against that idea. Reception could also be more friendly as

Share your thoughts on the outsourcing of the Gym at GRALC : Survey Report for 02 December 2024 to 07 April 2025

well.

Anonymous

3/17/2025 09:10 AM

Dumb idea This is about community services not money

Anonymous

3/17/2025 09:14 AM

Just feels like council is trying to get out of community responsibility again Hard no

Anonymous

3/17/2025 09:21 AM

Resounding no. What a way to kill community morale. Does council want to do anything for its community apart from spending money on alcohol and tourism?

Anonymous

3/17/2025 09:32 AM

??? Why would you do this?

Anonymous

3/17/2025 09:33 AM

This is a gym for community - we have enough private gyms in Griffith. This is the only gym where I feel supported and safe and not judged, I hope you don't take that away from me :(

Anonymous

3/17/2025 12:01 PM

Reduced fee for Council employees would motivate Council employees to use the facility more often.

Anonymous

3/18/2025 09:53 AM

Dumb idea

Anonymous

3/18/2025 10:09 AM

If this is a facility making council money, why outsource it?

Anonymous

3/19/2025 05:50 AM

Keep current facilities the way they arr

Anonymous

3/19/2025 09:19 AM

Should consider redeveloping into something the community needs. Griffith is flush with Gyms with another about to open, the market is saturated. If outsourcing, then the rent would need to be at market value. The facility is ageing and the costs associated with upkeep must be taken into consideration.

Anonymous

3/19/2025 11:51 AM

The current facility is good for me as a senior. It is not only a place to exercise, but it is also a social place for remaining connected. I don't use or rarely use the pool because of incontinence from prostate

Share your thoughts on the outsourcing of the Gym at GRALC : Survey Report for 02 December 2024 to 07 April 2025

cancer. Otherwise I would. Current pay as a casual and do the seniors classes when I can. If privatised I could not afford to go. This would reduce my level of independence and resilience placing a greater burden on the hospital and health system. Keep the facility in public hands if for no other reason than to assist seniors and people with disabilities maintain a level of health and independence. Finally, private gyms and franchises fail too often. What will happen then? Keep our public gym and pool facility public.

Anonymous

3/21/2025 07:33 AM

Good facilities, great staff

Anonymous

3/21/2025 08:23 AM

Can't make sense of this idea

Anonymous

3/21/2025 08:26 AM

Me and my friends come to this gym because it's cheap and we can do lots of classes for a good price. It's community focussed and the instructors know us by name and show interest in our lives. I don't want that to change.

Anonymous

3/21/2025 08:28 AM

Us seniors like the gym facility as it is, not intimidating to go to and we can do our own thing and not have to worry about parking. We are used to the senior classes on offer. The price is reasonable, council should take responsibility over its facilities and not hire them out for no reason. It would be a massive change for our community and council has not shared any reasons as to why this change would make sense. A lot of us are confused why you would try something like this.

Anonymous

3/21/2025 08:31 AM

I take my caseload of people with disabilities to this gym because it is quiet when we go, the staff are supportive and it's easy and cheap access for us. There is no discrimination towards them, it's community focussed and I don't think that should change.

Anonymous

3/21/2025 09:38 AM

If pool was to privatise I'd be concerned the prices would increase and I could not afford it. Council has already tried privatising and it did not work. I and others here love the helpful caring staff and the atmosphere is comfortable. Don't want staff to lose their jobs. Very professional herr

Anonymous

3/22/2025 09:04 AM

There are just some things that's should remain in public hands and this is one of them.

Share your thoughts on the outsourcing of the Gym at GRALC : Survey Report for 02 December 2024 to 07 April 2025

Anonymous

3/22/2025 09:57 AM

I am surprised it breaks even. If so leave it alone.

Anonymous

3/23/2025 10:40 AM

Ridiculous idea the gym is too small to be outsourced & council will have to spend lots of \$ to upgrade prior to renting the gym out

Anonymous

3/24/2025 10:21 AM

Leave it as it is!!

Anonymous

3/25/2025 10:01 AM

Would like Council to explore, though this may not mean 'confirm'. If this means cheaper gym membership, I think it's a great outcome for community. Would also like the option of a joint gym/ pool membership (eg 20% discount if both are up taken) to encourage uptake. Would like to see Crèche being able to serve both gym and pool members.

Anonymous

3/25/2025 10:28 AM

I am very happy with the current system. Great teachers, great classes.

Anonymous

3/25/2025 10:30 AM

Great weights and core class and gym

Anonymous

3/25/2025 06:05 PM

Community /rate payers should have a facility owned by the community to access. Just like the library which doesn't make a profit . This facility help maintain health - physical and mental and should be available to everyone

Anonymous

3/27/2025 10:04 AM

Yes. This facility adds substantially to the quality of life in this desert climate . The staff are excellent, helpful and diligent. We don't have beaches, museums or other social infrastructure so this is a vital part of our community's fabric. Also the gym classes are best in town from a timetabling perspective for working mums who can shoot out at lunch. Very very grateful user.

Anonymous

3/27/2025 04:04 PM

Is there a possibility for gym expansion in the near future? Everything is great otherwise.

Anonymous

3/31/2025 04:15 PM

Community health needs to be considered in this decision. Private gym membership costs would probably exclude many.

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Anonymous
4/04/2025 06:03 AM

Would still use pool as have children but would not use it as much
and I probably would not be able to afford separate gym membership.

Optional question (209 response(s), 93 skipped)
Question type: Essay Question



Griffith Regional Aquatic and Leisure Centre
Service Review – Draft Report
Griffith City Council
August 2024

**Document status**

Job #	Version	Written	Reviewed	Approved	Report Date
7774	1 Draft	S. Bunting	C.Middleton	J. McKenzie	June 2024
	2 Updated draft	S. Bunting	C.Middleton	J.McKenzie	August 2024

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Executive Summary

Griffith City Council ("Council") owns and operates the Griffith Regional Aquatic and Leisure Centre ("GRALC"). The GRALC is a vital recreational hub for the community, providing a range of aquatic and fitness services. To ensure the continued success and optimal performance of GRALC, Council engaged Morrison Low Consultants ("Morrison Low") in March 2024 to undertake a comprehensive service review, with a specific focus on efficiency improvements.

This review was carried out from April to June 2024, and informed by engagement with a range of internal stakeholders as well as an objective review of the GRALC's service delivery arrangements and performance.

Service delivery and performance challenges

Key challenges affecting service delivery and performance include:

- Costs are escalating for the GRALC operation, particularly staff and utilities.
- The age and condition of the original GRALC asset and facilities needs to be addressed.
- Extensive range of services currently provided and resourcing challenges associated with service delivery.
-
- High use of casual employment, which is presenting a suite of efficiency, effectiveness and cultural challenges and risk to the organisation, including:
 - Significant cost implications, given the casual loading paid to casual employees as required under the *Local Government (State) Award 2023*.
 - Administrative inefficiencies given the time required to prepare individual rosters for each of the GRALC's services (Swim School and Learn to Swim, Pool, Gym and Administration/Kiosk) and liaise with casual employees to confirm shift availability and revise rosters to reflect changes in availability.
 - Council's Human Resources team investing considerable time, effort and energy into coordinating a high number of recruitments for the GRALC, which represent approximately 31 per cent of all annual recruitments undertaken by Council with the cost of each recruitment exceeding \$2,000.
 - Lack of job security for casual employees, who are required to seek employment elsewhere in order to obtain certainty and security of ongoing, permanent employment, which perpetuates the cycle outlined above.

Improving service delivery and performance

The recommendations below are discussed in detail in the body of this report.

We recommend that Council:

1. Reconsider the service offering and whether Council is best placed to be the provider/operator of services currently provided at the GRALC, in particular:
 - a. Investigate leasing the Gym to a private contractor. This should explore building improvements to enable 24-hour access, and or increase fees to be more commercially aligned.
 - b. Investigate closure of the Kiosk and Crèche services while maintaining the sale of snacks



from the main entry counter.

2. Prepare an annual Business Plan to drive the GRALC performance. Include a percentage cost recovery target to encourage business-like decision-making.
3. Establish and endorse expected service levels and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the GRALC and ensure that KPIs are monitored and reported on a quarterly basis.
4. Prepare a Marketing Plan to promote the GRALC more strategically.
5. Continue to prepare a business case(s) for alternative supplementary heating sources.
6. Utilise collaborative buying contracts for gas, electricity and other consumables.
7. Revisit the role of the Co-ordinator and make this position an assistant manager role with hours overlapping with the manager and fulfilling the duty manager role. Merge the Coordinator with the Senior Administrator role supported by an additional customer service officer.
8. Revisit the practice of Sunday staff training to minimise overtime.
9. Prepare a detailed 10-year asset renewal plan for the GRALC.
10. Establish an internal restriction (reserve) to fund future capital renewal and improvement.
11. Revisit the GRALC Masterplan, to consider these and other long-term building requirements to determine a strategy for the indoor facilities.
12. Consolidate all forms of communication with GRALC staff into one communication medium. Review communication processes and protocols to ensure all employees are being appropriately engaged and included in workplace communications.
13. All rostering be co-ordinated and managed by one person either the Manager or GRALC Co-ordinator.
14. Ensure that operational management decision-making minimises additional cost while supporting staffing needs where possible.
15. Establish base staffing levels (winter hours) as permanent part-time roles, supported by a smaller group of casuals for leave coverage and extended summer hours.
16. Review and minimise the number of position descriptions for GRALC positions with positions being multi-tasked across the administration, aquatics and fitness disciplines.
17. Review recruitment processes and protocols to ensure all recruitments undertaken at the GRALC are being conducted in accordance with relevant provisions of the *Local Government Act 1993*, *Local Government (State) Award* and Council's Code of Conduct.
- 18.
19. Review the model of engagement of casual employees engaged at the GRALC, including the management of all casual employees, to ensure industrial risks are being proactively managed and mitigated.
20. Ensure all employees engaged at the GRALC are being inducted and regularly trained to perform the roles for which they have been employed, irrespective of the status of their employment (e.g. full-time/part-time/casual, permanent/temporary).



Service review findings

Table 1 Service review findings and commentary

Guiding question	Finding and commentary
Should this service be delivered to the community?	<p>Council's Community Strategic Plan identifies the outcomes of this service as important services and outcomes for the Griffith City community. Residents are most satisfied with the pool and hall components of the GRALC and less satisfied with the gym.</p> <p>Over the long-term, Council should consider which elements of the GRALC need to be delivered to the community.</p> <p>There is arguably a strong need for aquatic services (e.g. pools) to be provided to the community, noting that the GRALC is the only public swimming facility in Griffith City.</p> <p>However, other services currently provided by the GRALC – including childcare, gym and fitness services – should be reviewed, noting that there are other commercial providers of these services now operating in the City and Council is competing against those other operators.</p>
If so, how should it be delivered?	<p>Council is not required to be a direct provider of the GRALC facilities. Council can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Provide and manage all services (current model). (b) Outsource the provision of some services. (c) Outsource the provision of all services. <p>Currently, Council provides and manages all services, which requires a high number of casual employees to be engaged at the GRALC. As discussed in this report, this model presents some risks to Council.</p> <p>We note that Council has previously considered alternative service delivery options and there is little appetite for revisiting outsourcing. We would suggest that Council investigate the costs of enabling an external operator to operate the dry facilities (gym, gym programs and crèche).</p>
Is this service delivering on community needs and Council's goals?	<p>Council's current Delivery Program and Operational Plan do not include clear performance targets and measures for the GRALC and its various services, programmes and activities. As such, it is challenging to determine whether the service is delivering on community needs and Council's goals.</p> <p>Council is encouraged to establish clear performance targets and measures for the GRALC in its next Delivery Program.</p>
Is the service being delivered using the most appropriate service delivery mechanisms?	<p>Council has not recently explored other service delivery mechanisms, so it is challenging to assess whether the current model is the most appropriate.</p> <p>However, the GRALC is considered an important strategic asset providing employment and key recreational opportunities and for this reason Council prefers to retain an in-house delivery model to control costs and fees and charges.</p>
Is the service being delivered as efficiently and effectively as possible?	<p>On the information available, the service is not being delivered as efficiently as possible. Currently, the GRALC engages a large number of casual employees to deliver various services, programmes and activities provided by the centre.</p> <p>Council is in a constant state of recruitment for the casual pool. This recruitment is both time consuming and costly. The multitude of roles within the GRALC's structure makes rostering and service delivery complex and inefficient.</p>
Is the service resourced appropriately?	<p>Under the current operating model, the service is adequately resourced. Additional resources are not recommended.</p>



Guiding question	Finding and commentary
Is the service meeting current service standards and levels?	<p>Some service levels have been established via Council's Delivery Program and Operational Plan which are general in nature and difficult to measure.</p> <p>We would recommend Council establish clear service standards and levels in its next Delivery Program.</p>
What are the current and future issues affecting the service, and what should be done about them?	<p>Key issues impacting current service provision include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operating model relies on a highly casualised workforce, which experiences regular turnover. Retaining casual employees is challenging as it is difficult to provide some with regular or sufficient hours. • Recruiting sufficient staff. • Multiple roles that are either unfilled or currently occupied by existing staff via secondment. • Casual staff being employed to fill multiple positions within the GRALC, providing them with the opportunity to pick and choose shifts to suit the best remunerated, or most convenient, shift. • . <p>Key issues impacting future service provision include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ageing asset in poor condition – improved asset management planning and implementation coupled with renewal or replacement strategy. • Service provision optimisation – investigate service provision opportunity, through contractors, licencing and discontinuing underutilised services. • Cost of heating pools is increasing and requires more efficient heating sources. Careful consideration of the whole of life costs is required. <p>To address these issues Council should consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating permanent part time roles to reduce the reliance on casuals. • Rationalise some under performing cost centres by either closing the activity or outsourcing. • Develop a detailed long-term asset management plan with whole of life costs for the GRALC assets including new capital projects. • Create an internal restriction (reserve) to future capital renewal and improvements.



1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Local councils are responsible for delivering a wide range of services to their communities and exercising an extensive suite of service, regulatory, revenue, administrative, enforcement and ancillary functions under the Local Government Act 1993 ("the Local Government Act") and other legislation.

Under the Integrated Planning and Reporting ("IP&R") framework provisions of the Local Government Act, all local councils are required to plan holistically for the future and must develop a suite of inter-related strategies to guide their long-term planning and decision-making in relation to service delivery and resources. All plans, policies, programs, and activities developed and undertaken by local councils must directly relate to their respective IP&R frameworks.

The IP&R framework is designed to support local councils in establishing service levels, monitoring service performance, improving service delivery and encouraging continuous improvement across their organisations and operations.

The Integrated Planning and Reporting Guidelines for Local Government in NSW ("the Guidelines") published by the NSW Office of Local Government ("the OLG") and prescribed under the Local Government Act provide that local councils must, via their Delivery Program, "identify areas of service that the council will review during its term, and how the council will engage with the community and other stakeholders to determine service level expectations and appropriate measures".

In turn, local councils must specify which service delivery reviews they will undertake each year via their annual Operational Plan, and report on the results of such reviews in their Annual Report. Importantly, councils must disclose in their Annual Report any changes they have made to services in response to the findings of service delivery reviews undertaken in the previous year.

The service review process asks local councils to consider the following questions when reviewing services:

1. Should this service be delivered to the community?
2. If so, how should it be delivered?
3. Is this service delivering on community needs and Council's goals?
4. Is the service being delivered using the most appropriate service delivery mechanisms?
5. Is the service being delivered as efficiently and effectively as possible?
6. Is the service resourced appropriately?
7. Is the service meeting current service standards and levels?
8. What are the current and future issues affecting the service, and what should be done about them?

A service delivery review is a vital process for local councils and will ensure that their service functions are:

- **Appropriate** – that is, services meet current community needs and wants, and can be adapted to meet future needs and wants.
- **Effective** – that is, councils deliver targeted, better-quality services in new ways.
- **Efficient** – that is, councils improve resource use (people, materials, equipment, infrastructure) and re-direct savings to finance new or improved services.
- **Affordable** – that is, the community is able to afford the current and any proposed future service levels.



1.2 Context

The Griffith City Council

The Griffith local government area is located in the Riverina region, situated in the southwestern part of New South Wales (NSW), approximately 550 kilometres west of Sydney. Griffith's economy is largely driven by agriculture, particularly the production of grapes, citrus fruits, rice, and various other crops. Griffith has a diverse and multicultural community, with a strong influence from Italian and Indian cultures. The city offers a range of recreational facilities, including parks, sports fields, and community centres, contributing to the well-being of its residents. The population of the Griffith City Council area is around 27,000 people.

As with most other smaller communities the local population is both growing and ageing. Over the 20-year period from 2021 to 2041, the NSW Department of Planning projects that the Griffith local government area population will grow at an annual rate of 0.78 per cent, slightly less than the NSW average of 0.95 per cent, to comprise close to 31,600 residents by 2041. While the population is ageing the Griffith has a younger population than other regional NSW communities.

The Griffith Regional Aquatic and Leisure Centre

The GRALC is Council's flagship multipurpose swimming, fitness and sports facility and is open 360 days of the year.

The GRALC facility comprises of:

- Aquatic Centre with year-round swimming, with three indoor heated pools (25-metre 10-lane pool, program pool and a toddler's pool), a 50-metre 10-lane heated outdoor pool (open October-March), along with a heated 10-seater spa.
- Fitness Club comprising of a fully equipped, staffed gym offering a variety of fitness classes, including water aerobics, to suit all fitness levels.
- Splash! Swim School – an Austswim certified Swim School providing swimming classes from six months old right through to adults. Splash! Swim School operates six days per week and coincides with the school terms, offering squad training, along with private tuition (including those with special needs).
- 'Lil Petals Crèche offers short-term baby-sitting while parents and carers make full use of the facility.
- Aqua Café – in-house Kiosk offering various hot foods, snacks and drinks.

The GRALC facility was officially opened in 2000 and underwent an upgrade to install a 50-metre Olympic outdoor pool in February 2021. The outdoor pool operates throughout the warmer months from October to March. Aside from community use, the facility hosts a year-round swim school program which caters for approximately 1,100 students per term, swimming carnivals including country regionals, open days and events and hydrotherapy programs.



1.3 Project objective and scope

The Project involved reviewing the performance of Griffith City Council in respect to the GRALC. Given the high costs to operate a facility of this nature, the core focus of this service review was to assess the current status and financial performance of GRALC against industry benchmarks, and to provide an objective decision-making framework in relation to the provision of aquatic and leisure facilities in the Griffith local government area.

The primary objectives of the review were as follows:

- (a) Evaluate the financial performance and operational efficiency of GRALC operations.
- (b) Identify areas of inefficiency within the service delivery, management, and administrative functions.
- (c) Propose recommendations for improvements that can enhance the financial performance and overall efficiency of GRALC operations.

The scope of works required to undertake the following tasks:

- (a) Conduct an in-depth financial analysis of GRALC's major operational costs with a particular focus on labour, energy and materials.
- (b) Benchmark GRALC's Fees and Charges and revenue streams against similar aquatic facilities.
- (c) Review the staffing structure to identify opportunities for optimisation and efficiency gains.
- (d) Assess the current energy costs and propose solutions for better efficiency and cost savings.
- (e) Provide a comprehensive report outlining key findings, recommendations, and a roadmap for implementation.

1.4 Acknowledgements

We wish to thank Council and its staff for all the assistance, co-operation and courtesy extended to us over the course of our review, particularly during our site visit to the Griffith City Council from Wednesday, 22 April to Thursday 23 April 2024.



1.5 Limitations and restrictions

In preparing this report, Morrison Low has relied on:

- Information provided in-confidence by Council.
- Feedback provided by Council's staff.
- Feedback provided in-confidence by external stakeholders.
- Publicly available information.
- Our own analysis.



2 Service summary and delivery arrangements

2.1 Service summary

The GRALC is Council's key multi-purpose swimming, fitness and sports facility. The centre is open 365 days of the year, for 87 hours each week in the summer season (October to March) and 81 hours each week in the winter season (April to September). The GRALC incorporates the following buildings and facilities:

- 25-metre indoor swimming pool
- Program pool
- Indoor toddlers pool
- Swim School
- Squad training
- Gym
- Group fitness classes
- Indoor sports hall
- Crèche
- Changerooms and toilets (male and female)
- Reception
- Café
- Plant and filter rooms.

Council employs a large number of permanent, part-time and casual staff at the GRALC to plan and deliver a comprehensive program of activities throughout the year for members of the community accessing the centre.

Specific services delivered via the GRALC include:

- Learn-to-swim
- Private swim tuition
- Swim coaching classes
- Personal Training
- Group fitness classes
- Aqua aerobics classes
- Aerobics classes
- Child-minding services
- Holiday activities

2.2 Legislative context and considerations

Aquatic facilities are not statutory responsibilities of local councils under the Local Government Act, or another Act of Parliament. As such, these services are technically considered "discretionary" or "non-core", rather than "non-discretionary" or "core" responsibilities. Notwithstanding this, local communities commonly expect their council to operate a public swimming pool, given Australia's climate and the important role that public swimming pools play in supporting social cohesion and improved health and



wellbeing.

Section 24 of the Local Government Act provides that Council may provide services appropriate to the current and future needs within the community, subject to the provisions of the Local Government Act and accompanying *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021* ("Local Government Regulation").

Where councils operate public swimming pools, they must ensure compliance with a range of legislation, including the *Public Health Act 2010*, *Public Health Regulation 2012*, *Swimming Pools Act 1992* and *Swimming Pools Regulation 2018*.

2.3 Strategic alignment

Under the IP&R provisions of the Local Government Act and accompanying Local Government Regulation, Council is required to develop and adopt an inter-related suite of strategic planning documents, underpinned by a Community Strategic Plan, to guide its decision-making processes.

As illustrated in *Table 2*, below; there is a clear strategic link between the provision of aquatic and recreational services via the GRALC and the current Community Strategic Plan, along with Council's Delivery Program 2022-2026 and Operational Plan 2023-2024.

Table 2 Griffith City Council IP&R strategic alignment

IP&R Document	Reference		
Community Strategic Plan	4. Griffith is a great place to live.	4.7 Provide a range of sporting and recreational facilities	
Delivery Program and Operational Plan	Delivery Program 2022-2026	Operational Plan 2023-2024	Performance Measure
	4.7.2 Maintain the Griffith Regional Aquatic Leisure Centre (GRALC) in accordance with Asset Management Plans and increased usage.	4.7.2.1 Provide a clean, functional and well-maintained aquatic facility available to the public. 4.7.2.2 Recruit additional swim instructors.	Zero community complaints received relating to the cleanliness and maintenance of GRALC. Repair floors in the indoor pool area by June 2024. Increase in the number of swimming lessons provided.

2.4 Strategic, management and administrative reviews and decisions

Council is satisfied with the GRALC management and operation but wants to ensure itself that the facility is operating efficiently, in accordance with good practice. The facility experienced a fatality four years ago, and while Council was not found to have been at fault; it is of high importance to Council that the facility operates safely.

Council has developed a Master Plan in 2019 that includes expansion of the GRALC by closing off part of Olympic Street, connecting the GRALC to Banner Avenue and provide leisure pool facilities, slide, toddlers pool and sheltered picnic areas. These plans are a low priority for Council. They are currently on hold until a firm demand can be established and funding sourced.



Council commissioned an operational review of the GRALC in 2014 which was undertaken by RMP and Associates. The report recommended that Council:

1. Develop a Master Plan for the GRALC incorporating capital works to improve the attractiveness of the centre for leisure swimmers and provide additional water space for program users and recreational swimmers. The Master Plan to incorporate upgrades to the Fitness area, expansion of the existing building (the Swim Club room) outdoor furniture and shade with some BBQs to complement a new outdoor 25-metre 6-lane pool with a leisure pool integrated into the design and solar-heated and shaded.
2. Prepare an Asset Management Plan for the GRALC and seek input from engineers and other disciplines to cost the proposed upgrades and major maintenance works required to address issues relating to the internal 'comfort' of users, particularly air circulation and temperature, upgrades to the plant and equipment where required, investigation and resolution of poor drainage in the area of the outdoor volleyball court (where a new 25m pool and leisure pool would be located), and the options to rectify the gym roof leaks and extensions to the actual gym to increase size and provide toilets/showers and male/female change rooms specifically for gym users.
3. The capital investment in GRALC could be funded in part from Section 94 funds as the required expansion is due to increase in population since the centre was constructed.
4. Develop a tender document and contract to seek Expressions of Interest from suitably experienced Aquatic and Leisure centre management groups to manage the Centre and to indicate the timeframe required to achieve 100 per cent cost recovery for the asset (excluding capital works and significant maintenance costs).
5. To engage a suitably experienced consultant to assist Council with the transition from 'direct' management to an outsourced management solution and to specifically provide input into tender preparation, contract documentation and evaluation of tender process.

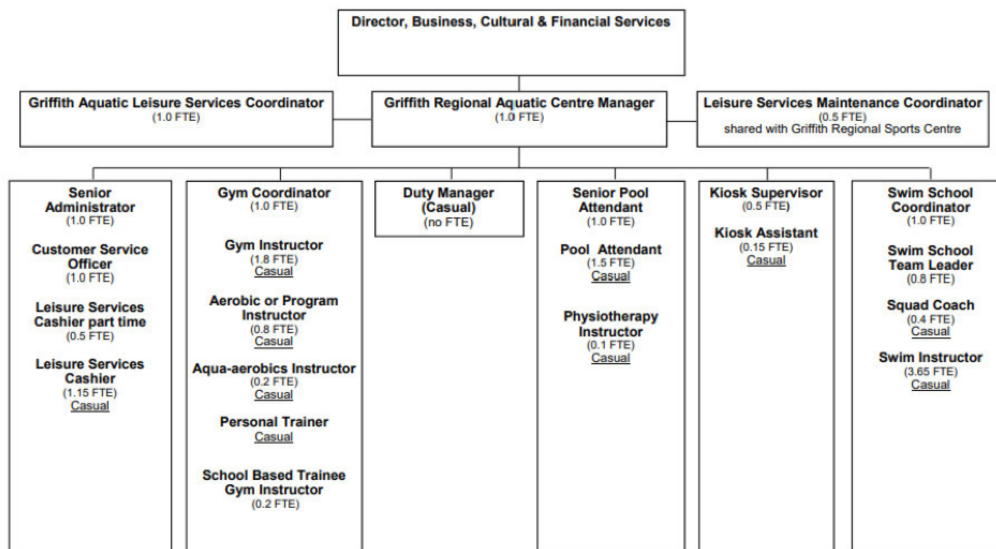
Recommendation (1) has since been completed.

2.5 Service resourcing

The GRALC is currently managed by a full-time permanent Centre Manager, who is in turn supported by five full-time permanent co-ordinators or supervisors, each overseeing different aspects of the centre's operations. Council currently employs a large number of casual employees to support the delivery of the GRALC's various services, programmes and activities provided.



Figure 1 GRALC structure



2.6 Community satisfaction

Council conducted a community survey in 2020. The survey asked two specific questions regarding the GRALC, centred on usage and satisfaction. The results are shown in *Figure 2* and *Figure 3*.

Figure 2 Community Satisfaction Survey 2020 - use of GRALC

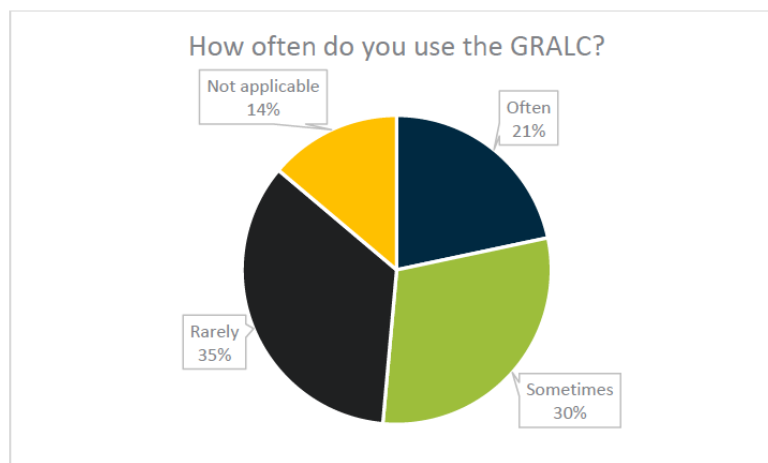
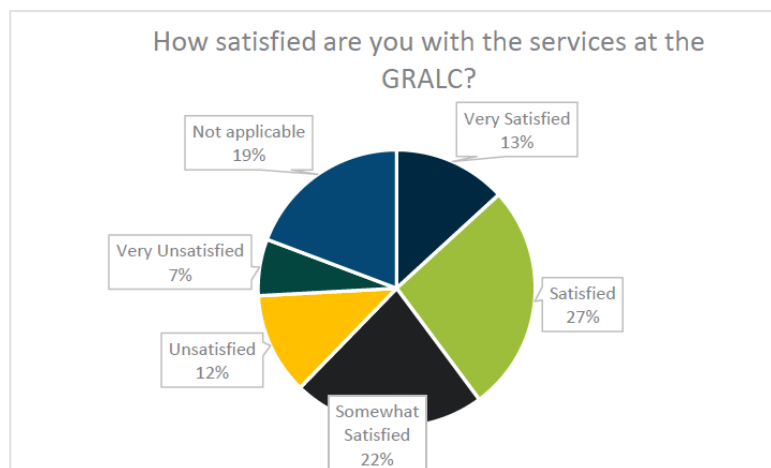




Figure 3 Community Satisfaction Survey 2020 – satisfaction with services at the GRALC



When compared to other leisure and cultural services surveyed, the GRALC is only second to the Library in terms of frequency of use, but satisfaction with the service is lower than many other services.

2.7 Financial performance

The GRALC's financial performance has declined over recent years from requiring an approximate \$1 million rate contribution in 2017/18 to almost \$2 million in 2022/23. Our analysis of the year-to-date actuals provided by Council is shown in *Table 3*, below, and we expect the service to similarly generate a deficit in the current 2023/24 year similar to 2021/22.

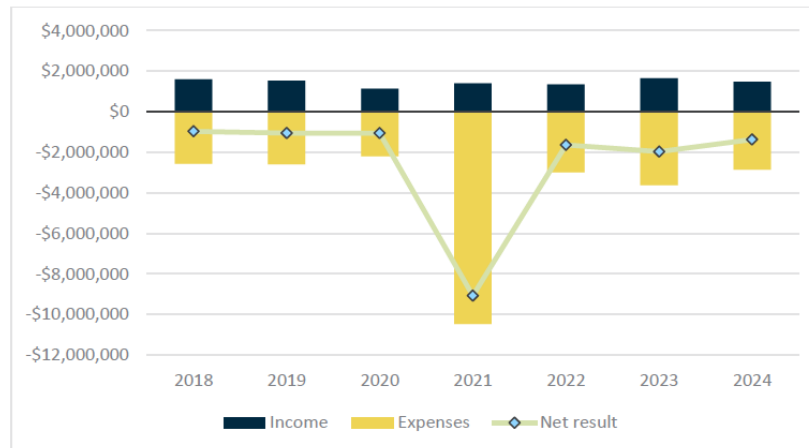
Table 3 GRALC financial performance, 2020-2024

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024 (10 months)
Operating Income	\$1,592,812	\$1,528,945	\$1,139,262	\$1,395,988	\$1,347,337	\$1,649,567	\$1,482,252
Capital Income	\$277	\$4,273	\$227	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Operating Expenditure	\$2,426,367	\$2,473,459	\$2,130,220	\$2,614,035	\$2,892,393	\$3,541,113	\$2,821,261
Capital Expenditure	\$140,469	\$115,051	\$63,952	\$7,859,196	\$91,309	\$78,637	\$35,923
Income	\$1,593,090	\$1,533,218	\$1,139,489	\$1,395,988	\$1,347,337	\$1,649,567	\$1,482,252
Expenses	\$2,566,836	\$2,588,510	\$2,194,172	\$10,473,230	\$2,983,702	\$3,619,750	\$2,857,185
Net result	-\$973,747	-\$1,055,292	-\$1,054,683	-\$9,077,242	-\$1,636,365	-\$1,970,183	-\$1,374,932
Data for graph							
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Income	\$1,593,090	\$1,533,218	\$1,139,489	\$1,395,988	\$1,347,337	\$1,649,567	\$1,482,252
Expenses	-\$2,566,836	-\$2,588,510	-\$2,194,172	-\$10,473,230	-\$2,983,702	-\$3,619,750	-\$2,857,185
Net result	-\$973,747	-\$1,055,292	-\$1,054,683	-\$9,077,242	-\$1,636,365	-\$1,970,183	-\$1,374,932



Chart 1 shows this information pictorially.

Chart 1 GRALC financial performance, 2020-2024



The 2020/21 net result included the capital cost of the new outdoor pool which, if excluded, and normal capital expenditure allocation substituted, would have resulted in an approximate deficit of \$1.3 million.

This performance is largely attributable to increase in costs associated with the 50-metre pool being considerably higher than the increased revenue that has resulted.

The following four charts represent the monthly variances in income, salaries and wages and other expenses for the GRALC's largest cost centres. The charts highlight that expenditure can be lumpy and while most increases coincide with seasonal peaks, some do not.

Notable trends are increasing salaries and wages in the administration and pool supervision cost centres during the peak season since the new 50m pool has opened.

Chart 2 Administration cost centre

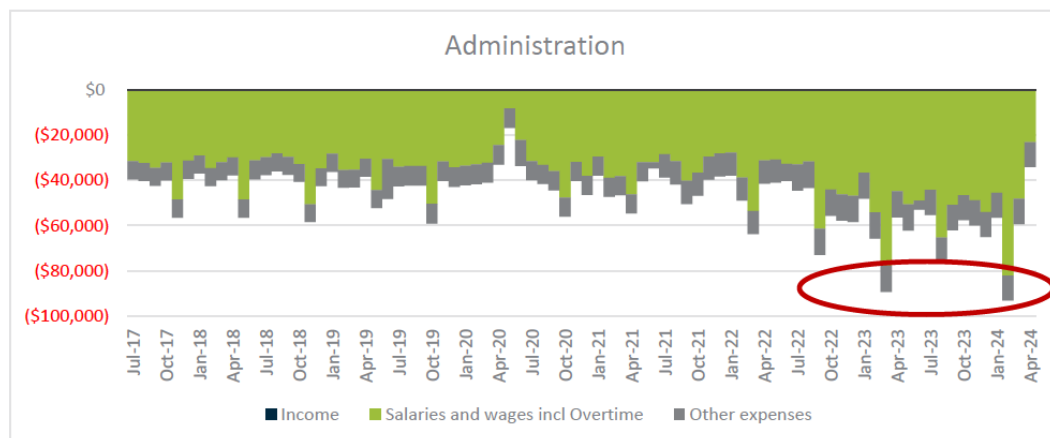




Chart 3 Pool supervision cost centre

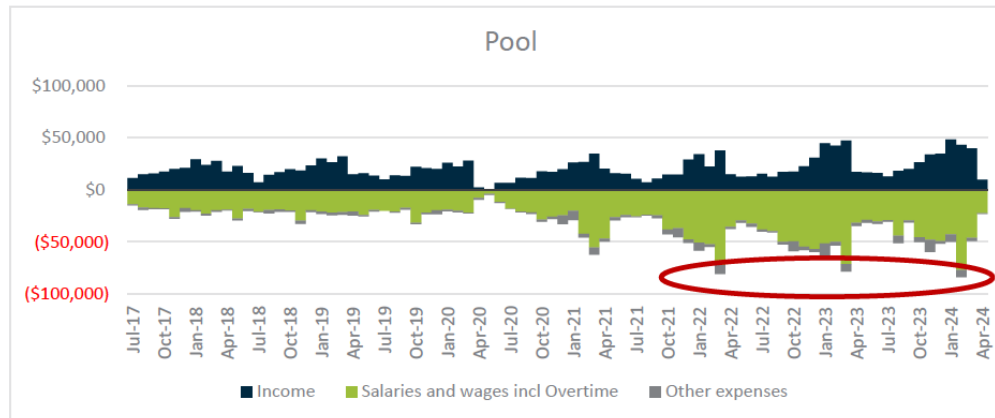


Chart 4 Gym cost centre

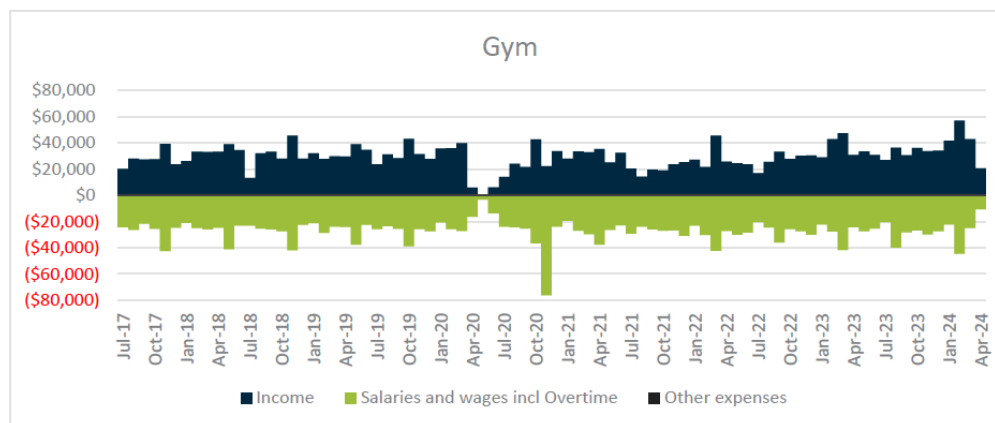
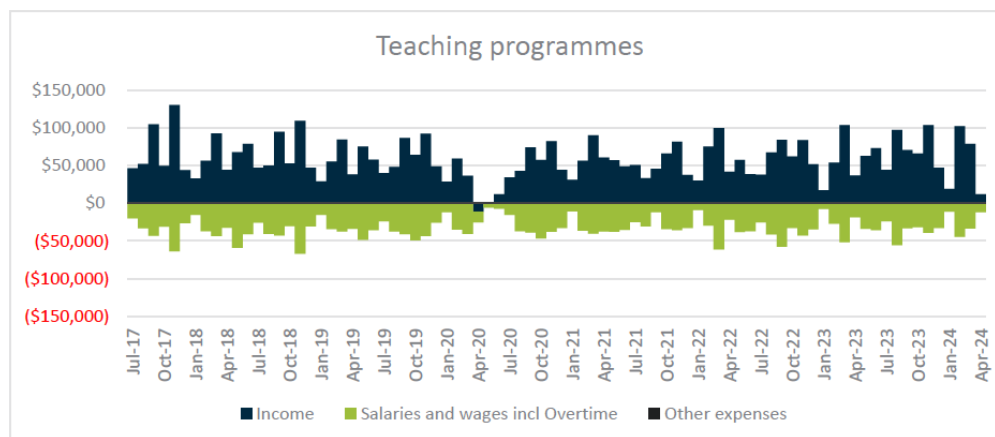


Chart 5 Learn to swim cost centre





2.8 Fees and Charges

Across the facilities examined, there were a variety of different pricing structures which provided for casual/one-off entry, season passes, 'add-on' fitness and aqua classes membership. Competitive long-term membership packages using a direct-debit system attract long-term users of aquatic facilities and provide some reliable cash inflows. We note that Griffith City Council already provides a range of package options.

While pricing structures vary in their degree of complexity, most facilities charged adult, child/concession, spectator, and family categories, with children under either three or four years old free of charge. *Table 4*, overleaf, provides a comparative analysis of the casual fees and charges levied by each of the shortlisted facilities (with all fees and charges drawn from each council's adopted Revenue Policy for the current 2023/24 year). Review of these figures suggests that:

- Family admission fee of \$20.00 is higher than the average of \$18.53.
- Adult admission fee of \$7.00 is higher than the average of \$6.46.
- Child admission fee of \$5.00 is higher than the average of \$4.73.
- Spectator admission fee of \$1.50 is lower than the average of \$1.95.

We understand that Council has recently reviewed its fees and charges for the GRALC, including increasing fees and charges. However, as detailed below, Griffith City Council's fees and charges are comparatively higher than those levied by other centres.

Table 4 Fees and charges comparative analysis, Casual fees

Council	Facility	Casual Admission Fee				
		Family	Adult	Concession	Child	Spectator
Albury City Council	Wodonga Leisure Centre	\$18.20	\$7.60	\$6.00	\$5.90	
Cessnock Council	Kurri Kurri Aquatic and Fitness Centre	\$20.00	\$6.40	\$5.50	\$5.50	\$3.50
Dubbo Regional Council	Dubbo Aquatic Centre	\$18.50	\$6.00	\$4.00	\$4.00	\$2.00
	Wellington Aquatic Leisure Centre	\$18.50	\$6.00	\$4.00	\$4.00	\$2.00
Goulburn Mulwaree Council	Goulburn Aquatic Leisure Centre	\$18.00	\$6.50	\$4.50	\$4.50	\$2.00
Griffith City Council	Griffith Regional Aquatic and Leisure Centre	\$20.00	\$7.00	¹	\$5.00	\$1.50
Kiama Municipal Council	Kiam Aquatic and Leisure Centre	\$22.00	\$7.00	\$5.00	\$5.00	\$4.50
Lake Macquarie Council	West Wallsend Swim Centre	\$16.80	\$6.60	\$4.10	\$4.10	\$3.10
Maitland Council	East Maitland	\$17.60	\$6.30	\$4.20	\$5.20	\$0.00

¹ GRALC offers membership options rather than concession pricing



Council	Facility	Casual Admission Fee				
		Family	Adult	Concession	Child	Spectator
	Aquatic Centre					
	Maitland Aquatic Centre	\$17.60	\$6.30	\$4.20	\$5.20	\$0.00
Shoalhaven City Council	Nowra Aquatic Park	\$17.70	\$5.10	\$3.80	\$3.80	\$0.00
Singleton Council	Singelton Gym and Swim Centre	\$19.00	\$6.20	\$4.10	\$4.80	\$2.50
Wagga Wagga City Council	Oasis Aquatic Centre	\$17.00	\$7.00	\$6.30	\$4.50	\$2.00
Average		\$18.53	\$6.46	\$4.64	\$4.73	\$1.95

2.9 Patronage, admissions and transactions

Council was able to provide patronage and admission data for the GRALC for the periods 2019-2024.

As illustrated by *Table 5*, below, admissions have grown since 2020 which experienced the largest impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Admission data for the current 2024 year is strong although only available for four of the peak months to date.

Table 5 GRALC patronage and admissions, 2019-2024 calendar years

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Pool General Admissions	36,032	27,043	37,128	40,779	52,654
Pool Membership	1,614	1,202	1,428	1,648	1,842
Pool Multi-pass	318	255	362	333	489
Gym Admissions	11,305	8,313	10,085	10,220	11,526
Gym Memberships	6,133	4,598	5,383	6,232	6,952
Gym Multi-pass	134	124	125	110	120
Swim Squad	111	274	560	481	561
Teaching programs	21,017	15,672	20,848	23,055	24,817
Aerobic	2,313	1,662	1,041	1,155	1,639
Creche	587	247	211	182	132
Kiosk transactions	4,6828	27,893	39,716	48,036	54,050
Merchandise sales transactions	3,161	2,292	3,130	3,448	4,017



The trends are shown below in the two charts separating high volume sales from lower volume. *Chart 6* shows a drop in 2020 due to COVID-19 followed by a recovery to exceed pre-pandemic levels for general pool admissions and kiosk sales. Note, the volume of Kiosk sales is high, but the value of each unit is low. Gym admissions, memberships and merchandise sales have improved but generally remain static over the period.

Chart 6 Large volume sales units

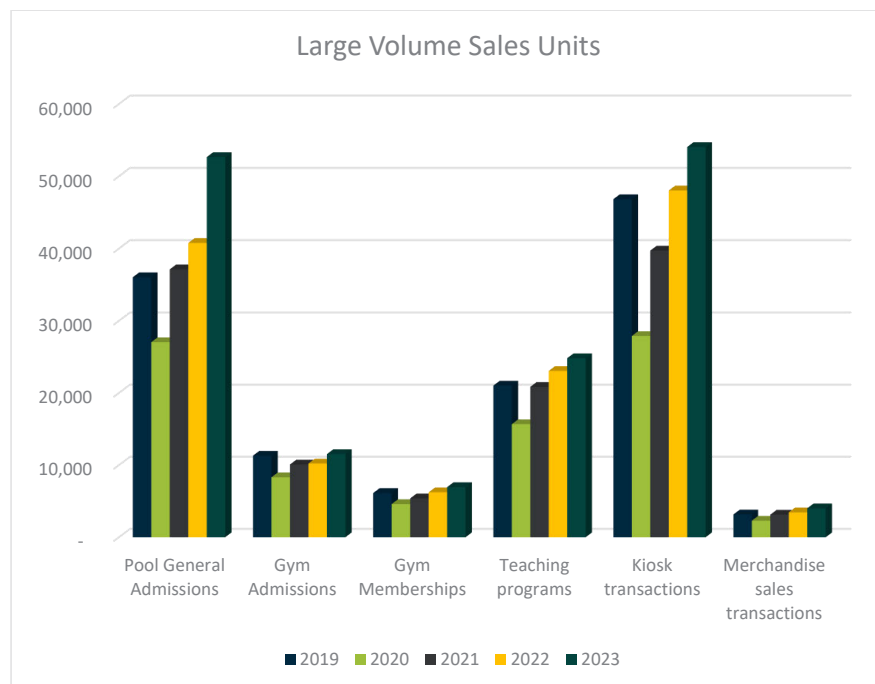
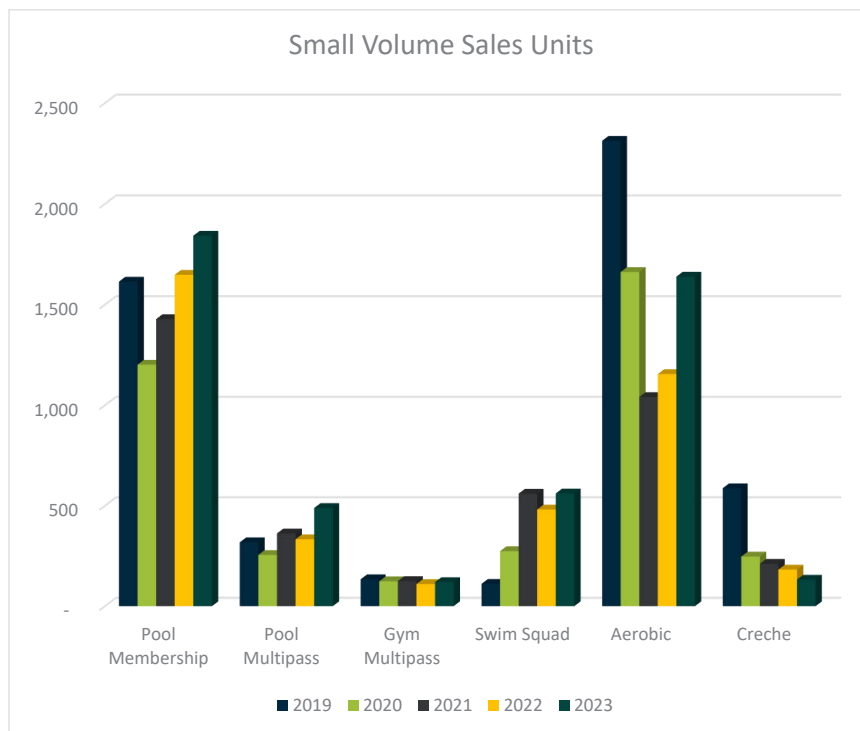


Chart 7 shows the GRALC's smaller volume sales. Aerobics admissions have not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels and gym multi-passes and admissions to the crèche continue to decline over time.



Chart 7 Small volume sales units



Some types of admissions and ticketing options are small in number and appear to be maintained more as a customer service than a commercial proposition.

2.10 Benchmarking

Eight Riverina and similar sized regional councils were invited to participate in a comparative exercise on operational models, costs revenues and energy sources. Despite follow-up calls and correspondence, no response was received from four of the invited councils. Three councils who participated indicated they wished to have the information they supplied reported anonymously.

One of the council's operated a seasonal outdoor pool and therefore, the data provided was difficult and somewhat meaningless to compare.

Key observations for those who did participate included:

- Total general pool admissions ranged between 52,000 and 265,000. Griffith's admissions are at the lower end of this range.
- Full-time equivalent staff ranged between seven and 13 with the GRALC having 8.3.
- Two councils had part-time staff.
- Three councils operated with a similar number of full-time equivalent casual staff although the GRALC was slightly higher.
- Total revenue ranged between \$1.1 million and \$2.5 million, noting the highest revenue centre also contained an indoor sports hall.



- Total operating cost ranged between \$2.7 million and \$4.4 million, with the GRALC at the lower end of this range.
- Total staff cost was between \$1.2 million and \$2.8 million. The GRALC had the highest staffing cost amongst the group.
- Utility costs ranged between \$223,000 and \$470,000 and again, the GRALC had the highest cost which was similar to the other pool heated by gas.
- Two pools use electricity as their primary heat source with one operating from a small supplementary solar installation.
- Three pools are under consideration for alternative heating sources.
- Three pools have separate position descriptions for the main functional roles in the centre.

While the response was disappointing, the limited data suggests that patronage, operating and revenue at the GRALC is lower. The GRALC has higher reliance on casual staff. Staff and utility costs are higher at the GRALC, and the operational staffing model is similar across the responding councils.

2.11 Leisure facility trends

Analysis of the recreation leisure market suggests that there are a range of trends that are increasingly impacting on the market, specifically on leisure centres. *Table 6*, below, summarises some of these trends and how they may guide future decision-making by Council in relation to the GRALC:

Table 6 Leisure and aquatic facility trends

Trend	Summary
Accessibility and inclusivity	Increased focus on designing facilities that are accessible and inclusive for people of all ages and abilities. This includes features such as ramps, sensory-friendly spaces, and inclusive service design and programming.
Demographics and needs based	Increased focus on ensuring facilities adapt to changing demographics and cater for current and expected community needs, including an ageing population and a younger, more technology-savvy generation.
Health and wellbeing	Increased focus on designing facilities that contribute to the community's quality of life and overall wellbeing. This includes incorporating allied health services within aquatic and leisure centres to create a central health hub for local communities.
Flexible design	Increased focus on designing facilities and spaces that provide usage flexibility and can be easily adapted for different purposes and activities, ensuring that space utilisation can be maximised.
Sustainable design	Increased focus on implementing environmentally sustainable practices in facility design and operations. This includes energy-efficient technologies, eco-friendly building materials and water conservation measures such as advanced water filtration systems, water recycling, and efficient water management practices.
Technology and innovation	Increased focus on integrating technology into facility operations and service delivery to enhance customer experience, such as mobile applications for facility bookings, online scheduling, and smart facility management.
Value for money	Increased focus on ensuring that facilities provide value for money and commercial performance can be improved to ensure effective return on investment.



2.12 Energy options and implications

We understand Council has submitted, or is in the process of submitting, a grant application to install solar panels on the roof of the GRALC. There are a number of commercially operated swimming pools that use alternative energy sources for operational energy, including several larger indoor public pools in NSW that use some element of solar energy.

The Sydney Olympic Park Authority (SOPA) Aquatic Centre underwent a refurbishment in 2021/22, which included the installation of solar panels on the roof of the centre. The driver for this project was compliance with the NSW Government's Resource Efficiency Policy and procurement standards by being 'greener' via increased use of renewables.

The solar panels on the Centre were expected to have the following impacts:²

Table 7 Expected impacts of solar panel installation at Sydney Olympic Park Authority Aquatic Centre

Kilowatts generated	Investment	Estimated cost savings p.a.
1,307	\$1,700,00	\$298,000

This suggests the expected payback period was seven years. This solar panel installation was completed in 2022/23, so a full year of data is not yet available.

While dependent on weather, the area of solar panels needed to generate 1,307 kilowatts of electricity in NSW is approximately 7300m². On average NSW has an average of 5 peak sun hours per day. Griffith is higher than the NSW average with 5.3 peak sun hours per day so will be able to generate more electricity.

We do note in the Annual Report³ that the SOPA's consumption of gas has remained static over the last two years while electricity consumption is increased, despite SOPA generating almost 10 per cent of its own electricity supply needs. The solar panels at the Aquatic Centre recently caught fire and we reached out to SOPA's Aquatic Centre Manager for insights into the project but our timing was inconvenient.

We interviewed the Manager of the Ryde Aquatic Centre which has solar panels on the roof which generates 10 per cent of the Centre's electricity needs. A cogeneration plant is used to generate a further 40 per cent of the Centre's electricity needs, with the balance obtained from the mains supply.

A research paper by Priyadarsini Rajagopalan in 2015 titled *Solar Heating for Commercial Swimming Pools – Experiences in Southeastern Australia* identified 10% of municipal pools were using solar heating with the main barrier's; capital cost, roof space and the ability of solar to meet their demand. As gas prices have risen solar has become more attractive. The paper did not address the overall energy saving through solar use.

In 2014, the North Sydney Council installed a cogeneration plant at the North Sydney Olympic Pool. The cogeneration technology process uses a heat engine to simultaneously generate both electricity and heat energy. The cogeneration plant is fuelled by natural gas. The project cost \$700,000 and was expected to save \$60,000 in electricity costs, a payback period of approximately 11 years. Payback periods are likely to have reduced as energy costs have increased disproportionately. We note that by 2020 the North Sydney Olympic Pool had reached the end of its useful life and Council had embarked on a new contentious \$64 million re-development. This highlights the need for Council to consider whole of life costs in any alternative energy solutions.

Alternative energy sources have the capability to meet some of the energy needs of the GRALC and in

² Sydney Olympic Park Authority Annual Report 2021/22

³ Sydney Olympic Park Authority Annual Report 2022/23 pg.8.



addition to exploring solar options, Council should explore cogeneration. We noted that in most recent pools the drive to move away from gas is more driven by operator policy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by moving to renewables rather than cost savings. A key consideration will be the remaining life of the asset and the renewal requirements to ensure the timing of any investment provides a payback.

3 Consultation insights and analysis

In undertaking this service review, Morrison Low made several positive observations regarding the GRALC. Throughout the engagement process we found almost all staff demonstrated strong commitment to customer service excellence and quality customer care. Many Council staff associated with the GRALC are long-serving and have built strong relationships with local groups and users, often going above and beyond normal expected service levels because the GRALC is a proud part of the Griffith community. There has been a focus on maximising use of the GRALC within the constraints the service has.

However, consistent with the objective and scope of this review; we have focused our efforts on identifying opportunities for Council to improve culture, strategy, systems and processes to optimise service delivery and performance.

3.1 Strategy and performance

3.1.1 Key findings

- There are elements of the GRALC operation that require strategic consideration by Council to determine if or how these should continue. Specifically, the kiosk, gym and crèche all provide products or services that are available elsewhere within the community from other commercial providers. These components are offered more as a service and make losses when administration costs are distributed to them.
- Of the three services identified above, the gym in particular competes with various other local gyms. As large-scale chain gymnasiums continue to expand into the regions and establish new facilities in regional centres; it is likely that Council's operation will continue to come under challenge from new and existing providers who offer an extended range of services and equipment.
- Council offers the cheapest gym in Griffith, but compared to other gyms there appears an under investment in both staff and equipment. Attracting more clients (and therefore improving the financial viability of the gym) is expected to require additional investment from Council, both in developing its staff and improving its equipment.
- There is limited planned or structured marketing of the GRALC service offerings. The GRALC would benefit from a Marketing Plan to promote the facility more strategically.
- The GRALC has no Business Plan to guide its annual direction to help provide a focus for staff and set performance expectations.

3.1.2 Issues and commentary

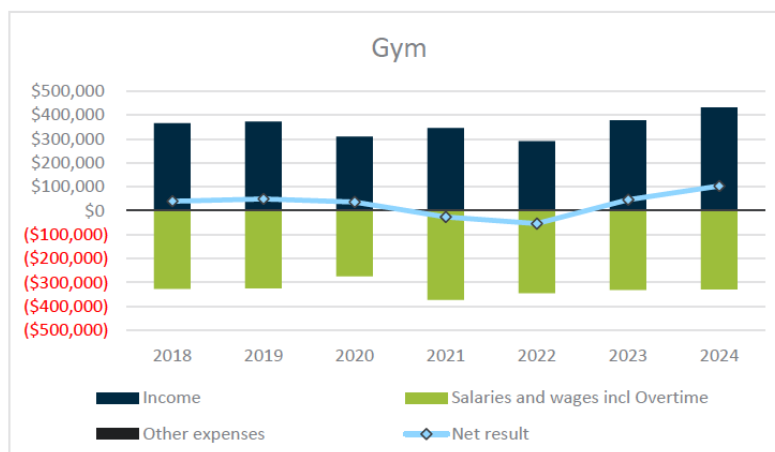
- (a) Council does not have a formal business plan process for the GRALC or other facilities and manages performance through Council's performance management system Pulse to link performance back to its Community Strategic Plan. The Delivery Program actions centre around maintenance and increasing usage. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) include zero community complaints around maintenance and cleanliness, completing repairs to the floor and recruiting additional swimming instructors. There does not appear to be a formal process of tracking this performance and the



actions and targets do not give a good guide to how well the GRALC is managed to give Council the most efficient and effective service delivery.

- (b) Council has previously conducted an Operational Review in 2014 and the asset improvements have largely been driven by a report. The report proposed that Council transition the management of the GRALC from a direct management model to an outsourced management solution. A full outsourced operation is not favoured by Council as its preference is to retain control of the asset. There is however some appetite to consider outsourcing the more commercial components of the facility.
- (c) There are three service offerings that have been underperforming over the longer term: the gym, crèche and kiosk. We do note the Gym appears to be performing better in the 2023/24 financial year although this is yet to be completed, and we noted earlier that the revenue and costs can be lumped together, and a more complete picture can be obtained after June. The following charts show the gym and kiosk can break even or return a small profit. The crèche is a cost to Council and has a specific target audience to provide as a child-minding service to attract young mothers to the gym. All three service components are available commercially within a short distance.
- (d) The Gym competes with commercial gyms in the City and is successful by offering a discounted entry. The commercial gymnasium market is very competitive with more fitness chains moving to the regions. Council needs to decide where there is a significant public benefit or disadvantaged user groups that warrants its participation in these parts of the market or whether it can safely exit the market.

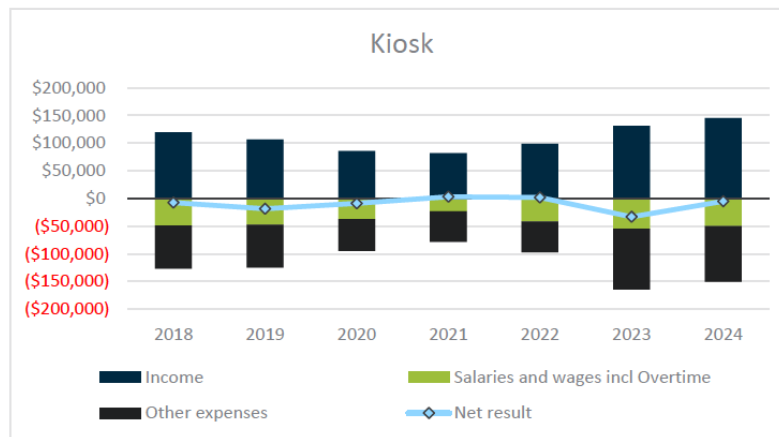
Chart 8 Performance of Council Gym over the financial years



- (e) It would appear from Council's financial data that the Kiosk generally makes a loss or barely breaks even. We were unable to ascertain why this occurs as it could be for a number of reasons: excessive stock costs, excessive labour cost, under-pricing or stock loss due to unaccounted inventory discrepancies. The Council has leased the Kiosk in the past, but this has not proved viable for a private operator.

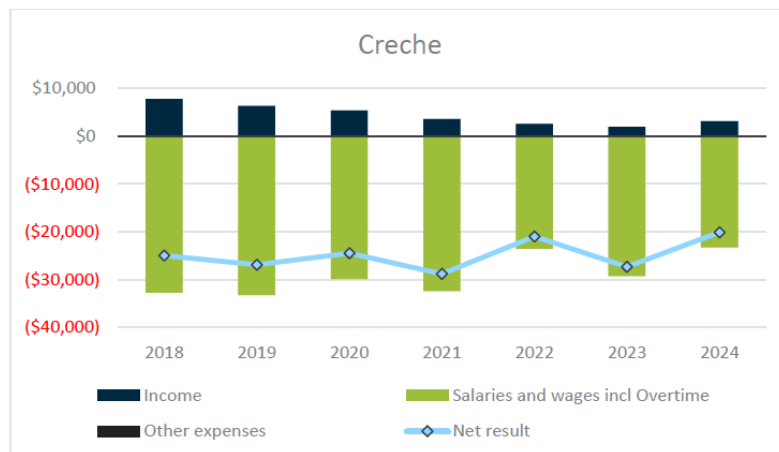


Chart 9 Performance of the Kiosk over the financial years



- (f) As seen by the attendance in numbers, use of the Crèche is steadily declining over the last five years to a point where in 2023 there were less than 200 users over the year. The creche operates limited hours and is not a registered childcare service. It makes a loss of between \$20,000 and \$30,000 per annum. The staff are not qualified child-care providers, so the service is more akin to babysitting. In order to use the service, the parent must remain in the Centre. The Crèche is seen as a service to enable a specific demographic to use the gym or pool.

Chart 10 Performance of the Creche over the financial years



**Recommendation/s**

1. Reconsider the service offering and whether Council is best placed to be the provider/operator of services currently provided at the GRALC in particular:
 - a. Investigate leasing the Gym to a private contractor. This should explore building improvements to enable 24-hour access, and/or increase fees to be more commercially aligned.
 - b. Investigate the closure of the Kiosk and Crèche services while maintaining the sale of snacks from the main entry counter.
2. Prepare an annual Business Plan to drive the GRALC performance. Include a percentage cost recovery target to encourage business-like decision-making.
3. Establish and endorse expected service levels and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the GRALC and ensure that KPIs are monitored and reported on a quarterly basis.
4. Prepare a Marketing Plan to promote the GRALC more strategically.

3.2 Operations**3.2.1 Key findings**

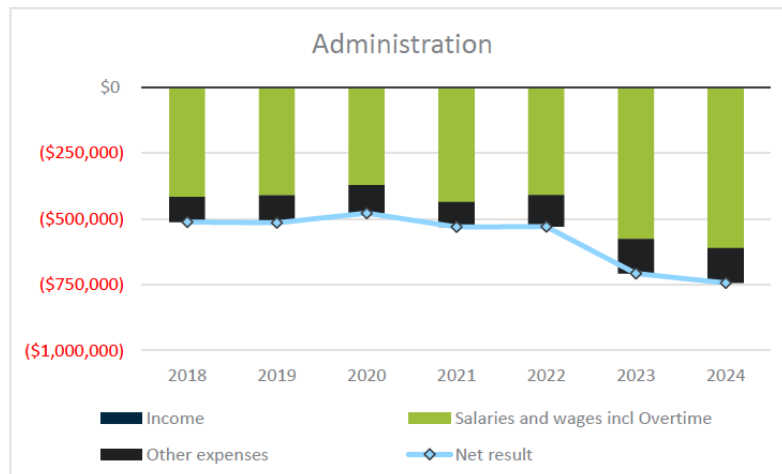
- Operational costs, in particular administration costs, have grown as have electricity and heating costs.
- The Council is in the process of applying for a grant to install solar panels and will need to ensure that the roof structure and any future renewals support a solar panel installation.
- Most public pools use solar energy generation as a supplementary energy source. Therefore, Council will need to retain some commercial supply of electricity and/or gas, ideally through collaborative purchasing arrangement such as Hunter Councils or regional initiatives.
- Council will need to consider whole of life costs in any alternative energy solutions. Council should also consider building life, renewal requirements and payback periods in determining if alternative energy sources are feasible.
- Cost benefit analysis on switch energy sources are best undertaken in conjunction with a Masterplan that considers the future of the pool and plant renewal.

3.2.2 Issues and commentary

- (a) Administration costs have increased considerably over the past two years. While there has been an increase in expenses the largest contributor to the increase is salaries and wages.

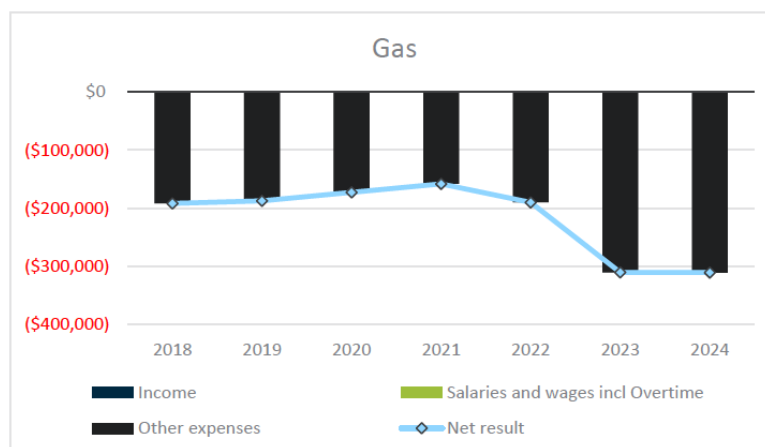


Chart 11 Administration costs over the financial years



- (b) This increase is most likely due to employment of the GRALC Co-ordinator, which was a new position. We understand that the position was initially intended to work in tandem with the manager to provide full coverage of weekday opening hours and avoid the need for a Duty Manager. However, a change of hours of work for the Co-ordinator has been made which removes these cost savings. Duty Manager costs amounted to \$6,200 in 2023.
- (c) Council is concerned with the high and increasing cost of gas and electricity.
- (d) Gas is the principal form of heating and gas costs have increased by over 50% in the last two years from less than \$200,000 to over \$300,000, as shown in *Chart 12*. The gas supply contract commenced in 2022 for a two-year period and will expire at the end of this year.

Chart 12 Cost of gas

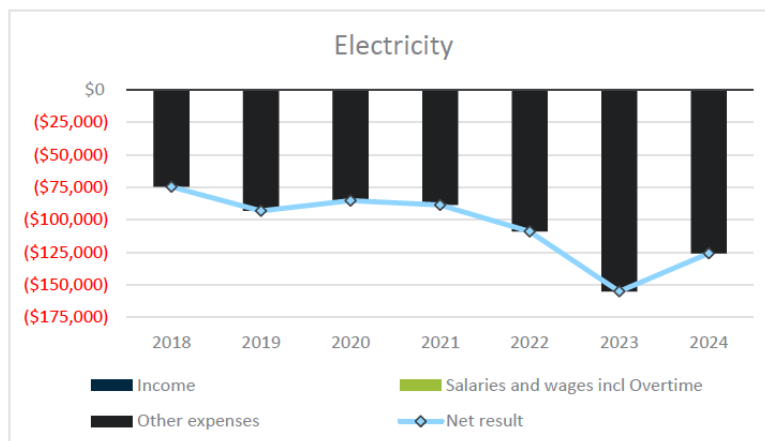


- (e) Council is part of the Hunter Council buying group for the supply of electricity. Taking advantage of the procurement expertise and the buying power of a large group of councils will be difficult to improve on without a change in energy source, for example, solar generation. The electricity supply



contract also commenced in 2022 for a two-year period and will expire at the end of this year.

Chart 13 Cost of electricity



- (f) Council is currently considering alternative energy sources and is applying for a grant to install solar panels.
- (g) The GRALC takes staff training seriously especially after the unfortunate death at the pool. It has put in place regular all staff training sessions. These sessions are scheduled on Sundays prior to opening. Sundays are chosen to enable the most attendance given that some staff have other primary employment. However, given the large number of casuals, this creates the highest cost for Council in terms of overtime payments. Many staff we spoke with questioned whether the training needed to be held on Sunday.

Recommendation/s

5. Continue to prepare a business case(s) for alternative supplementary heating sources.
6. Utilise collaborative buying contracts for gas, electricity and other consumables.
7. Revisit the role of the Co-ordinator and make this position an assistant manager role with hours overlapping with the manager and fulfilling the duty manager role. Merge the Co-ordinator with the Senior Administrator role supported by an additional customer service officer.
8. Revisit the practice of Sunday staff training to minimise overtime.

3.3 Asset management and maintenance

3.3.1 Key findings

- The Asset Management Plan shows that the majority of Council's building asset class have good capacity and functionality but 50% are in fair or poor condition.
- This is reflected in the GRALC, where a majority of the building is in good condition. The exception is the plant room for the pool, pool surrounds and roof structure.
- There is also a need to plan for upgrades of filters, air handling, floors and building fabric.



3.3.2 Issues and commentary

- (a) During the consultation process and site visit, it was brought to our attention that the GRALC has a number of defects, many of which are significant and yet to be addressed. Some of these may present risk to Council from compliance, safety and operational perspectives.
- (b) We note that Council's Asset Management Plan has allocated funding for building maintenance and upgrades but it appears these may not provide long-term solutions.
- (c) While there is an awareness of many of the issues, there appears to be no documented forward renewal program.
- (d) Council has strategically added the outdoor 50m pool four years ago as part of a masterplan for the GRALC.
- (e) The master plan included expansion of the GRALC across Olympic Street, closing the street to through access and the development of a children's play space, picnic areas, a waterslide and water play. The project is on hold subject to grant funding.
- (f) The master plan does not address the long-term future of the covered pool area. This part of the GRALC is now 24 years old and whilst still young in terms of building age, the harsh environment inside the building and changing leisure trends and expectations mean swimming pools often start to lose performance and functionality well before the building life expires.
- (g) Council should develop a long-term view on the future of the indoor facility as this will help shape investment in the facility. This should include the estimated future life and renewal program as well as creating an internal restriction (reserve) to fund capital renewal and improvements

Recommendation/s

- 9. Prepare a detailed 10-year asset renewal plan for the GRALC.
- 10. Establish an internal restriction (reserve) to fund future capital renewal and improvement.
- 11. Re-visit the GRALC Masterplan, to consider these and other long-term building requirements to determine a strategy for the indoor facilities.

3.4 People and culture

3.4.1 Key findings

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

3.4.2 Issues and commentary

[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]

Chart 14 Administration - salaries and wages including overtime

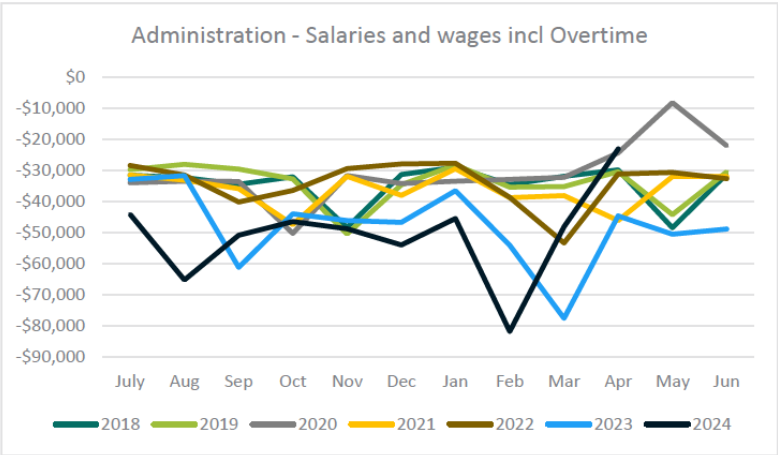


Chart 15 Pool - salaries and wages including overtime

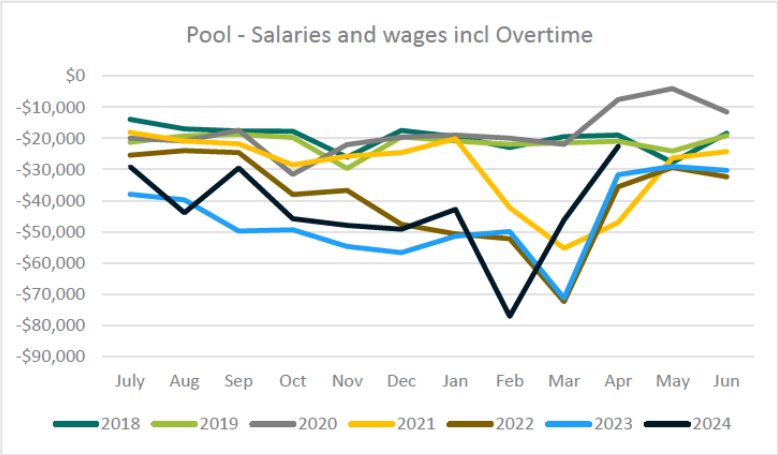
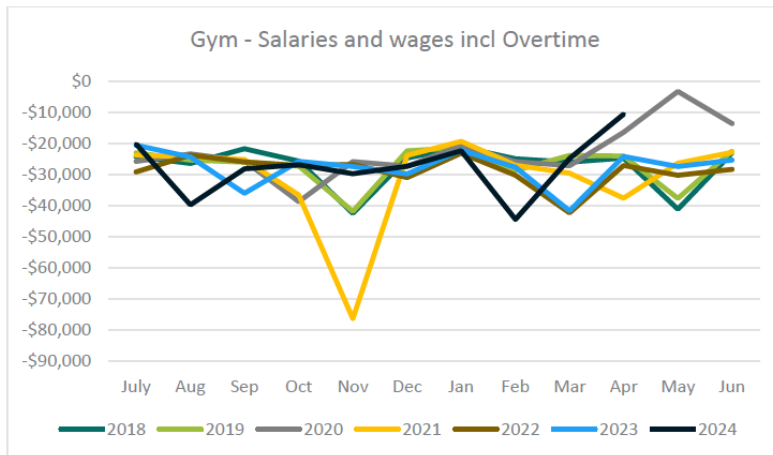


Chart 16 Gym - salaries and wages including overtime



[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

(b) [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
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[REDACTED]

(b) [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

(b) [REDACTED]
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[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
for Council.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Recommendation/s



12. Consolidate all forms of communication with GRALC staff into one communication medium. Review communication processes and protocols to ensure all employees are being appropriately engaged and included in workplace communications.
13. All rostering must be co-ordinated and managed by one person either the Manager or GRALC Co-ordinator.
14. Ensure that operational management decision-making minimises additional cost while supporting staffing needs where possible.
15. Establish base staffing levels (winter hours) as permanent part-time roles, supported by smaller group of casuals for leave coverage and extended summer hours.
16. Review and minimise the number of position descriptions for GRALC positions with positions being multi-tasked across the administration, aquatics and fitness disciplines.
17. Review recruitment processes and protocols to ensure all recruitments undertaken at the GRALC are being conducted in accordance with relevant provisions of the Local Government Act 1993, Local Government (State) Award and Council's Code of Conduct.
- 18.

3.5 Risk management

3.5.1 Key findings

- (a) Risk management has improved.
- (b) Council completes regular safety meter forms.
- (c) No major risks since event.
- (d) Council may be exposed to industrial risks via the high use of casual employees at the GRALC. This model should be reviewed to ensure risks are clearly identified and being appropriately managed.

3.5.2 Issues and commentary

- As noted previously, the GRALC currently uses a high number of casual employees within its team structure. While this approach helps ensure the GRALC meets its agreed service levels; the use of a casualised workforce presents risks to any employer, and feedback from Council employees suggests these risks may not be effectively managed at present. Specifically, Council's industrial exposure via the use of long-term casuals with regular and predictable working arrangements, and risk exposure via casual employees not receiving comprehensive training to undertake their job duties.
- All casual employees are being comprehensively inducted and trained to undertake job-specific duties, which minimises risk to the organisation. Council is aware of its responsibility to ensure all employees are inducted and trained to perform the roles for which they have been employed, irrespective of the status of their employment (e.g. full-time/part-time/casual, permanent/temporary).

Recommendation/s

19. Review the model of engagement of casual employees engaged at the GRALC, including the management of all casual employees, to ensure industrial risks are being proactively managed and mitigated.
20. Ensure all employees engaged at the GRALC are being inducted and regularly trained to perform the roles for which they have been employed, irrespective of the status of their employment (e.g.



full-time/part-time/casual, permanent/temporary).

3.6 Systems and processes

3.6.1 Key findings

- (a) Council's policies and procedures have been progressively updated over the last four years.
- (b) Council developed an overarching Operations Manual for the GRALC in 2020.

3.6.2 Issues and commentary

- There appears to be no outstanding issues.



4 Implementation Roadmap

Table 8 Implementation roadmap

	Action	Who	Dependent on
1	Consider reporting and determine which recommendations should be adopted	Council	
	Strategic Direction		
2	Decisions to close or outsource components of the operation determined	Council	1
3	Consultation with impacted staff if roles not required	HR	2
4	Communication with customer	GRALC Manager	2
5	EOI process if Gym operation outsourced	GRALC Manager	3
6	Subject to outcomes of EOI process, building changes planned and implemented	GRALC Manager	5
7	Transfer to independent operator	GRALC Manager	6
8	Prepare Business Plan and KPIs	GRALC Manager	7
	Staff		
9	Communication channels consolidated	GRALC Manager	1
10	Rostering centralised	GRALC Manager	1
11	Transition from casual to permanent part-time roles mapped	GRALC Manager	1
12	Position descriptions consolidated, including GRALC Co-ordinator	HR/ GRALC Manager	11
13	Consultation process with staff on change from casual to permanent part-time	HR	11/12
14	Roles advertised and filled	HR	13
15	Implement other recommendations –staff training, roles responsibilities and hours of work	GRALC Manager/HR	1
	Operations		
16	Prepare business case for alternative heating sources (including whole of life costs)	Assets	1
	Asset Management		
17	Long-term capital expenditure and maintenance plan prepared	Assets	1
18	Improvements incorporated in Long-Term Financial Plan	Finance	18



5 Appendices

5.1 Management models

There are various management models available to local councils in managing public community venues such as recreation facilities and aquatic centres. While we have not recommended a change in management models for the GRALC we have included a discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of each model should Council choose to explore these in the future.

In practice, management models largely fit into one of the following three categories:

- **Direct Management:** under this model, Council directly manages and operates the facility. This is the current model utilised by Council in relation to the GRALC.
- **Indirect Management:** under this model, an external operator (typically a specialist leisure or recreation management agency) manages or part-manages the facility, via a management services agreement with Council.
- **Independent Management:** under this model, an external operator manages the facility via a formal lease and/or management agreement.

Each of the three management models listed above has inherent strengths (or advantages) and weaknesses (or disadvantages). Further, when determining the most appropriate management model, it must be recognised that no one model will suit all facilities and situations. Factors that should be considered by Council in deciding the most appropriate management model for its specific needs are outlined below.

5.1.1 Direct Management

Under this model, Council would continue to directly manage and operate the GRALC and design, deliver, and promote services and programmes. The key advantage of this model is that Council can directly control the condition of the centre and the quality of the services and programmes it provides, along with fees and charges.

Table 9 Management model advantages and disadvantages: Direct management

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Council can exercise a high level of control over the day-to-day operation of the GRALC. – Council can ensure the GRALC is maintained to a high standard and has the capacity to provide adequate funds for all asset management requirements, including cyclical maintenance and structural maintenance. – Council's governing body has capacity to make ongoing input into strategy and service offering. – Council can oversee marketing strategy and initiate direct promotion of the facility, its services and programmes. – Council can respond to changing customer needs and priorities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Model requires Executive and senior staff with skills and expertise in managing, operating and/or maintaining aquatic and recreation facilities. – Council must be willing and able to maintain the facility to a high standard and ensure adequate funds are allocated to meet asset management requirements. – Political influence can be applied by the governing body to change strategy and service offering, or stifle/delay new opportunities. – Council may be slower to identify and exploit opportunities due to governance structures and internal bureaucratic arrangements. – Less flexible industrial arrangements may limit resourcing decisions.



5.1.2 Indirect Management

Under this model, Council would enter into a management services contract with a contractor to manage the whole or part of the GRALC. The key advantage to this model is that the operator can typically provide specialist experience that Council may lack, and is responsible for resourcing, including recruiting, training and managing staff (rather than Council).

Table 10 Management model advantages and disadvantages: Indirect management

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operator can typically apply specialist experience which is usually not readily available to Council. Council does not need to employ staff to manage and operate the centre or provide services and programmes. Operation of the centre is at arm's length from Council and freed from day-to-day Council issues and interventions. Operator can usually respond to needs, issues and priorities more rapidly and efficiently than Council. Operator typically able to make more flexible industrial arrangements (not subject to <i>Local Government (State) Award</i>). Council can remain a partner in the arrangement and thus continues to have some control over the centre and access to performing reporting/monitoring. Formal commitments for maintenance and refurbishment allocations can be set. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council can find itself locked into an external management agreement with an ineffective manager for a significant period. Legal implications and possible action for failure to deliver contract obligations. Operator can focus predominantly on profitable services and programmes to the detriment of wider community obligations.

5.1.3 Independent Management

Under this model, Council would outsource the management and operation of the GRALC to an external party or organisation through a formal lease agreement. The key advantage to this model is that it is likely the most effective financially, and significantly minimises (or eliminates) financial and risk implications for Council. However, this model does present significant risks that community benefits may be lost via service, staffing and programming decisions, with Council restricted in its ability to influence such decisions.

Table 11 Management model advantages and disadvantages: Independent management

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lessee typically able to achieve operational economies on conditions of use, labour, goods and services. Financial and risk implications for Council are minimised or eliminated entirely. Lessee typically able to make more flexible industrial arrangements (not subject to <i>Local Government (State) Award</i>). Council can set guaranteed operating financial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lessee's objectives may conflict with achieving equitable access or community service obligations desired by Council. Limited opportunity for community and customer input into establishing and reviewing services, programmes, timetables and fees. Lessee typically has strong focus on covering costs and generating profit, influencing decision-making relating to services, buildings and equipment.



Advantages	Disadvantages
position. – Lessee may be well positioned to obtain and provide immediate capital for improvements and maintenance requirements.	– Council has no opportunity to participate in centre management, with control usually exercised via a medium- to long-term lease.

5.2 Comparable Facility Review

As part of this service review, we sought to identify other rural councils that were a similar size and with similar facilities to the GRALC.

Table 12, below, lists the facilities that were identified as part of the comparative analysis.

Table 12 Comparable Facility Analysis

Council	LGA Population ⁴	Facility
Cessnock Council	63,632	Kurri Kurri Aquatic and Fitness Centre
Dubbo Regional Council	54,922	Dubbo Aquatic Centre
		Wellington Aquatic Leisure Centre
Goulburn Mulwaree Council	32,053	Goulburn Aquatic Leisure Centre
Griffith City Council	27,086	Griffith Regional Aquatic and Leisure Centre
Kiama Municipal Council	23,074	Kiama Aquatic and Leisure Centre
Lake Macquarie Council	213,845	West Wallsend Swim Centre
Maitland Council	90,226	East Maitland Aquatic Centre
		Maitland Aquatic Centre
Shoalhaven City Council	108,531	Nowra Aquatic Park
Singleton Council	24,577	Singleton Gym and Swim Centre

5.3 Key Insights

Key observations from our research include:

- It is difficult for councils that operate aquatic facilities to do so at a cost-neutral level.
- Broader strategic shift away from the traditional model where councils run a 50m outdoor pool, along with children's area and picnic facilities, towards indoor facilities.
- Greater focus now on revenue-generating activities such as learn-to-swim, health classes, recreation usage and key stakeholder groups such as swimming clubs.
- Merchandise and food kiosks have the potential to raise revenue if run efficiently and operated by sales-trained staff.
- Commercial returns from learn to swim and other program-based activities may reduce the

⁴ Population data sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021 Census).



subsidy per user visit that the community must currently pay.

- Key challenges are the recruitment and retention of experienced staff at all levels, particularly those involved with learn to swim and management/co-ordination activities.
- Heating and/or operating costs of outdoor pools in the winter tend to favour a seasonal model, particularly for councils in rural and regional areas.
- Some councils that run their own aquatic facilities are trying to move away from a younger, casualised workforce to a more experienced permanent staff model.
- Developing a skilled and motivated aquatic facility workforce requires Council to determine a clear long-term operating model, alongside training and professional accreditation opportunities.
- Generally, an in-house model provides councils with greater flexibility to respond to issues raised by elected officials and members of the public.
- An external model allows councils to utilise the skills and experience of a specialist provider with a large network of aquatic facilities to draw resources and knowledge from. However, this model can potentially lead to unforeseen capital or maintenance costs for Council, particularly toward the end of a contract.

The following section outlines some of the key themes that were identified via the review of comparable facilities in more detail.

5.3.1 Management models

Of the facilities reviewed, there was a relatively even spread between in-house and outsourced operations. This even spread was equally applied to councils that owned a single facility and those that owned multiple facilities, as well as those that ran seasonal pool facilities and those that ran year-round.

Two councils utilised a mixed model, being Cessnock Council and MidCoast Council. In the case of Cessnock City Council, the council's two outdoor public swimming pools (located at Branxton and Cessnock) are currently managed in-house, whereas the larger Kurri Kurri Aquatic and Fitness Centre (located at Kurri Kurri) is managed and operated externally by Belgravia Leisure. Similarly, MidCoast Council directly operates its smaller public swimming pools (located at Bulahdelah and Stroud), whereas the larger Great Lakes Aquatic Centre (located at Forster) and Manning Aquatic Centre (located at Taree) are managed externally by YMCA.

Decisions regarding the management model are largely attributed to strategic drivers and internal capability. Councils with a preference for outsourcing, perceive aquatics to be an important service that needs to be delivered, but not necessarily by the councils themselves, and appear motivated predominantly by a desire to achieve cost savings or cost containment. Such councils recognise that external operators are subject to a different ("cheaper") industrial award structure and enjoy greater buying power for pool chemicals, retail merchandise and utilities. In contrast, those councils that manage aquatic facilities themselves are motivated more by a desire to maintain high levels of service and ensure they remain responsive to community needs and expectations. These councils recognise that strong internal capability in aquatics and fitness facility management was critical to the success of the direct management model.

As to whether an external or internal model (or a combination of the two) is the best operating structure for Griffith City Council ultimately depends on several factors, including but not limited to operating costs, maintenance obligations, human resource capacity and user satisfaction and community feedback. As discussed in Section 5 of this report; on the information available, we would recommend that Council review the current management model and explore the potential benefits of pursuing an indirect management model.



5.3.2 Services and strategy

Many of the facilities reviewed indicated Learn to Swim was critical to improve cost recovery of pool operations. Gyms, fitness classes and kiosk facilities were also cited as critical earners that were able to improve cost recovery and reduce the cost burden on ratepayers for these facilities. We note that Griffith City Council already provides Learn to Swim classes as well as a range of other fitness and gym classes. As noted previously in this report, the GRALC facility does not incorporate or have space for a substantial kiosk or café, so there is no opportunity to achieve further revenue via a secondary spend retail offering such as this.

Construction of 50-metre pools has declined since the late twentieth century, following a peak in popularity during the period between the 1960s and 1990s, when there was strong community pressure to build 50-metre competition and training facilities. Two councils identified 50-metre pools as being detrimental to cost recovery and potentially not required by members of their respective communities, who were predominantly seeking recreational aquatic facilities (rather than competitive swimming facilities). In contrast, one council has recently developed their leisure centre to include a 50-metre outdoor pool. The GRALC's new 50m pool was identified by the community as an important need given Griffith's hot climate.

5.3.3 Fees and charges

Across the facilities examined, there were a variety of different pricing structures which provided for casual/one-off entry, season passes, 'add-on' fitness and aqua classes membership. Competitive long-term membership packages using a direct-debit system attract long-term users of aquatic facilities and provide some reliable cash inflows. We note that Griffith City Council already provides a range of package options.

While pricing structures vary in their degree of complexity, most facilities charged adult, child/concession, spectator, and family categories, with children under either three or four years old free of charge. *Table 13*, overleaf, provides a comparative analysis of the casual fees and charges levied by each of the shortlisted facilities (with all fees and charges drawn from each council's adopted Revenue Policy for the current 2023/24 year). Review of these figures suggests that Council is an outlier in its fees, noting its:

- Family admission fee of \$20.00 is higher than the average of \$18.53.
- Adult admission fee of \$7.00 is higher than the average of \$6.46.
- Child admission fee of \$5.00 is higher than the average of \$4.73.
- Spectator admission fee of \$1.50 is lower than the average of \$1.95.

We understand that Council has recently reviewed its fees and charges for the GRALC, including increasing fees and charges. However, as detailed above (and illustrated in further detail in *Table 13*, overleaf), Griffith City Council's fees and charges are comparatively higher than those levied by other centres.

Table 13 Fees and charges comparative analysis, Casual fees

Council	Facility	Casual Admission Fee				
		Family	Adult	Concession	Child	Spectator
Albury City Council	Wodonga Leisure Centre	\$18.20	\$7.60	\$6.00	\$5.90	
Cessnock Council	Kurri Kurri Aquatic and Fitness Centre	\$20.00	\$6.40	\$5.50	\$5.50	\$3.50
Dubbo Regional	Dubbo Aquatic	\$18.50	\$6.00	\$4.00	\$4.00	\$2.00



Council	Facility	Casual Admission Fee				
		Family	Adult	Concession	Child	Spectator
Council	Centre					
	Wellington Aquatic Leisure Centre	\$18.50	\$6.00	\$4.00	\$4.00	\$2.00
Goulburn Mulwaree Council	Goulburn Aquatic Leisure Centre	\$18.00	\$6.50	\$4.50	\$4.50	\$2.00
Griffith City Council	Griffith Regional Aquatic and Leisure Centre	\$20.00	\$7.00	GRALC has membership options	\$5.00	\$1.50
Kiama Municipal Council	Kiama Aquatic and Leisure Centre	\$22.00	\$7.00	\$5.00	\$5.00	\$4.50
Lake Macquarie Council	West Wallsend Swim Centre	\$16.80	\$6.60	\$4.10	\$4.10	\$3.10
Maitland Council	East Maitland Aquatic Centre	\$17.60	\$6.30	\$4.20	\$5.20	\$0.00
	Maitland Aquatic Centre	\$17.60	\$6.30	\$4.20	\$5.20	\$0.00
Shoalhaven City Council	Nowra Aquatic Park	\$17.70	\$5.10	\$3.80	\$3.80	\$0.00
Singleton Council	Singelton Gym and Swim Centre	\$19.00	\$6.20	\$4.10	\$4.80	\$2.50
Wagga Wagga City Council	Oasis Aquatic Centre	\$17.00	\$7.00	\$6.30	\$4.50	\$2.00
Average		\$18.53	\$6.46	\$4.64	\$4.73	\$1.95



Customer Service CS-CP-601 (PUBLIC POLICY)

1 Policy History

Revision No.	Council Meeting Date	Minute No.	Adoption Date
1	14/01/2003	25	14/01/2003
2	11/03/2003	248	11/03/2003
3	08/03/2005	70	08/03/2005
4	11/05/2010	0142	11/05/2010
5	10/03/2020	20/065	17/04/2020
6	09/07/2024	24/182	08/08/2024

2 Policy Objective

- To provide guidance for staff and Councillors in dealing with customers.
- To ensure that all customers are treated in the same manner.
- To ensure Council resources are used in the best available way.

3 Policy Statement

3.1 Service Commitment

~~3.1.1 Council staff and Councillors shall strive to meet the needs of our customers in a professional and ethical manner with courteous and efficient service.~~

We will ensure that all our customers will be provided with an efficient, friendly and responsive service.

Staff and Councillors shall:

- treat all customers with respect and courtesy
- listen to what customers have to say
- respond to customer enquiries promptly and efficiently
- act with integrity and honesty when liaising with customers
- consult customers about service needs
- ensure customer enquiries/requests are clearly understood

3.2 Standards of Service

3.2.1 Electronic correspondence will be acknowledged, and a response or request for further information made when required. Written correspondence will be acknowledged where further investigations are required to enact a response.



~~Council staff shall strive to respond to correspondence received from customers (written or emailed) within five (5) days. An acknowledgement letter may be sent where investigations are such that more than 5 business days is required to enact a response.~~

- 3.2.2 Telephone calls to Council shall be answered as quickly and efficiently as possible.
- 3.2.3 Council staff shall answer incoming calls by clearly stating their name. Unanswered calls shall divert to another member of staff or to voice mail.
- 3.2.4 Staff making outgoing calls shall identify themselves by name and council/division/branch, as appropriate, and shall clearly outline the purpose of the call.
- 3.2.5 Reception area and customer service centre staff shall greet customers as quickly as possible and in a professional and helpful manner.
- 3.2.6 Staff required to visit a customer external to Council facilities shall attempt to contact the customer first and make an appointment. At the beginning of a Council visit, staff shall clearly identify themselves and the purpose of the visit.
- 3.2.7 Council staff are to wear appropriate name badges to identify themselves when dealing with the public.

3.3 Customers Who Cannot Be Satisfied

- 3.3.1 Customers who cannot be satisfied are people who are not satisfied with Council responses to their enquiries and continue to maintain or assert that the Council is either unable to, or unwilling to assist them further and disagree with the action Council has taken in relation to their complaint or concern.
- 3.3.2 If in the opinion of the General Manager a customer cannot be satisfied and all appropriate avenues of internal review or appeal have been exhausted and the customer continues to write, telephone and/or visit Council the following actions may be taken:
 - a) the General Manager may write to the customer restating Council's position on the matter if necessary and advising that if the customer continues to contact Council regarding the matter Council may:



- i) not accept any further phone calls from the customer
 - ii) not grant any further interviews
 - iii) require all further communication to be put in writing
 - iv) continue to receive, read and file correspondence but only acknowledge or otherwise respond to it if:
 - the customer provides significant new information relating to their complaint or concern; or
 - the customer raises new issues which in the General Manager's opinion, warrant fresh action
- b) the General Manager shall advise Councillors of any correspondence issued in accordance with clause 3.3.2 (a)
- c) the customer shall be given an opportunity to make representations about Council's proposed course of action
- d) if the customer continues to contact Council after being advised of Council's proposed course of action, the General Manager may, after considering any representations from the customer, advise the customer that any or all of points i) - iv) above will now apply

3.4 Customers Who Make Unreasonable Demands

- 3.4.1 Customers who make unreasonable demands are those people whose demands on Council start to significantly and unreasonably divert Council's resources away from other functions or create an inequitable allocation of resources to other customers. Such demands may result from the amount of information requested, the nature or scale of services sought or the number of approaches seeking information, assistance or service.
- 3.4.2 If in the opinion of the General Manager a customer is making unreasonable demands on Council and the customer continues to write, telephone and/or visit the agency the following actions may be taken:
- a) the General Manager may write to the customer advising them of Council's concern and requesting that they limit and focus their requests and that if the customer continues to place unreasonable demands on the organisation the Council may:
 - i) not respond to any future correspondence and only take action where, in the opinion of the General Manager the correspondence raises specific, substantial and serious issues; or
 - ii) only respond to a certain number of requests in a given period
 - b) the General Manager shall advise Councillors of any correspondence issued in accordance with clause 3.4.2 (a)
 - c) the customer shall be given an opportunity to make representations about Council's proposed course of action



- d) if the customer continues to contact Council after being advised of Council's proposed course of action, the General Manager may, after considering any representations from the customer, advise the customer that either or both of points i) - ii) above will now apply

3.5 Customers Who Raise Numerous Generalised and Repeated Demands

3.5.1 If in the opinion of the General Manager customers are making numerous generalised and repeated demands that are difficult for staff to understand the following actions may be taken:

- a) the General Manager may notify the customer that:
 - i) only the Public Officer will deal with them in future
 - ii) they must make an appointment with the public officer or have an agreed monthly meeting at a set time; or
 - iii) all future contact with Council must be in writing
- b) the General Manager shall advise Councillors of any notification issued in accordance with clause 3.5.1 (a)
- c) the customer shall be given an opportunity to make representations about Council's proposed course of action

3.6 Customers Who Constantly Raise The Same Issue With Different Staff

3.6.1 If in the opinion of the General Manager a customer is constantly raising the same issues with different staff the following actions may be taken:

- a) the General Manager may notify the customer that:
 - i) only the Public Officer will deal with them in future
 - ii) they must make an appointment with the Public Officer or have an agreed monthly meeting at a set time; or
 - iii) all future contact with Council must be in writing
- b) the General Manager shall advise Councillors of any notification issued in accordance with clause 3.6.1 (a)
- c) the customer shall be given an opportunity to make representations about Council's proposed course of action

3.7 Customers Who Are Rude, Abusive or Aggressive, or exhibits signs of mental health distress or substance abuse

3.7.1 Rude, abusive or aggressive behaviour may include rude or otherwise vulgar noises, expressions or gestures, verbal abuse of either a personal or general nature, threatening or offensive behaviour, physical violence against property or physical violence against a person.



3.7.2 If in the opinion of any staff member rude, abusive or aggressive comments or statements are made in telephone conversations or interviews, the staff member may:

- a) warn the caller that if the behaviour continues the conversation or interview will be terminated
- b) terminate the conversation or interview if the rude, abusive or aggressive behaviour continues after a warning has been given.

3.7.3 Where a conversation or interview is terminated in accordance with clause 3.7.2, the staff member must notify the General Manager or the relevant Director of the details as soon as possible.

3.7.4 If in the opinion of the General Manager any correspondence to Council contains personal abuse, inflammatory statements or material clearly intended to intimidate, it will be returned to the sender and not otherwise acted upon.

3.7.4. To ensure a safe and comfortable environment for all, customers exhibiting erratic behavior or extreme emotional stress, which may be attributable to a mental health condition or substance abuse, may be asked to leave the building and/or the Police may be asked to intervene.

3.8 General

3.8.1 In all of the situations referred to in this policy, adequate documentary records must be made and maintained on the appropriate Council file.

3.8.2 Where the General Manager determines to limit a customer's access to Council in any of the ways specified in this policy, the General Manager must advise the Council as soon as possible of the relevant circumstances and the action taken and forward such advice, where appropriate, to the ICAC, Department of Local Government and the NSW Ombudsman for information.

4 Definitions

None

5 Exceptions

None

6 Legislation

Local Government Act 1993



7 Related Documents

Customer Service Charter (Attached)
Emergency Response Procedures – WHS-FO-105

8 Directorate

Sustainable Development

~~CUSTOMER SERVICE CHARTER~~

~~OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU~~

~~We are committed to working in partnership with the community, to deliver excellent service standards through dedication, innovation and continuous improvement.~~

~~We will ensure that all our customers will be provided with an efficient, friendly and responsive service within an appropriate timeframe.~~

~~We guarantee your confidentiality is a priority and no personal information, verbal or written, will be disclosed to the public, without your consent.~~

~~WHEN A CUSTOMER VISITS OR TELEPHONES COUNCIL~~

- ~~○ We will attend to the counter and answer the telephone promptly, courteously and deal with an enquiry directly without unnecessary referrals or transfers.~~
- ~~○ If we cannot deal with the enquiry we will forward your request to the appropriate department and a telephone call will be returned at the first opportunity.~~
- ~~○ A Duty Planner and Building Surveyor is available each day by appointment to answer any in depth Development or Building enquiries.~~
- ~~○ If Council is not the current service provider for the nature of your enquiry, we will endeavor to direct our customers to the relevant provider.~~

~~CUSTOMER REQUEST MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (CRM)~~

- ~~○ Record all works or services requests from customers into CRM for actioning and resolving with the relevant department.~~
- ~~○ For works or services requests, we will provide the CRM identification number to the Customer for future reference.~~



- Following the day of the CRM requests, they are actioned within Council's standard timeframe and we strive to ensure;

Phone Call	Answered within 1 working day
Written Acknowledgement or Response	Answered within 5 working days

WHAT WE ASK OF YOU

- Providing us with accurate and complete details when you contact us
- Respecting the privacy and rights of other customers
- Treating our employees with respect and courtesy
- Phoning ahead to make an appointment for complex enquiries or the need to see a specific officer
- Having a note pad and pen or device by the phone to records any details
- Quoting any reference numbers that may be applicable to your enquiry
- If you wish to make a complaint about a service, please speak to a Customer Service Officer, or alternatively ask to speak to Council's Public Officer relating to personnel.

COUNCIL RESPONSIBILITY

MAYOR—Exercise policy making functions, presides at meetings of council and carries out civic and ceremonial functions.

COUNCILLORS—Represent the interests of residents and ratepayers as a member of the governing body of council.

GENERAL MANAGER—Responsible for efficient operation of council (day to day management) and carry out council decisions.

ACCESSIBILITY

Griffith City Council is contactable by:

In person at the Customer Service Centre – From 8:15am to 4:00pm Monday to Friday

1 Benerembah Street, Griffith

By Phone on 1300 176 077 from 8:15 am to 5:00pm Monday to Friday

By Email admin@griffith.nsw.gov.au

Via Website www.griffith.nsw.gov.au



<https://www.facebook.com/griffithcitycouncil>



~~**Emergency After Hours Contact** on (02) 6964 0886~~

~~**Water & Sewer Emergencies/Odour Complaints After Hours** on (02) 6962 8105~~

~~**Animal Hotline (dog attacks, stock on the road etc.) After Hours** on 0408 210 196~~

~~**All fire emergencies please call** 000~~

OTHER SERVICES AVAILABLE

~~**Community Directory** with Information on Community Services, Groups and Organisations is available on our [Website](#).~~

~~**JP Services** — JPs are available Monday to Friday within Council's business hours.~~



Council's Customer Service Charter

Information for customers

Our commitment to you

We are committed to working in partnership with the community, to deliver excellent service standards through dedication, innovation and continuous improvement.

We will ensure that all our customers will be provided with an efficient, friendly and responsive service.

Our service standards



In person we will

Attend to the counter promptly and greet you with respect, courtesy and understanding

Ensure your enquiry is dealt with directly without unnecessary referrals or transfers.

Do our very best to untangle red tape and streamline processes and systems

Refer your enquiry to the relevant department who will look into it as soon as practical if we're not able to resolve your issue immediately



In response to written letters, emails, website and QR code correspondence we will

Acknowledge correspondence as soon as practical

Action your request where possible

Record all written correspondence

Provide a response or contact you for further information where needed.



On the phone we will

Answer calls promptly and advise our name and department

Listen to your enquiry and provide understanding in a friendly manner

Ask further questions if required to be able to assist you as best as possible

Ensure your enquiry is answered as efficient as possible

Redirect the call if required to another department, or record your request and forward onto another officer

Help us to help you



When contacting us for assistance you will

Provide us with accurate and complete details

Treat our employees with respect and courtesy

Phone ahead to make an appointment for complex enquiries or the need to see a specific officer

Respect the privacy and rights of other customers

Personal Information

We will respect the confidentiality of information that you provide to us and will comply with the Information Protection Principles set out in the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act, 1998, as modified by the Privacy Code of Practice for Local Government and the Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002 (NSW).

Griffith City Council | 1 Benerembah Street Griffith NSW 2680 | 1300 176 077
www.griffith.nsw.gov.au | admin@griffith.nsw.gov.au



Use of Council Footpaths UD-CP-201 (PUBLIC POLICY)

1 Policy History

Revision No.	Council Meeting Date	Minute No.	Adoption Date
1	11/05/2010	0142	11/05/2010
2	25/06/2013	0203	25/06/2013
3	14/06/2016	16/168	14/06/2016
4	13/03/2018	18/084	13/04/2018
5	09/07/2024	24/182	08/08/2024

2 Policy Objective

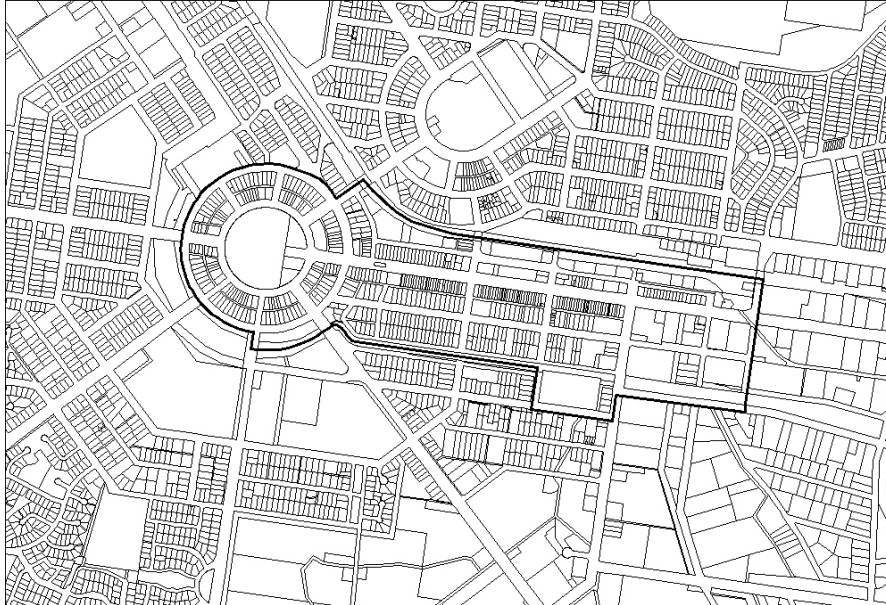
- The purpose of this policy is to set down guidelines and application requirements relating to the use of Council's footpaths within the CBD for the following:
 - a) To provide local food and drink premises including hotels, refreshment rooms, cafes, restaurants in the city's commercial zone with the opportunity to establish safe outdoor eating areas on the public footpath;
 - b) To provide opportunities for not-for-profit organisations, charities and commercial operators to set up food vending carts and barbeques to operate from appropriate locations on Council's footpath;
 - c) To provide local business the opportunity to display merchandise in appropriate locations on Council's footpath;
 - d) To provide local business the opportunity to display temporary advertising structures in appropriate locations on Council's footpath; and
 - e) To enable buskers to perform on land owned by or in the control of Council.
- To manage public safety on footways for all people living in and visiting the Griffith area, especially for the elderly and the visibility/mobility impaired.
- Maintain a safe environment and prevent obstruction to pedestrian and vehicle movement in the designated area.

3 Land to Which This Policy Applies

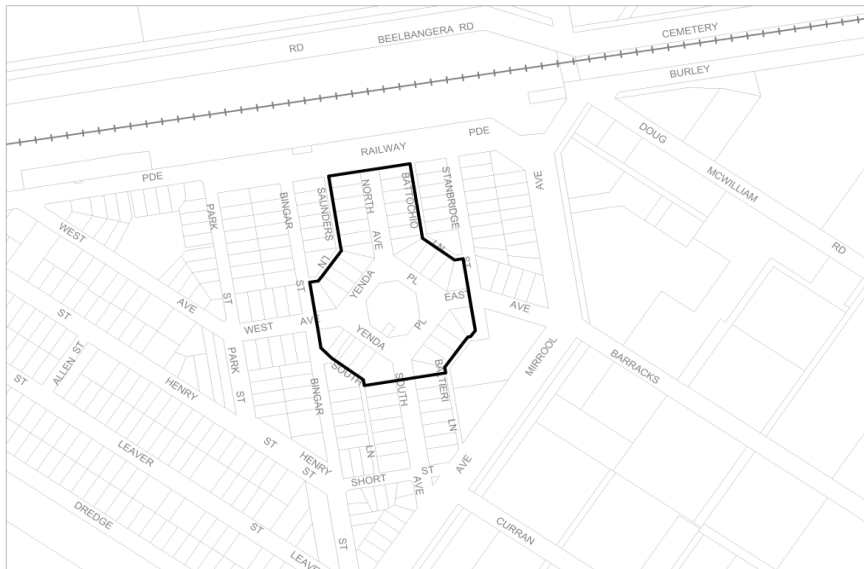
- 3.1 This policy applies to land within the Griffith CBD and the Yenda Town Centre identified within the black line area on the following maps.



Map 1 Griffith CBD



Map 2 Yenda Town Centre





- 3.2 The display of temporary advertising structures and goods for sale is not permitted in the following areas:
- a) Parks, open spaces or public road median strips.
 - b) Narrow footpaths that are considered to have high pedestrian use.
 - c) Footpaths that are occupied by other uses, such as bus stop, taxi ranks, fire hydrants, Australia Post facilities.
 - d) Footpaths in the vicinity of intersections which may interfere with visibility or distract vehicular movement.

4 Policy Statement

4.1 Outdoor Dining Area – Requirement for Development Consent and a Licence to Occupy

Where it is proposed to use Council's footpath for outdoor dining incorporating the placement of tables, chairs and associated shade structures, an application for development consent is to be made to Council and determined in accordance with the provisions of Environmental Planning & Assessment Act, 1979 and Section 125 of the Roads Act, 1993.

In addition, applicants will be required to enter into a licence agreement with Council, make payment of fees based on the dimensions of the area approved by Council in accordance with Council's Revenue Policy and provide written indemnification against action or claims against Council included in Public Liability Insurances.

Development consent determines only that the footpath may be used for the purpose of outdoor dining. The licence to occupy the footpath is an agreement between the occupier and the land owner (Council) describing the terms under which the footpath is used. This may vary from time to time in accordance with this Policy or its amendments.

The existence of development consent does not imply approval of any of the terms of the licence agreement. A licence agreement will not be entered into that departs from conditions of development consent.

4.1.1 Controls

The following controls have been developed to provide guidelines for applicants seeking development consent for outdoor dining:

- a) Only applies to premises which have received development approval for or are lawfully used as food and drink premises.



- b) There shall be no obstruction or danger created for pedestrian or vehicular traffic flow.
- c) The area to be occupied shall normally be of a dimension that is equal to the width of the shop front. A development or licence application which proposes to extend forward of the neighbouring shop front will be referred to the neighbouring property owner and business operator unless written permission of the parties is contained in the application. Objections by the neighbouring land owner or business operator will be referred to a Council meeting for determination.
- d) A minimum 2.6 m wide clear area is to be provided to enable pedestrian movement. A greater distance may be required based on the proposal and the circumstances of the case including existing constraints due to the volume of pedestrian traffic, proximities to other footpath obstructions, proximity to intersections and other footpath conditions including cross-fall and slope.
- e) Outdoor dining will not be permitted on the footpath adjacent to the shop wall.
- f) Where parking is adjacent to any proposed outdoor eating area a setback of one metre is required for passengers to alight from their vehicles. A suitable road safety barrier system may be required with a 1.0 metre setback from the kerb.
- g) If alcohol is to be served, it shall be done in accordance with Liquor and Gaming NSW licensing requirements for primary service authorisation. In the case of hotel premises, the outdoor eating area on Council's footpath is to be used primarily for the serving and consumption of meals and is not to be used solely for serving alcohol such as a 'beer garden'.
- h) Any approval for meal consumption will require appropriate signage stating that the furniture is only to be used by customers who are to consume a meal prepared or sold by the establishment, and stating any restriction to hours where alcohol is consumed. The wording is to be approved by the Director Sustainable Development (or equivalent position) or their nominated delegate.
- i) Where it is proposed that alcohol will be consumed, specific approval is required from the Liquor and Gaming NSW and where no liquor license is in force both Griffith City Council and Liquor and Gaming NSW.
- j) The hours of operation generally will be:-
 - (i) For premises where no alcohol service is provided, the hours for the use of the outdoor seating shall be between 6.00am until the



close of trade of the approved use of the premises or 2.00am whichever is the earliest.

- (ii) For premises where alcohol is proposed to be served including BYO premises, the hours for the use of the outdoor seating shall be between 6.00am until the close of trade of the approved use of the premises or 2.00am whichever is the earliest. Alcohol shall not be served or consumed on the footpath prior to 10.00am or after 10.30pm Sunday to Thursday, and prior to 10.00am to midnight Friday and Saturdays

A legible sign describing the requirements above is to be clearly displayed.

- k) No moveable furniture is to be left on the footpath area outside the hours stated in (i) above.
- l) Unless otherwise approved by Council, Street Furniture must meet the following objectives:
 - (i) Moveable tables must be metal mesh, timber or similar construction.
 - (ii) Chairs must be metal mesh, timber or similar finish.
 - (iii) High quality plastic furniture shall be permitted with the approval of Council.
 - (iv) A range of umbrella colours will be permitted provided there is consistent grouping of the theme of the umbrellas in colour and advertising.
 - (v) Discrete advertising related to the restaurant premises will be permitted on the umbrellas.
 - (vii) Street furniture must be kept in good serviceable order and repair.
- m) Where it is proposed or is considered necessary to carry out footpath construction works, paving materials shall be in accordance with the relevant policy or masterplan.
- n) Planter boxes, screens, menu boards or other paraphernalia may be approved subject to specifications required by the Director Sustainable Development (or equivalent position) or their nominated delegate provided details are provided in the development application.
- o) Where no onsite toilet facilities are provided, the maximum number of chairs on the footpath plus within the premises shall not exceed 20.



- p) Drop-down screens that interfere with the effectiveness of CCTV coverage will not be allowed.
- q) Where the use of a heating device is proposed, details of the type, location and design must be included in the application. Appropriate fire safety equipment must be easily accessible and its location noted in the application.

Heating devices should turn off automatically if overturned to prevent injury to patrons and property. Heating devices must be removed from public land and appropriately stored when not in use.

Direct access to the gas mains and use of electrical extension cords are not permitted.

Installation of gas heaters should be in accordance with AS 4565 – 2004 Radiant Gas Heaters. Heaters must not be placed where they may present a fire hazard (eg in close proximity to umbrellas).

- r) In limited circumstances Council may approve the use of a portion of an Outdoor Dining Area for the purposes of a coffee cart to be used in conjunction with an approved refreshment room. The coffee cart shall comply with the, Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code and the NSW Food Act 2003 and Regulation. Patrons of the coffee cart shall be within the outdoor dining area while being served and queuing outside of this area is not permitted.
- s) Council may require the approved area to be delineated at the applicant's expense. The method of delineation will be determined by Council.

4.1.2 Application Requirements

- a) The applicant shall lodge a completed development application with Council which shall be accompanied with the following:
 - (i) Owner's consent from the land owner of the food and drink premises and Griffith City Council as the owner of the footpath. Should the siting of any tables and chairs extend beyond the boundary of the site, then owner's consent is also required from the neighbouring properties;
 - (ii) Payment of the prescribed fee for a development application, as published in Council's Revenue Policy;
 - (iii) Detailed plans of the footpath, showing the exact dimensions and position of the proposed area, siting of the street furniture, a cross-section from the property boundary to the top-of-kerb and details of the style, type and colour of the street furniture;



- (iv) A statement of environmental effects.
 - (v) Completion of any extension of an existing Licensing Authority trading licence to incorporate the footpath area.
 - (vi) Evidence of a current public liability insurance cover (minimum \$20 million) which must indemnify Council and include footpath trading.
 - (vii) An application for a licence to occupy the footpath
- b) Where conditional approval is granted the following will be payable in accordance with Council's Revenue Policy:
- an annual fee per square metre
 - a bond
 - a licence preparation fee
- c) The footpath license approval will be limited to a maximum 36 months for the area forward of the shop front and 12 months for areas that extend forward of adjoining shop fronts.

4.2 Food Vending Carts and Barbeques

Where it is proposed to use Council's footpath for the sale of food and drinks on a take-away basis incorporating the placement of food vending carts and gas operated barbeques as defined in this policy an Activity Application is to be made to Council and determined in accordance with the provisions of Local Government Act, 1993. Any such approval will be subject to compliance with the provisions set down in 3.2.1 of the Policy and will be subject to conditions including, but not limited to, annual agreement where the payment of fees is in accordance with Council's Revenue Policy and written indemnification against action or claims against Council included in Public Liability Insurances.

4.2.1 Controls

The following controls have been developed to provide guidelines for applicants seeking approval for mobile food vending carts and barbeques.

- a) No obstruction or danger is created for pedestrian or vehicular traffic flow.
- b) The area to be occupied shall be parallel in length to the shop front. Any extensions on to the neighbouring shopfront of the same premises must have the neighbouring property owner's written permission prior to submitting an Activity Application.



- c) A minimum 2.6 m wide clear area being provided to enable pedestrian movement. A greater distance may be required based on the proposal and the circumstances of the case including existing constraints due to the volume of pedestrian traffic, proximities to other footpath obstructions, proximity to intersections and other footpath conditions including cross-fall and slope, or the nature of the proposed activity.
- d) The hours of operation for the vending cart or barbeque selling or displaying commodities are limited from 8.00am to 7.00pm daily during Daylight Saving period and from 8.00am to 6.00pm daily during other times of the year. In exceptional circumstances, hours of operation may be varied at the discretion of the Director of Sustainable Development (or equivalent position) or their nominated delegate.
- e) The mobile food vending cart or barbeque shall not operate within 50 metres from any existing business or other premises, displaying or selling similar types of food stuffs at the same time. In addition a mobile food vending cart shall not operate within 50 metres from any not-for-profit or charity organisation operating a fund raising activity which includes a barbeque facility.
- f) No alcohol is to be served.
- g) No food vending cart or barbeque equipment moveable furniture is to be left on the footpath area outside the hours stated in d) above.
- h) All food vending carts and barbeque equipment displaying or selling food must comply with the Food Standards, Australian and New Zealand Food Safety Standards, the Food Act 2003 and the applicable requirements of the NSW Food Authority – Mobile Food Vending Vehicles, 2009.
- i) Suitable garbage receptacles with close-fitting lids must be provided in the food vending cart. When directed, a suitable receptacle must be provided adjacent to the food vending cart for placing litter and all garbage must be removed daily or more frequently when the need arises

4.2.2 Application Requirements (Food Vending Cart)

- a) The applicant shall lodge a completed application with Council which shall be accompanied with the following:
 - (i) Owner's consent from the premises where the food vending cart is to set up in front of and Griffith City Council as the owner of the footpath.
 - (ii) Payment of the prescribed fee;



- (iii) Detailed plans of the footpath, showing the exact dimensions and position of the proposed siting of equipment, a cross-section from the property boundary;
 - (iv) Design and specifications of the proposed food vending cart.
- b) Where conditional approval is granted the following will be payable:-
 - an annual fee per square metre
 - a bond
 - a licence preparation fee
- c) Evidence of a current public liability insurance cover (minimum \$20 million) is to be provided which must indemnify Council of all public liability.
- d) The approval will be limited to a maximum 36 months and be renewable after the end of this period
- e) The fees payable under 4.2.2 (a)(ii) and (b) above are amended and adopted by Council annually and published in Council's Revenue Policy.

4.2.3 Application Requirements (Barbeques)

- a) The applicant shall lodge a completed application with Council which shall be accompanied with the following:
 - (i) Owner's consent from the premises where barbeque is to set up in front of and Griffith City Council as the owner of the footpath.
 - (ii) A plan of the footpath, showing the proposed siting of barbeque equipment
- b) Evidence of a current public liability insurance cover (minimum \$20 million) is to be provided which must indemnify Council of all public liability.
- c) The approval will be limited to a one (1) day only and be renewable after the end of this period

4.3 Display of Goods

Where it is proposed to use Council's footpath for the display of goods incorporating the placement of merchandising racks and trade tables an Activity Application is to be made to Council and determined in accordance with the provisions of Local Government Act, 1993. Any such approval will be subject to compliance with the



provisions set down in 4.3.1 of the Policy and will be subject to conditions including, but not limited to, annual agreement where the payment of fees is based on the dimensions of the area approved by Council and written indemnification against action or claims against Council included in Public Liability Insurances.

Approval will only be given where in the opinion of Council there is adequate area for pedestrian circulation and safe lines of sight and where the use is considered to contribute positively to the proposed character of the area and streetscape.

Where heritage values are applicable, street use and styling of street furniture shall be complementary to the heritage values.

If operation of the business is found to cause undue inconvenience or disruption to pedestrian and traffic circulation or the adjoining premises, Council may take steps to terminate the licence.

Where compliance cannot be achieved due to the circumstances of the case, a development application is to be made to Council and determined in accordance with the provisions of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979.

4.3.1 Controls

- a) Council will consider the following matters in determining the application:
 - (i) Suitability of goods for open display: Whether products may be considered offensive in a manner from accepted social, moral, religious and cultural perspective.
 - (ii) Safety aspects of display: Whether the proposed display and sale of goods is likely to cause a safety hazard for pedestrians or detrimentally affect the amenity of the surrounding area or cause damage to footways.
 - (iii) Stability: Any display structures with wheels must incorporate a locking device for safety and stability.
 - (iv) Public health requirements: Display and sale of food items must meet all requirements of the relevant health legislation (eg. safe storage, appropriate temperature regulation, etc).
- b) Approval permits the use of the footpath adjacent to the business premises. The display must not extend further than 1 metre from the existing shop front and be restricted to the length of the street boundary of the premises unless otherwise agreed by Council and stated on the licence permit.



- c) A minimum clear width of 2.6 metres must be obtained for pedestrians at all times without obstructions from urban features including street trees, bins, street furniture and signs.
- d) Empty boxes or disused packaging must not remain on the footway area or be rested against Council's litterbins, trees or other street furniture. Failure to remove waste may result in the termination of licence.
- e) All outdoor furniture is to be stored away from the public area and off public land outside the hours of operations as approved of the current business.
- f) The day-to-day operation of a business in a licensed street trading area is the responsibility of the proprietor/permit holder and the use is at the permit holder's own risk. It is their responsibility to ensure good management practices occur, and the permit holder must:
 - (i) Operate the business in accordance with principles outlined in this policy and conditions of license agreement;
 - (ii) Manage the furniture and features within the designated approved area, and ensure furniture is returned to position when moved by customers;
 - (iii) Monitor behaviour of customers and ensure courtesy is extended to both the general public and surrounding occupants in terms of noise and social behaviour;
 - (iv) Observe all legal requirements and laws relating to the business;
 - (v) Maintain access in and around the site with consideration that the occupied space is publicly owned space;
 - (vi) Comply with all requests made by Council's Planning and Compliance Officers, both formal and informal during the course of the daily operation of the business.
- g) All goods for sale must be established well clear of driveway access points and routes for emergency vehicles;
- h) Display stand(s) must be:
 - (i) Stable, and in the case of inclement weather conditions be removed from the footpath;
 - (ii) Constructed of metal or solid timber construction and of a colour harmonious to the surrounds;
 - (iii) High presentation quality and appearance;



- (iv) Fit for purpose; and
- (v) Suitably finished so that no damage is caused to Council's pavements.
- i) Displays must be placed immediately against the front wall of the approved business;
- j) Displays must not exceed 1 metre in width or extend beyond the common boundary between adjacent shops;
- k) The permit holder shall be permitted to display goods and place display stands within the approved trading area only during the hours that the business premises is open. All display stands, racks, containers and goods must be removed from the footway and stored within the business premises after business hours;
- l) No temporary containers, milk crates, cardboard boxes, packing cases, packing material or similar receptacles are to be used at any time;
- m) Goods, boxes or packing material are not to be stored above or under the display, or stored anywhere outside the approved trading area. All empty or disused boxes must be removed from footway area and stored or disposed of in private garbage bins;
- n) No goods shall be placed directly upon the ground;
- o) Full supervision and control must be readily available from the licence holder, proprietor or employees;
- p) The placement of food, perishables or produce of any type within the approved area must comply with health regulations, legislation and requirements;
- q) Displays and goods must not hang from awnings or be attached to the shop fronts;
- r) The permit holder will only be permitted to sell goods that are available from the subject business;
- s) The projection of amplified music, spruiking, live or taped advertising material into the street is not permitted;
- t) Any repair or maintenance works to be carried out on the footpath by Council will take precedent over the approval for commercial use. The approval will be suspended during any such work on the footpath and the Licence Holder will be given reasonable period of notice in advance;
- u) The display of the following items are prohibited:



- (i) Cooking or preparation of food;
 - (ii) Breakable items such as glass, china ware and bottled liquids;
 - (iii) Offensive materials;
 - (iv) Computer games, vending machines, pinball machines and the like;
 - (v) Large items of household furniture and whitegoods;
 - (vi) Liquor products, beers, wines or the like, tobacco products or drugs of any type including scheduled medicines; and
- v) The following are general conditions of a standard licence agreement:
- (i) The approved area shall not be utilised by anyone other than the permit holder;
 - (ii) The permit holder shall pay a fee to Council on the first day of each financial year. Council will issue notification and request for updated Public Liability insurance prior to this time. Public liability insurance is to be for a minimum value of \$20 million, with Griffith City Council noted as an interested party. Council reserves the right to review fees at any time;
 - (iii) The licence holder shall be responsible for any damage caused to Council's footway by the installation, maintenance and/or removal of the outdoor furniture or facilities, and will bear all costs to repair and make good to existing;
 - (iv) A copy of the licence agreement must be kept on the premises, and is to be produced on request by Council's officers. The permit sticker must be displayed in a prominent position in the front window of the premises at all times;
 - (v) Licence agreements are to remain with the property.
 - (vi) Failure to comply with any of the requirements of this policy or conditions of the approval may result in the termination of the approval. Any breach of safety must be rectified immediately as non-compliance will result in immediate loss of permit.

In the event that Council cancels the approval then it may be cancelled by notice in writing by the Council to the Licence Holder given at any time on receipt of which the Permit Holder must remove all material from the footway and shall have no other rights under the agreement. If the furniture is not removed and the public



place is not reinstated to its original condition within a period specified by Council, works will be carried out at the licence holder's expense;

- (vii) If the conditions of the licence are to be varied, the necessary documentation must be submitted to Council requesting the change and giving appropriate reasons for the request. Depending on the extent of the requested change, referral to Council staff for assessment and payment of reassessment fees may be required. If Council staff agrees to the amendments, the licence must then be amended and re-signed prior to any changes being made to the street trading area.

4.3.2 Application Requirements

- a) Where the display of merchandising racks and trading tables comply with the provisions of clause 4.3.1 of this policy applicant shall lodge a completed Activity Application with Council which shall be accompanied with the following:
 - (i) Owner's consent from the land owner of the premises and Griffith City Council as the owner of the footpath.
 - (ii) Payment of the prescribed fee;
 - (iii) Detailed plans of the footpath, showing the siting of the merchandise rack and/or display table; and details of the style, type and colour of the street furniture; and
- b) Where the display of merchandising racks and trading tables do not comply with the provisions of clause 4.3.1 the applicant shall lodge a completed development application with Council which shall be accompanied with the following:
 - (i) Owner's consent from the land owner of the premises and Griffith City Council as the owner of the footpath. Should the siting of any tables and chairs extend beyond the boundary of the site, then owner's consent is also required from the neighbouring properties;
 - (ii) Payment of the prescribed fee;
 - (iii) Detailed plans of the footpath, showing the siting of the merchandise rack and/or display table; and details of the style, type and colour of the street furniture; and
 - (iv) A statement of environmental effects which is also to include justification for the variation to the requirements of the policy.



- c) Where approval is granted evidence of a current public liability insurance cover (minimum \$20 million) is to be provided which must indemnify Council.
- d) The approval will be limited to a maximum 36 months at which time a new application is to be lodged with Council. Applications for renewal should be lodged with Council at least 4 weeks prior to any approval lapsing.
- e) The fees payable under 4.3.2(a)(ii) and (b)(ii) above are adopted by Council annually and published in Council's Revenue Policy.

4.4 Temporary Advertising Structures

Where it is proposed to use Council's footpath for temporary advertising structures incorporating the placement a-frame or sandwich board or like type structures an Activity Application is to be made to Council and determined in accordance with the provisions of Local Government Act, 1979.

Any such approval will be subject to compliance with the provisions set down in 3.4.1 of the Policy and will be subject to conditions including, but not limited to, annual agreement where the payment of fees is based on the dimensions of the area approved by Council and written indemnification against action or claims against Council included in Public Liability Insurances.

Approval will only be given where in the opinion of Council there is adequate area for pedestrian circulation and safe lines of sight and where the use is considered to contribute positively to the proposed character of the area and streetscape.

If the placement of the sign is found to cause undue inconvenience or disruption to pedestrian and traffic circulation or the adjoining premises, Council will take steps to terminate the licence.

Where compliance cannot be achieved due to the circumstances of the case, a development application is to be made to Council and determined in accordance with the provisions of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979.

4.4.1 Controls

- a) The maximum number of a-frame or sandwich board or like type structures permitted shall be one (1) per premises. Where a premises is occupied by more than one business, such as an arcade or a first floor use, one (1) additional sign may be permitted.
- b) The content of the sign is only to display details of the business, including details of goods and services available or special sales. The sign shall not contain third-party advertising.



- c) A minimum clear width of 2.6 metres must be obtained for pedestrians at all times without obstructions from urban features including street trees, bins, street furniture and signs.
- d) All moveable signage is to be stored away from the public area and off public land outside the hours of operations as approved of the current business.
- e) All signage must be kept clear of access points to the shop including those of adjoining premises. and routes for emergency vehicles;
- f) The a-frame sign, sandwich board or like type structure must be:
 - (i) Stable, and in the case of inclement weather conditions be removed from the footpath;
 - (ii) Constructed of metal or solid timber construction and of a colour harmonious to the surrounds;
 - (iii) High presentation quality and appearance;
 - (iv) Suitably finished so that no damage is caused to Council's pavements.
- g) The a-frame sign, sandwich board or like structure must not exceed a height of 1200mm nor exceed 600mm in width.
- h) Displays must be placed immediately against the front wall of the approved business;
- i) Any repair or maintenance works to be carried out on the footpath by Council will take precedent over the approval for commercial use. The approval will be suspended during any such work on the footpath and the Permit Holder will be given reasonable period of notice in advance;
- j) The following are general conditions of a standard licence agreement:
 - (i) The approved area shall not be utilised by anyone other than the permit holder;
 - (ii) The permit holder shall pay a fee to Council on the first day of each financial year. Council will issue notification and request for updated Public Liability insurance prior to this time. Public liability insurance is to be for a minimum value of \$20 million, with Griffith City Council noted as an interested party. Council reserves the right to review fees at any time;
 - (iii) The permit holder shall be responsible for any damage caused to Council's footway by the installation, maintenance and/or removal



of the outdoor furniture or facilities, and will bear all costs to repair and make good to existing;

- (iv) A copy of the licence agreement must be kept on the premises, and is to be produced on request by Council's officers. The permit sticker must be displayed in a prominent position in the front window of the premises at all times;
- (v) Licence agreements are to remain with the property.
- (vi) Failure to comply with any of the requirements of this policy or conditions of the approval may result in the termination of the approval. Any breach of safety must be rectified immediately as non-compliance will result in immediate loss of permit.
- (vii) In the event that Council cancels the approval then it may be cancelled by notice in writing by the Council to the Permit Holder given at any time on receipt of which the Permit Holder must remove all material from the footway and shall have no other rights under the agreement. If the signage is not removed and the public place is not reinstated to its original condition within a period specified by Council, works will be carried out at the licence holder's expense;
- (viii) If the conditions of the licence are to be varied, the necessary documentation must be submitted to Council requesting the change and giving appropriate reasons for the request. Depending on the extent of the requested change, referral to Council staff for assessment and payment of reassessment fees may be required. If Council staff agrees to the amendments, the licence must then be amended and re-signed prior to any changes being made to the street trading area.

4.4.2 Application Requirements

- a) Where the display of temporary advertising structures complies with the provisions of clause 4.4.1 of this policy applicant shall lodge a completed Activity Application with Council which shall be accompanied with the following:
 - (i) Owner's consent from the land owner of the premises and Griffith City Council as the owner of the footpath.
 - (ii) Payment of the prescribed fee;
 - (iii) Detailed plans of the footpath, showing the siting of the advertising structure and details of the style, type and colour.



- b) Where the display of the advertising structure does not comply with the provisions of clause 4.4.1 the applicant shall lodge a completed development application with Council which shall be accompanied with the following:
 - (i) Owner's consent from the land owner of the premises and Griffith City Council as the owner of the footpath.
 - (ii) Payment of the prescribed fee;
 - (iii) Detailed plans of the footpath, showing the siting of the advertising structure; and details of the style, type and colour of the advertising structure and
 - (iv) A statement of environmental effects which is also to include justification for the variation to the requirements of the policy.
- c) Where approval is granted evidence of a current public liability insurance cover (minimum \$20 million) is to be provided which must indemnify Council and include footpath trading must be provided annually
- d) The approval will be limited to a maximum 36 months at which time a new application is to be lodged with Council. Applications for renewal should be lodged with Council at least 4 weeks prior to any approval lapsing.
- e) The fees payable under 4.4.2(a)(ii) and (b)(ii) above are adopted by Council annually and published in Council's Revenue Policy

4.5 Public Performance including Busking

Griffith City Council encourages performances and busking within the central business district provided that a permit is obtained from Council's City Strategy and Development Department and the prescribed fee is paid.

4.5.1 Controls

- a) Buskers can perform anywhere in the central business district with the exceptions of the following:
 - (i) Median strips within a public road
 - (iii) Within the area immediately surrounding the Cenotaph in Memorial Park.
- b) Buskers can perform at any one time between the hours of 9.00 am and 8.00 pm each day.
- c) A busker may accept but cannot solicit donations in appreciation of their performance



- d) All buskers need a Griffith City Council Busking Permit to perform on land owned by or in the control of Council. The permit must be displayed at all times while performing
- e) If busking as a group, each member of the group will need to apply for an individual busking license. Groups of up to 5 licensed buskers can perform at any one time, providing all members have their license on display.
- f) Public performances will require a permit and the permit will prescribe the approved location, which would normally be in one of the parks adjoining the footpath.
- g) Performances must not cause a nuisance by:
 - (i) Obstructing pedestrian or vehicle traffic or entrances to shops or buildings.
 - (ii) Excessive noise, due to the amplification of musical or other equipment.
 - (iii) Selling or offering for sale of any articles, commodities or services other than a busker's own original recordings.
 - (iv) Using dangerous implements or materials as part of the performance.
 - (v) Vilifying or harassing any member of the community, including but not limited to racial, sexual, gender or disability discrimination.

4.5.2 Application Requirements

- a) Application shall be made to Council for a Performance or Busker's Permit and shall be accompanied with the following:
 - (i) In the case of Buskers, owner's consent from the business operator and/or landowner of the premises where the busker is to perform.
 - (ii) Payment of the prescribed fee;
- b) The approval will be limited to a maximum 12 months at which time a new application is to be lodged with Council.
- c) The fees payable under 4.5.2(a)(ii) above are adopted by Council annually and published in Council's Revenue Policy.



4.6 Unauthorised Use

The unauthorised use of the footpath, including additional tables and chairs associated with outdoor dining, temporary advertising structures, merchandise racks or trade tables that are not in accordance with an approval or otherwise permitted by Council shall be removed upon the direction of an authorised Council Officer. Where a direction to remove the unauthorised items has been ignored, Council shall impound the unauthorised items.

4.7 Council Consent as Land Owner

Council's consent as land owner is required prior to the submission of any application for the use of the footpath. Where Council refuses to grant land owner's consent, it shall provide reasons for withholding such consent.

5 Definitions

- **busker** is a person who plays a musical instrument, sings, dances, mimes or performs an act to entertain the public.
- **food and drink premises** means retail premises used for the preparation and retail sale of food or drink for immediate consumption on or off the premises, and includes restaurants, cafes, take away food and drink premises, milk bars and pubs.
- **food vending cart** means a barrow, trolley or cart that does not require registration with the NSW RMS and any adjacent area reasonably used for the purpose of displaying and selling food stuffs.
- **hotel** means the premises to which a hotelier's licence granted under the Liquor Act 1982 relates.
- **Public performance** means performance by a group of music, singing, dance or similar activity or public speaking on behalf of a group, agency, **political party** or Church.
- **primary service authorisation** enables liquor to be served to patrons without another product or service under an on-premises licence. The most common example is the sale of liquor in a restaurant without a meal. All restaurants, including those with a primary service authorisation, cannot operate with the primary purpose of selling or supplying liquor. Restaurants with a primary service authorisation must have meals available at all times. A primary service authorisation does not allow a restaurant to operate as a bar.
- **refreshment room** means a restaurant, café, tearoom, eating house or the like.



6 Exceptions

None

7 Legislation

None

8 Related Documents

None

9 Directorate

Sustainable Development

Western Riverina Regional Drought Resilience Plan



Acknowledgement of Country

Griffith City Council, Leeton Shire Council, Murrumbidgee Council, and Narrandera Shire Council acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the region's lands and waters, and pay our respect to Elders past and present.

We value the vital involvement of members of the primary production and broader communities of each council area to the formulation of this plan and extend our thanks to those who contributed.



This document was prepared for Griffith City, Leeton Shire, Murrumbidgee, and Narrandera Shire Councils by Meridian Urban.



This project is supported by Griffith City, Leeton Shire, Murrumbidgee, and Narrandera Shire Councils, through funding from the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund and NSW Government.

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Glossary

Key terms used throughout this plan are defined below.

ADAPTATION	Adjustment or modification in natural and/or human systems in response to actual or expected shocks and stresses to moderate harm, reduce vulnerability and/or exploit beneficial opportunities.
ADAPTIVE CAPACITY	The ability of individuals and groups to adjust and respond to environmental and socio-economic changes.
ADAPTIVE GOVERNANCE	Coordinating iterative, flexible, and responsive interactions between systems when designing interventions and for their implementation and evaluation.
COPING CAPACITY	Communities that may be constrained in their capacity to use available resources to cope with adverse events and to prepare for, absorb and recover.
DROUGHT	Drought means acute water shortage. Drought is a prolonged, abnormally dry period when the amount of available water is insufficient to meet our normal use.
ECONOMIC RESILIENCE	The ability of the economy to absorb the economic impact of shocks and stressors without changing the economic status or outcomes.
ENVIRONMENTAL RESILIENCE	The ability of the natural environment to cope with a diverse range of shocks and stressors while maintaining natural processes and ecosystem services.
GOVERNANCE	Governance is the structures and processes by which individuals, groups and agencies in a society share power and make decisions. It can be formally institutionalised, or informal.
INTERVENTION OPTIONS	Alternative or complementary actions, projects, programs, policies, initiatives, and investments that are planned to bring about change in the system.
LOCAL KNOWLEDGE	Local knowledge and First Nations knowledge incorporates elements of lived experience within a landscape, bearing witness to the operation of systems. It includes aspects of people, landscape, culture – how people interact with surroundings and as part of communities and processes.
RESILIENCE	The ability of a system to absorb a disturbance and reorganise to maintain the existing functions, structure, and feedback. Also see general resilience, specified resilience, economic resilience, environmental resilience, and social resilience.
RISK	The potential for adverse consequences for human or ecological systems, recognising the diversity of values and objectives associated with such systems.
SHOCK	Sudden, short-term events that threaten a city (or region). Examples include major storms, floods, bush fires, heatwaves, disease outbreaks, terrorism, and cyber-attacks.
SOCIAL RESILIENCE	The ability of the human society to cope with a diverse range of shocks and stressors while maintaining existing social and community functions.
STRESSOR	An event that occurs gradually over a timeframe that causes an adverse effect, e.g. drought.
SYSTEMS	The interaction of processes, networks, and inter-dependencies across a complex 'whole'.
THEORY OF CHANGE	Refers to theories, causal mechanisms and assumptions that explain how and why outcomes and impacts will be achieved through use, implementation and production of proposed inputs, activities, and outputs.
TRENDS	Major global or regional influences that have driven change in the past and are expected to shape change into the future.
THRESHOLD	The point at which a change in a level or amount a controlling variable causes a system to shift to a qualitatively different regime. Also referred to as a tipping point.
TRANSFORM	The process of radically changing or building a new system with different structure, functions, feedback, and identity.
TRIGGER POINT	A pre-agreed situation or event, that when met, activates a management intervention. Trigger points are usually defined in the planning phase.

Introduction

This Regional Drought Resilience Plan is a collaboration between Griffith City, Leeton Shire, Murrumbidgee, and Narrandera Shire Councils, and their communities, working together to advance the region's resilience to the impacts of drought.

Drought is a recurring feature of the Australian landscape. While common experiences exist, the impacts and major pressures through drought varies across geographies, and across communities.

The Western Riverina region is dependent on the land, water and climatic conditions for prosperity. This highlights a need enhance drought resilience opportunities to position the region to respond to and recover from dry times. Sustainable and diverse economies, and connected communities that are responsive to drought signals, are the foundation to reduce vulnerability and mitigate potential impacts.

The Western Riverina is unique in its drought context. Whilst susceptible to periods of drought, the irrigation schemes of the region and regulation of the Murrumbidgee River set it apart from other parts of NSW. Water uncertainty in the region, as opposed to climatic events leading to drought, is a consequence of an interplay of factors. These factors, broadly grouped by climate, policy and operational infrastructure requirements, each have their own challenges but interact in combination across the drought cycle.

Within the region, vulnerabilities from drought are indicated by downward trends in rainfall and soil moisture. Changes in the Snowy Mountains catchment area would also have effect given the flows received from the Alpine region. Across the community, challenges are voiced in the evolution of the complex water policy landscape which places its own pressures on the community. Under this broader context, the region retains a self-driven focus on harnessing co-operative community and economic opportunities. This plans seeks to build on the collective strengths and regional identity of the Western Riverina as a premier food bowl for Australia to take steps now to stem the impacts of future drought on our region.

The Regional Drought Resilience Plan program is one of five focus areas¹ of the Commonwealth Government's Future Drought Fund. The NSW Regional Drought Resilience Plan program is jointly funded through the Commonwealth Government's Future Drought Fund and the NSW Government, supporting local governments to work together regionally to plan for drought resilience proactively and pragmatically.

¹ Other focus areas under the Future Drought Fund include farm business resilience, roll-out of the Drought Resilience Self-Assessment Tool, and better land management practices that support landscape resilience.

Drought resilience

'will ensure regional Australia can endure deeper, longer droughts, and recover from them sooner. This will help Australia's agricultural industries maintain national farm income, increase food security, and protect the regional jobs that rely on agriculture during the toughest years. Importantly, it will also increase the resilience of rural and regional communities and improve environmental outcomes'.

(CSIRO, 2022)

Image: Fivebough Wetlands

Western Riverina Regional Drought Resilience Plan

Western Riverina Regional Drought Resilience Plan Framework

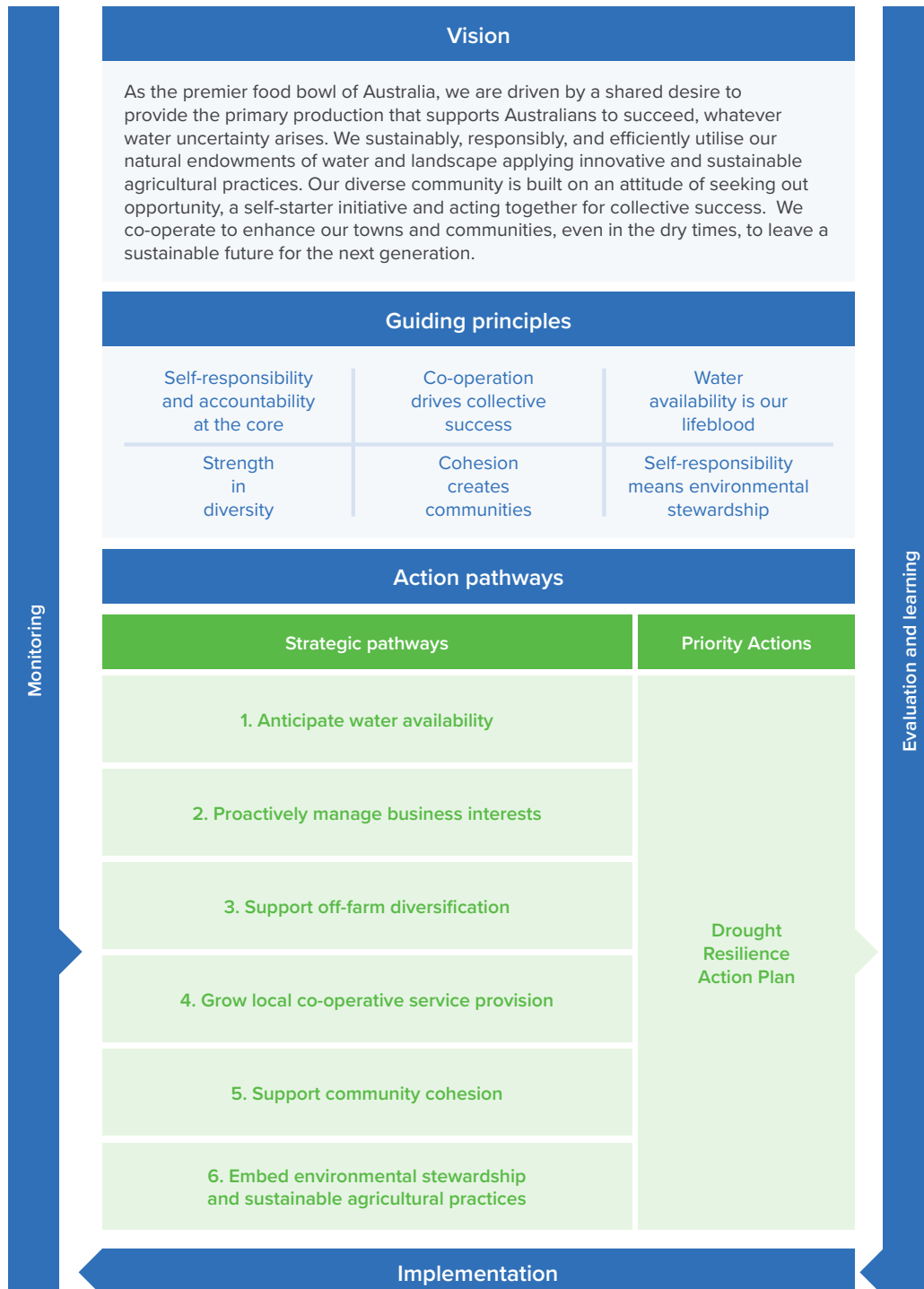


Figure 1 — Western Riverina Regional Drought Resilience Plan Framework

Western Riverina Regional Drought Resilience Plan

Purpose

The Western Riverina RDRP provides direction and options for how the community, business, industry networks, and local governments can adapt to strengthen drought resilience and transform for new opportunities.

The purpose of this plan is to:

- Increase understanding of the region's current and future drought resilience, considering the region's unique economic, environmental and social characteristics
- Recognise the interdependent nature of the local economy, community wellbeing, and environmental sustainability through the drought cycle and across business types
- Understand local signals and drought priorities in the community's voice and create stronger connectedness and greater social capital within communities
- Inform decisions based on a combination of local knowledge, and risk and resilience information
- Identify pathways and opportunities to improve regional drought resilience, mitigate risks and adapt to change
- Help Councils and regional organisations be in a stronger position to implement strategic actions and support partnerships that drive enhanced drought resilience
- Develop concrete actions to address and mitigate short-term and long-term drought impacts.

For the purposes of this plan, references to regional businesses include farms and agricultural business, contractors, suppliers, industry, retail and commercial services and references to community includes all townships, irrespective of size.

How does the plan help

The Western Riverina Regional Drought Resilience Plan combines drought history, climate analysis and local input to form a comprehensive understanding of the impacts of drought and to anticipate and prepare for the next drought cycle.

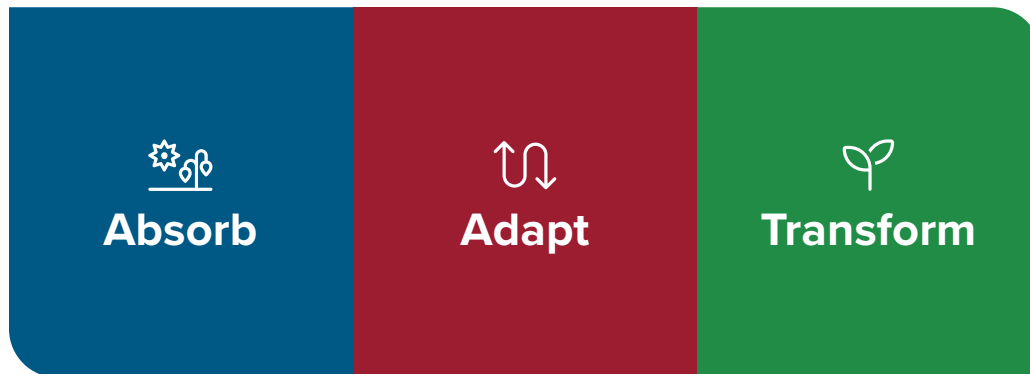
Whilst the future cannot necessarily be predicted, this plan addresses drought resilience by building in actions across the system where impacts are felt and across the drought cycles where interventions can be most effective. The plan consolidates on the range of existing programs and initiatives. It supports the ongoing collaboration between key actors who support the community through drought cycles.

The impacts of drought can be insidious with a slow onset but prolonged effects that reach across the community. It is important we understand the warning signals of drought and retain a focus on continuous preparedness.

How previous impacts of drought have manifested across community networks, local business and the natural environment provides a guidepost for where actions are needed. This plan supports a focus on outcomes through:

- Prevention of potential impacts
- Increased preparedness and resilience through recognition of signals
- What is needed in response
- What is needed for recovery.


This Regional Drought Resilience Plan supports collective and cooperative measures to prepare for drought in the face of changing and uncertain futures. This is done through several intervention approaches:



These areas of absorptive capacity, adaptive capacity and transformational capacity provide a view of the priorities identified by this plan relative to different components of the drought cycle, effort and/or costs associated. Some opportunities are short-term and more immediate, whilst others are more transformative in nature and require long-term effort to generate change.

This concept forms part of a resilience 'theory of change' model² which helps us to break down and consider the complex elements of drought resilience and the links across issues. This makes clear both how and why its impacts run so deep. This approach also helps to inform decision-making for enhanced resilience and adaptation as conditions and circumstances change over time.

This plan supports drought resilience in the Western Riverina through approach that will:

-  **Understand and recognise the triggers and impacts**
-  **Build capacity to meet challenges**
-  **Unite in community**
-  **Use regional voices to advance strengths and opportunities**

This Regional Drought Resilience Plan provides the framework for implementation and identifies practical ways the community and businesses of the region can prepare for and respond to drought impacts. Implementation funding is available from longer-term investment under the Commonwealth Government's Future Drought Fund, as well as other funding and grant assistance opportunities.

Implementation of actions contained in this plan is dependent on funding availability.

² The drought resilience plan integrates the 'Resilience, Adaptation Pathways and Transformation Approach' (RAPTA) developed by CSIRO which provides a framework to map resilience interventions. For more information on RAPTA, visit <https://research.csiro.au/eap/rapta/>



Image: Visit Griffith

Western Riverina Regional Drought Resilience Plan

Vision and principles

Vision

As the premier food bowl of Australia, we are driven by a shared desire to provide the primary production that supports Australians to succeed, whatever water uncertainty arises. We sustainably, responsibly, and efficiently utilise our natural endowments of water and landscape applying innovative and sustainable agricultural practices. Our diverse community is built on an attitude of seeking out opportunity, a self-starter initiative and acting together for collective success. We co-operate to enhance our towns and communities, even in the dry times, to leave a sustainable future for the next generation.

Guiding principles



Self-responsibility and accountability at the core

People in this region are frank and honest. We are very good at what we do – whether running the local café or managing a multi-million dollar diversified agri-business portfolio. The sense of responsibility and personal accountability is strong – people need practical and realistic support to keep doing what they do well.



Co-operation drives collective success

Not many parts of Australia work under such successful co-operative approaches like this region. From the irrigation schemes to the mills and even local pubs, the co-operative business structure provides a trust-based way to transform communities by growing services and prosperity in other critical sectors – like aged care, housing, and even retail – so that local services can be retained in-community, owned by community.



Strength in diversity

Farmers in this region know how to build, manage and grow diversified on-farm operations – they have been doing it efficiently for generations. Transferring this culture of diversification into off-farm economic growth that supports manufacturing and value-added employment and prosperity is a clear opportunity.



Water availability is our lifeblood

The region is unique in the way it receives its natural endowment of water – receiving both in-region rainfall and irrigation waters from Australia's snow country via the Snowy Hydro scheme. This combination of water sources supports arguably Australia's most critical and diversified irrigated and dryland country. However, uncertainty exists for both sources of water, which create similar drought-like conditions through different causes.



Cohesion creates communities

The region embodies the Australian ideals of mateship. There are tight-knit communities in towns and districts across the region that band together in a crisis to help each other through. It's a clear and common foundation of what it takes to live successfully and sustainably.






Self-responsibility means environmental stewardship














There is an awareness of the precious nature of resources with which the community is entrusted. There is increasing recognition and practice in environmental restoration, regenerative agriculture, and care for Country that will pay great dividends as efforts increase.








Region snapshot

Information sourced from: ABS 2021 Census data, Regional Development Australia, and AgTrack - Agricultural and Land Use Dashboard

 Population 47,589	 Population aged 65+ 20.6% <small>(17.7% NSW average)</small>	 First Nations population 8.5% <small>(3.4% NSW average)</small>
REGIONAL ECONOMY* 23,752 jobs (2021) Economy \$3.5b (2020) Local businesses 5,608 (2022)	UNEMPLOYMENT Griffith: 3.0% Leeton: 3.8% Murrumbidgee: 2.9% Narrandera: 5.2%	VOLUNTARY WORK <small>(organisations)</small> 13.2% — 23.2% <small>(13.0% NSW Average)</small>

Largest industries (by employment)

GRIFFITH  Poultry Processing  Wine / Alcoholic Beverage Manufacturing  Hospitals	LEETON  Secondary Education  Meat Processing  Grain Mill Product Manufacturing
MURRUMBIDGEE  Other Grain Growing  Grain-Sheep or Grain-Beef Cattle Farming  Local Government Administration	NARRANDERA  Grain growing, and Grain-Sheep or Grain-Beef Cattle farming  Local Government Administration  Meat Processing  Aged Care Residential Services

LARGEST INDUSTRIES <small>(gross value add)</small>  Agriculture  Manufacturing  Health and education  Electricity and water supply	PRINCIPAL AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES  Broadacre cropping  Fruit and nuts  Livestock
---	---

ASSETS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Western Riverina Intermodal Freight Terminal ✓ Griffith Medical Health Precinct ✓ Griffith Regional Airport ✓ Country Universities Centre ✓ Yanco Agricultural institute ✓ TAFE NSW campuses ✓ Narrandera Fisheries Centres 	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Murrumbidgee River and tributaries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Billabong Creek ✓ Murrumbidgee Valley and Oolambeyan National Parks ✓ Fivebough and Tuckerbil Wetlands ✓ Recreational lakes
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*Values include Carrathool Shire LGA

About the Western Riverina Region

The Western Riverina, as part of the broader Riverina Murray region, is known as Australia’s ‘food bowl’. It is built around premium agricultural areas, and long-standing agricultural industry strengths linked to secure water and complemented by beneficial climate conditions and versatile soils. The Western Riverina Regional Drought Resilience Plan covers the local government areas (LGA) of Griffith City, Murrumbidgee, Leeton Shire and Narrandera Shire.

Griffith is the largest regional city in the Western Riverina and is one of the three regional cities in the broader Riverina Murray region alongside Wagga Wagga and Albury. A number of smaller centres support Griffith in surrounding rural communities. Leeton is the second largest centre in the Western Riverina and Leeton Shire includes the towns of Whitton and Yanco. The shire is a strong driver of the broader regional strengths, in particular through the role it plays in value-add agriculture, including agricultural education and research.

Murrumbidgee Council contains the three townships of Coleambally, Darlington Point and Jerilderie. These centres account for over 90 percent of the LGA’s population, and reflect strengths through food and fibre production, benefiting from the Murrumbidgee River, Billabong Creek and water supplied from the Murray River.

Narrandera Shire is located at the juncture of the Newell and Sturt Highways, representing a transition from the broad acre agricultural areas to the east to the highly productive Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area. Narrandera forms the main town and provides a concentration of services, supported by smaller communities in Barellan, Binya, Grong Grong, and a number of rural localities.

Across each LGA the strength in agriculture is linked through connection to water, a highly evolved local industry with value-add processing, and connection

to major markets and major transport infrastructure. Key assets include the Murrumbidgee River, and flows received from the Alpine Region. The Western Riverina is home to the major irrigation schemes of the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area, Coleambally Irrigation Area, and Murray Irrigation area, alongside other private irrigators. This irrigation network supports many farms and provides some of the nation’s most important irrigation areas.

Building on agricultural strengths, educational and research institutes form key assets in the region. This includes the Country Universities Centre, Yanco Agricultural Institute, and TAFE campuses across LGAs, with the largest TAFE campus in the Riverina located at Griffith. These educational facilities and major health facilities anchor services in the region and provide for a mixture of employment options.

The position of the region has influenced its economic development and agricultural strengths, capturing major freight corridors between capital cities, and evolving its own manufacturing and transport hubs. These form the basis of future growth ambitions, with further links to emerging activation precincts across the state.

The northern part of the region (north of Jerilderie) is within the Wiradjuri Nation, the largest territory at the time of European settlement. The Nation encompasses the Central West slopes and plains and extends from Coonabarabran to the north, hugging the Great Dividing Range south towards the Murray River in the south and out to western NSW. The Nation encompasses approximately one fifth of NSW. Wiradjuri people are known as ‘people of three rivers’, acknowledging the three rivers that are associated with their Country: the Wambuul (Macquarie River), Kalari (Lachlan River) and Murrumbidjeri (Murrumbidgee River).

Figure 2 — Map of the Western Riverina Region and local centres



Figure 3 — Approximate extent of the Wiradjuri Nation³

3 Griffith City Council, 2019, Griffith City Council Reconciliation Action Plan December 2019/December 2021, Available at <https://www.griffith.nsw.gov.au/page.asp?f=RES-GWK-21-15-76>.

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Wiradjuri Nation

The Wiradjuri Nation is the largest traditional owner group in NSW known to have cared for the lands in the regions for at least 60,000 years. Colonisation drastically changed their way of life, leading to dispossession and cultural suppression.

The culture of the Wiradjuri people is closely linked to the land and waterways, and retains a strong belief that if we care for Country, it will care for us. There are several sites of significance to the Wiradjuri people in the area, including the Koonadan Aboriginal Place and the Fivebough and Tuckerbil Wetlands. Conservation practices are key to ensuring these sites continue to maintain an ecological balance.

Water has played a critical role in the lives of Aboriginal people, for survival in arid environments and for culture, spiritual connection to land and waters and identity. Water helped in defining language boundaries and ceremonial places, and also underpins many land management practices. Traditional Aboriginal water collection and storage practices have evolved for many centuries and continue into the present.

In collaboration with First Nations/ Aboriginal people, a state-wide Aboriginal Water Strategy is currently under development, building upon consultation over recent year. The plan will identify ways of increasing water rights and ensuring that First Nations people are empowered to contribute to water management and planning decisions.

People and community

The Western Riverina is attracting new agricultural ventures and business operators who are keen to trial innovative approaches. Across the region, the vibrancy of agricultural industry is shining.

At heart of this is a strong community co-operative style of approach to not only business, but community development. A drive to work together, and to share knowledge and benefits, is a key attribute behind some of the region's most successful economic and community ventures. Strong community identity and a sense of civic duty is foundational in this regard. It also informs the community's dedication to volunteering activities and organisations. Whilst volunteerism rates are in decline nationally, community dedication at the local-scale across the Western Riverina remains relatively strong.

Sport and recreation plays a major role in the wellbeing of people and communities in the region, displayed through the diverse range of sporting teams and sporting calendar. This goes beyond those that play, but to the broader community as avid spectators and volunteers who contribute to the local teams and the running, maintenance and administration of local venues and facilities. Other social interest groups also add to the vibrant tapestry of community spirit and provide important creative and social connections.

Green spaces, recreational and natural assets are therefore critical to community wellbeing. While maintaining water to these spaces during drought is challenging, it is also essential to underpin community cohesion and mental wellness at a broader scale. There are also significant visitor economy dividends associated with these assets, as well as the region's colonial heritage and lively arts and culture scene.

Image: Jerilderie Plains

Western Riverina Regional Drought Resilience Plan

Environment

The Western Riverina is part of the wider Riverina Bioregion which has high soil fertility and a generally abundant water supply. These aspects underly its primacy as a premier food-growing region.

The climate of the Riverina Bioregion is dry and semi-arid with hot summers and cool winters, and most rainfall occurring in winter months. Vegetation ranges from river red gums along river channels, to saltbush on the plains. National parks in the region include Murrumbidgee Valley and Oolambeyan National Parks. The region's natural assets include significant wetlands and swamps such as the Fivebough and Tuckerbil Wetlands. These areas provide important habitat for native fish, amphibians, birds, mammals and many other water dependent fauna. These areas are also of cultural heritage significance to the region's First Nations people.

Since European colonisation there has been substantial modification of the vegetation and landscape through pastoral activities, the use of ground and surface water resources, and the introduction of feral animals to the region including Carp in the river systems.

One of the most profound changes at a landscape scale was the construction and commencement of the Snowy Mountain Scheme (Snowy Scheme). The Snowy Scheme was designed to produce electrical energy. However, one of the key objectives of the Scheme was to mitigate the effects of drought on irrigated agriculture in NSW and Victoria by improving the security of water supply to farmers along the fertile Murray and Murrumbidgee Rivers.

Economy

Collectively, the Western Riverina economy supports approximately 23,752 jobs and its economic value is an estimated \$3.5 billion⁴ per year. The four key strengths of the region are in agriculture, manufacturing, utilities, and health and education

The high-quality agricultural lands support a long-held sector strength with significant value-add opportunities. The sector retains strong links to manufacturing, which also benefits from the linkages to large cities, distribution points of ports and airports, and links to freight and logistics hubs.

Economic assets exist through the major freight routes, freight railway lines, and links to the neighbouring regional city precincts in Albury and Wagga Wagga. The region's Western Riverina Intermodal Freight Terminal and urban industrial areas also provide economic enablers.

Investment in the region continues with major projects planned and underway. Strengths which support the key industries are its access to water and irrigation systems, proximity to metropolitan markets, extensive road and rail infrastructure and emerging population-serving employment clusters.

Industry	Employment (2021)	Gross Value Add (2020)
Agriculture	3,926 jobs (16.5% share)	\$583m
Manufacturing	3,827 jobs (16.3% share)	\$526m
Health and education	4,405 jobs (18.5% share)	\$390m
Electricity and water supply (including renewables)	382 jobs (1.6% share)	\$144m

⁴ This includes Carrathool Shire in addition to Griffith City, Leeton Shire, Murrumbidgee, and Narrandera Shire

How this plan was prepared

The Western Riverina Regional Drought Resilience Plan was prepared through the valued contribution of a broad cross section of community members, stakeholders, local government, government services, community organisations, businesses and local producers. This engagement was supported by an evidence-based resilience assessment for the region.



Resilience Assessment

- research and literature
- strategy and policy reviews
- regional characteristics
- trends and projections for drought impacts; and
- drought resilience indicators assessment.



Stakeholder engagement

- online community and business surveys
- community, industry and government workshops
- community drop-in sessions
- targeted consultations, interviews and discussions with community, industry and services representatives.

The narrative, theme and actions within the plan are directed by the conversations across community engagement. The plan builds on existing strategies through the lens of drought resilience which supports development on the identified strategic pathways.



Image: Leeton Chill & Grill Festival

Western Riverina Regional Drought Resilience Plan

Strategic alignment – state, regional and local

Looking upwards, the regional drought resilience program provides strategic alignment with international scale goals including the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, alongside national-scale strategies and frameworks and state-level strategic instruments. This alignment demonstrates how working locally contributes to broader sustainability and resilience outcomes for NSW and Australia.

Key plans and strategies contributing to this alignment and the preparation of the Western Riverina Regional Drought Resilience Plan has included (but is not limited to):

- Murray-Darling Basin Plan
- Riverina Murray Regional Plan 2041
- Western Riverina Regional Economic Development Strategy (2023 update)
- Draft Murrumbidgee Regional Water Strategy
- Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation (RAMJO) strategies, plans and papers
- NSW Climate Change Adaptation Strategy
- NSW Government Department of Primary Industries Drought Hub
- Department of Regional NSW Drought Signals Dashboard
- Commonwealth Government's Drought Resilience Self-Assessment tool
- Council Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework documents.

A stakeholder-driven approach

The resilience assessment which underpins the RDRP built an understanding of local context and drought impacts around the economic, natural environment and social characteristics of the region. However, impacts are not felt in isolation but rather can compound and cascade. Community consultation was key to understanding how these interactions occur and build.

The engagement process centred on community workshops, drop-in sessions, targeted meetings and discussions, and an online survey to collate experiences, insights and views from a broad cross section of community members. We spoke with growers, livestock graziers, industry and community group representatives, business operators, First

Nations organisations, subject matter specialists, service providers, local and state government agencies, elected representatives and more.

Discussion was had on what was needed into the future to better position the region collectively when the next time a dry period is upon us. This discussion focussed on actions and initiatives that were required in preparation for drought, the needs during drought and then into recovery.

Figure 4 — Engagement workshops held in-region



9 workshops across weeks in July and September 2024

Coleambally / Narrandera
Barellan / Leeton / Griffith

4 drop in sessions

Darlington Point / Jerilderie
Whitton / Griffith

Online survey

Community / Business owners
and operators

72 survey responses

45+ workshop attendees

Engagement observations and insights

Key insights communicated through the stakeholder consultation process and informing the preparation of this plan include:

-  Co-operative community approaches are strong and working well. This sets the region apart from other areas. There is a strong desire to work together for mutual benefit.
-  Irrigation has stabilised the local economy over the past 50 years which has limited the impacts of drought on the region to an extent, though it is still felt.
-  Mental health and wellbeing ahead of the next drought should be a key area of focus. Mental health support once drought has set in is welcomed, but it can be too late. Tools to support producers ahead of drought is a clear opportunity, as well as building broader community mental health literacy.
-  Primary producers in the region benefit from opportunities to showcase their property management and production processes. People come from around the world to learn from Western Riverina producers.
-  The Western Riverina plays a key role in broader food security matters, and as a key exporter for the nation. As key players in this system we want to see what is being planned at higher policy levels.
-  State and Commonwealth Government services that support drought preparedness should be more actively promoted and marketed.
-  An improved and shared understanding of how the water market operates is needed.
-  To deal with reduced water availability, economic development needs to focus on non-water dependent jobs / industries. Government assistance is needed in diversifying the economy to reduce reliance on contribution from agricultural.
-  The key is to act early when making decisions in the face of drought, which applies to on and off-farm businesses.
-  The efficiency of government processes and systems places unnecessary stress on people. For example, registration of trucks (of which properties / businesses usually have many) which must be done in-person. Issues were also present with previous grant application process and timelines of such availability.
-  Townships have good water allocations that provide opportunities for new businesses.
-  Resilience is driven by efficiencies and strong self-accountability based upon business acumen, efficient management, innovation and sustainability.
-  Business and property succession planning is critical.

Messages from the Community

Community views are strong on how the region builds its own resilience and how it contributes to the resilience of Australians more broadly. Key messages from the community, which are central to this plan include:



Regional enablers

To bolster the resilience to the effects of drought, the region's ability to capitalise on its community and economic development opportunities is reliant upon key enabling attributes. Beyond water, these include access to reliable energy networks, digital connectivity and transport infrastructure.

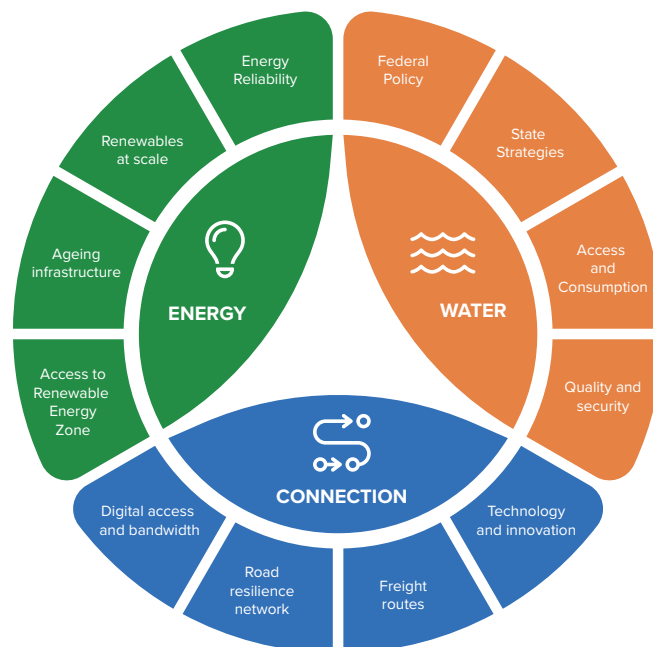


Figure 5 — Regional enabling priorities of the Western Riverina

How our region is impacted by drought

How the Western Riverina region is impacted by drought is closely aligned to its connection with water, which is the 'lifeblood' of the region.

Natural river systems

This is a unique part of Australia. The region derives the benefit of relatively modest in-region rainfall, but also the bounty of surface water from rain and snow precipitation from far away. The Murrumbidgee is sourced from high in the Australian Alps, winding its way across the south-west slopes of NSW and across the riverine plains to where it meets the Murray River. The Snowy Scheme was originally conceived as an irrigation scheme to draw the snowmelt from the Snowy Mountains west into the Murrumbidgee and Murray Rivers, before it also diversified into hydro-electric power generation.

The Murrumbidgee River connects centres and communities across the region and is the basis for productive agricultural lands, nationally important wetlands, and hydroelectricity further beyond the Western Riverina.

The Murrumbidgee catchment is part of the southern Basin of the Murray-Darling Basin, with this basin flowing into the Murray River. The Murray River system also influences the region, supplying water to south of Billabong Creek. This supports production in and around Jerilderie and the broader Murrumbidgee Council area.

Land uses are diverse across the Murrumbidgee Valley. A high proportion of land is used for dryland grazing and cereal-based cropping. The region supports the production of over 40 percent of NSW grapes and 50 percent of Australia's rice. Given the diversity of users, and the context to which it sits as part of the broader Murray-Darling Basin system, there are competing interests which provide the backdrop for a range of issues related to regional water planning and policy in the region.

The Snowy Scheme water makes its way through the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area (MIA) via Blowering Dam and Burrinjuck Dam on the Murrumbidgee River. Blowering Dam stores water that has been released from storages further upstream in the Snowy-Tumut Development Section of the Snowy Scheme. Water releases from Blowering and Burrinjuck Dams are managed by NSW State Water, to provide for town water supply, irrigation and environmental use requirements. On the Murrumbidgee River, as at Gundagai, the Snowy Scheme contributes inflows of around 25 percent during average inflow years, but 60 percent during drought years. Water from the two storage dams flows down to Berembend Weir, a journey taking five days and a further two days to Gogeldrie Weir. From Berembend Weir, water moves into Bundidgerry storage and onto the Narrandera Regulator, which is the start of the system owned and maintained by Murrumbidgee Irrigation.



Image: Griffith Main Canal

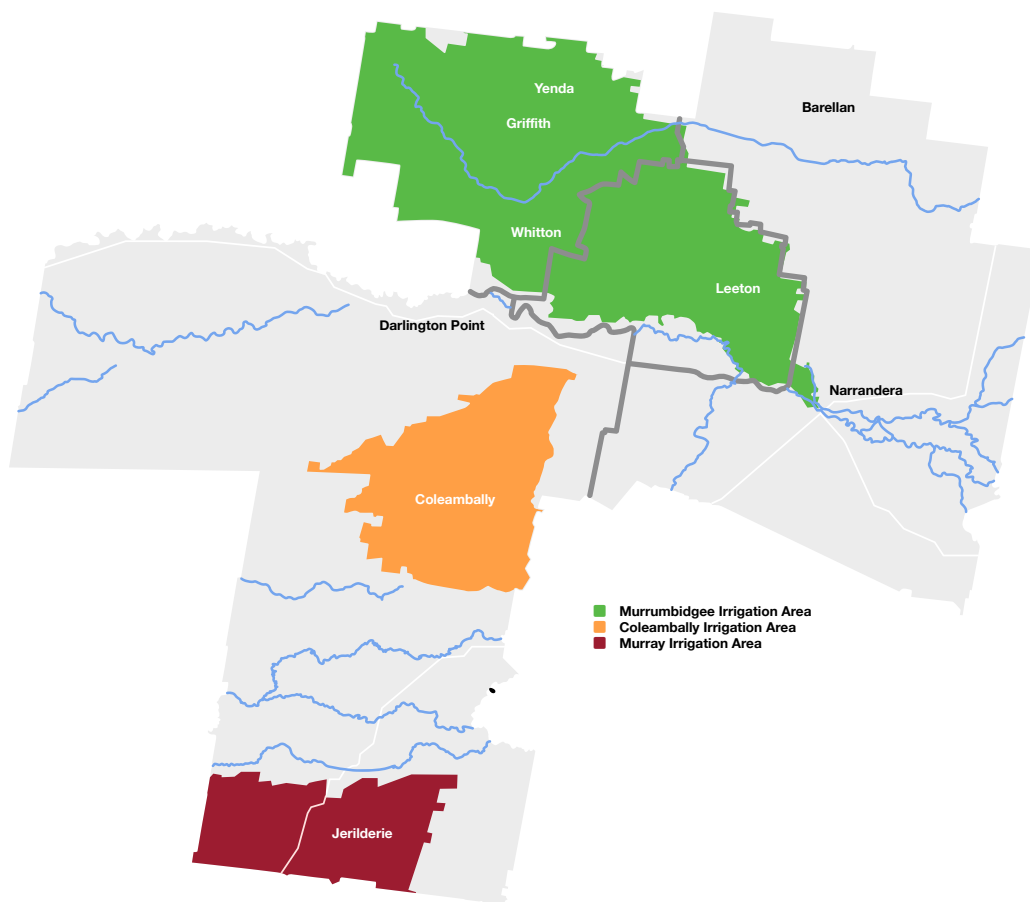
Western Riverina Regional Drought Resilience Plan

Irrigation areas

The Murrumbidgee River acts as the natural delivery course for the major food producing areas of the MIA and the Coleambally Irrigation Area (CIA) via Blowering Dam (on the Tumut River, a tributary to the Murrumbidgee) and Burrinjuck Dams. These irrigation areas provide over one-quarter of all the fruit and vegetable production in NSW and are also one of Australia's largest exporters of bulk wine. The southern part of the region, south of Jerilderie and Billabong Creek, is serviced by Murray Irrigation which supplies to more than 740,000 hectares of farmland.

This access to water through the establishment of irrigation schemes, and other water sources, has supported the growth and scale of operations in the region both in agribusiness and associated manufacturing. Economic activity in the region, both historically and at present is strongly linked to the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Scheme, and the water infrastructure investment that support the modern-day irrigation network.

Figure 6 — Major irrigation areas in the Western Riverina



The region's different types of 'drought'

The Bureau of Meteorology notes that drought is a prolonged, abnormally dry period when the amount of available water is insufficient to meet our normal use. We typically think of drought as the absence of rainfall in a region given most other regions in Australia are predominantly dryland in nature.

'Water uncertainty' is a preferred term in the region rather than this traditional rainfall and climate-led view of drought. This uncertainty can come from a range of different mechanisms in this region which may occur singularly or in combination. Engagement highlighted three kinds of 'water uncertainty' for the region:

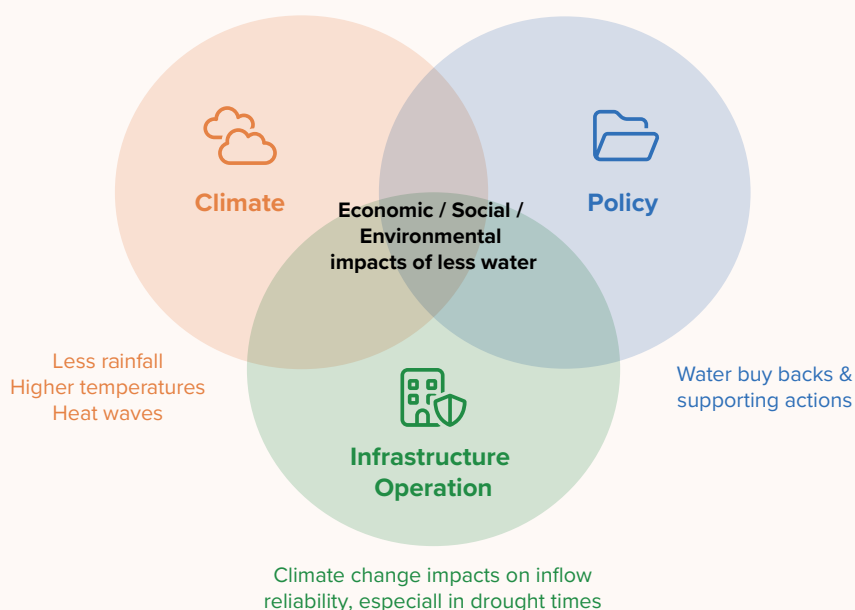
- > 'Natural' drought – which is the climate-related drought experienced across Australia, and involves a deficit in the level of rainfall occurring in region.
- > 'Human-made' drought – which is the lack of irrigation water due to government policy or out-of-region water availability.

- > Operational constraints influences – which involves the asset-based constraints of scheme maintenance and operation, an more significantly, reliability of supply.

The effects of drought and any resilience initiative need to be aligned with responses to the broader context, including policy drivers and operational implications of changing rainfall patterns in the Snowy Mountains. These may result in less water availability or a reduction in the reliability of water supplies in the region. The interplay of these factors creates uncertainty in the water landscape for this region.

Whilst the irrigation schemes have stabilised local and regional economic activity, water shortage and drought impacts can still be felt across the community. Into the future, the impact of climate change on the Snowy Mountain region is also important to the Western Riverina given the reliance on elevated inflows in drier periods from the Snowy Scheme. This emphasises a need to plan ahead to alleviate potential future impacts.

Reduced Water Availability



Policies / Programs / Actions in response to the various drivers need to be aligned to avoid unintended consequences and implementation gaps.

Figure 7 — Drivers of loss of water availability in the Western Riverina

Drought impacts

Regardless of how drought manifests, whether it is climatic, policy or operationally-related, the impacts are largely still the same. The impacts below were identified through consultation to inform the plan.



Environmental Impacts

- Loss of topsoil through groundcover loss and wind erosion
- Increased demand on alluvial ground water
- Reduced root zone soil moisture
- Water turbidity
- Pressure on the wetlands to support a wider variety and quantity of wildlife
- Low inflows into the water courses and higher evaporation rates impacting the health of flora and fauna
- Biosecurity and pest and weed outbreaks
- Vegetation dieback
- Increased potential for bushfire and grassfire, and dust storms
- Water and food availability for wildlife



People and Social Impacts

- Social isolation
- Increased mental and physical health issues
- Increased demand on community services
- Challenges in attracting and retaining workers
- Youth retention
- Maintenance of sports and recreational facilities
- Reduced ability to partake in sporting and recreation activities
- Household financial distress, and capacity to access local services
- Population decline and loss of skills
- Increased need for community group activity with less volunteers available
- Increased potential for conflict and reduced community cohesion
- Impacts on culture and cultural practices
- Infections and illness from water quality



Economic Impacts

- Reduction in water allocations
- Limited fodder and water availability for livestock
- Reduced discretionary spending in townships
- Water uncertainty creates loss of confidence in both commercial & residential property market
- Reduction in agricultural production, reduced yields
- Loss of or reduced farm income, balance sheet impacts and reduced borrowing capacity
- Maintaining cash flow and debt servicing
- Loss or reduction in on and off farm employment
- Increased fodder and water prices
- Changes in farm ownership models
- Halting of investment and capital projects on farms and directly associated businesses
- Research and innovation can stall
- Compounding effects of other natural events such as frosts

Impacts from external trends

-  Changing water policy environments including water buy backs and allocation changes
-  Housing pressure and availability of land in and around towns impacting housing supply for workers
-  Costs of living and rising costs of farming inputs
-  Demand from overseas markets is driving the need for sustainability and accreditation
-  Changes to government service delivery models which centralise employment to larger centres and results in consequences for awareness of programs and support, and access to services
-  Changes to farm structures, with an increase of corporate farm and the resultant impacts to local community service provision, population and local spend
-  Limited telecommunications and electricity network reliability and coverage.

Cascading impacts of drought

The effects of drought are not isolated, they are interconnected across the social and economic systems in the region and broader pressures on the landscape. Given the significance of agriculture within the regional economy, impacts to the sector have broader flow on effects to downstream industries, supply chains, and the local businesses in town that rely on discretionary spending.

Many existing challenges within a regional area are made harder. Workforce attraction and retention can be an issue through drought. Where workers leave during drought, it can be difficult attracting these workers back which can be both timely and costly to business operations and can impede productivity in the recovery cycle.

As part of the development of this plan, it is essential to consider the relationship between drought impacts and their underlying causes, with a focus on addressing the root causes rather than merely responding to the resulting chain of symptoms. In this regard, the design and implementation of actions can address multiple challenges across the system.



Drought history

The impacts of drought can vary based on community, weather conditions, and the prevailing macro influences and trends of the time. Additionally, personal circumstances can vary significantly. Major droughts in Australian history have affected the Western Riverina region, characterised by periods of low rainfall.

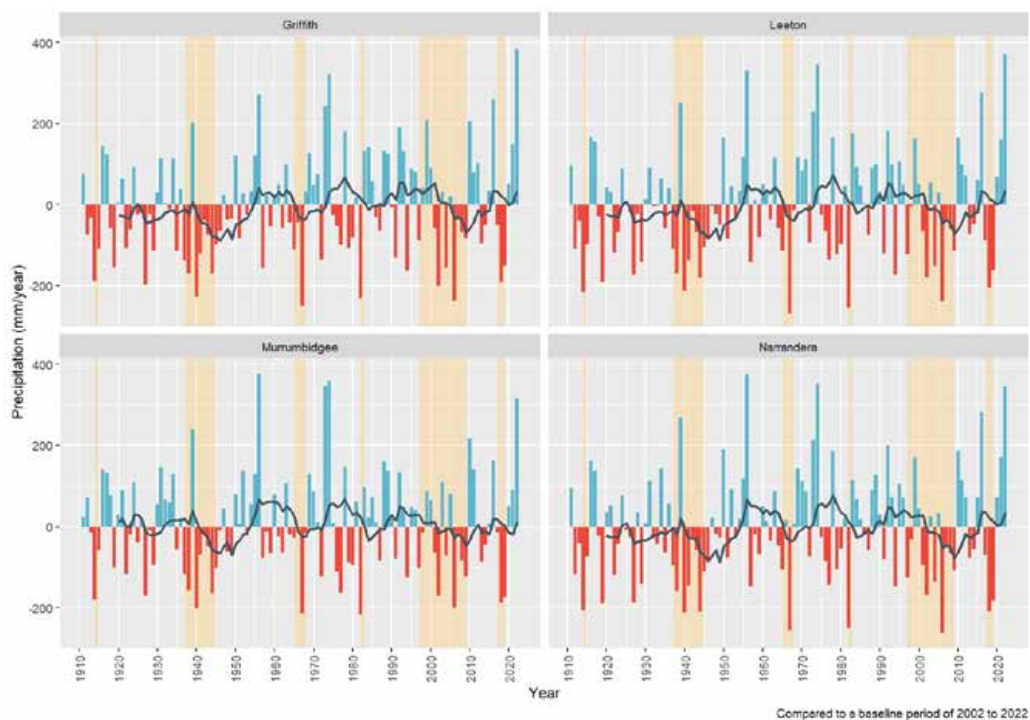
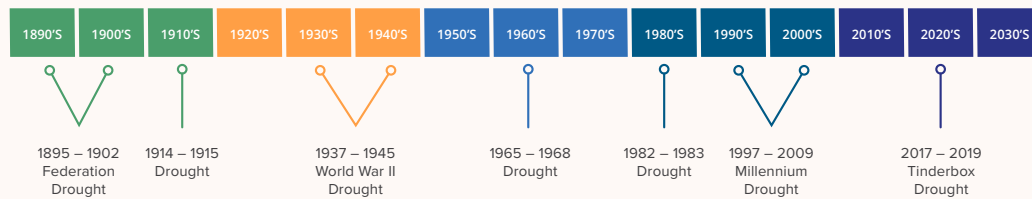


Figure 8 — Yearly mean precipitation anomaly by LGA

*Note that the data does not extend back to the Federation drought of 1890-1902

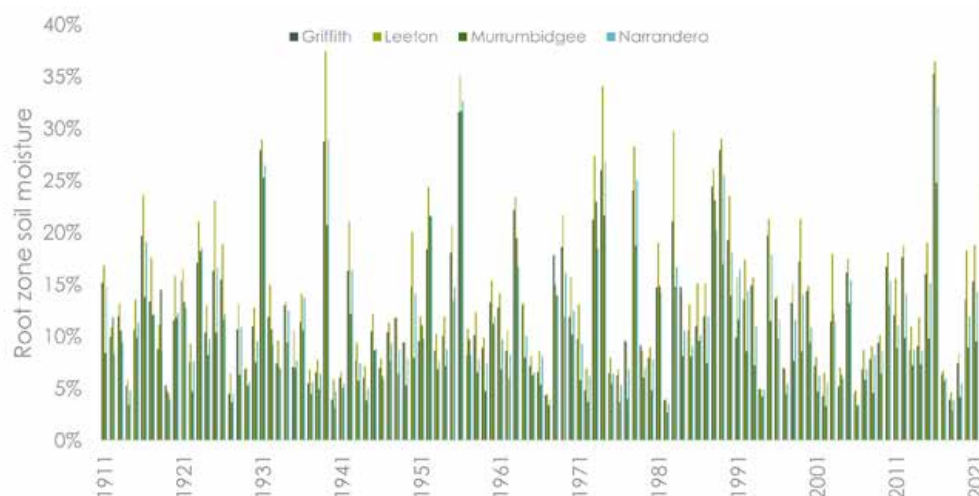


Figure 9 — Soil moisture across LGAs. Major historical droughts align with lower soil moisture levels

The region experiences some years of consistent rainfall, scattered with year-to-year fluctuations. The WWII Drought and Millennium Drought display some of the more protracted periods with notable impacts to soil moisture levels.

A comprehensive synthesis of historic drought climate data specific to the region is included at Appendix A. An analysis of this was undertaken as part of the Resilience Assessment reporting that informs this plan.

A focus on the 2017-2019 drought

During the 2017-2019 period, rainfall for much of Australia, in particular most of the Murray–Darling Basin, was substantially below average. The three years from January 2017 to December 2019 was the driest on record for any 36-month period starting January, when averaged across the Murray–Darling Basin and NSW. Average rainfall for the basin was over 100 millimetres lower than the second driest period (January 1965 to December 1967), and NSW received around 170 millimetres less rainfall than the next driest period, the Federation Drought (1900-1902).

A notable feature of the rainfall deficiencies of these three years is that they were concentrated in the cooler seasons. Both 2018 and 2019 were especially dry. The period was the driest and hottest on record for the basin as a whole. These record warm temperatures exacerbated dry conditions, at times rapidly drying soils in a matter of months. This led to periods in 2017 and 2019 that researchers have termed ‘flash drought’.



Image: Grain storage, Jerilderie

Western Riverina Regional Drought Resilience Plan

Future drought

The agricultural industry is a significant economic driver for the region. The high-quality agricultural lands support a long-held sector strength with significant value-add in industries of education and manufacturing. Because of this, it is important to consider the projected impact of future climate changes to better plan for potential increased rainfall uncertainty and its impacts of associated water policy.

The further in advance we plan, build awareness and put in place redundancy measures, the more options we will likely have available to address issues down the track.

Future climate scenarios





According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reporting, under all emissions scenarios considered global surface temperature will continue to increase until at least the mid-century. Increasing temperatures and energy within the climate system are projected to result in widespread changes to weather and climate patterns, including drought and all elements of the water cycle.

The below section presents projections of drought and associated climate conditions which are assessed over two possible future climate scenarios using regional climate model ensembles. Projections are shown across the region using the reference period (1976-2005) and then two timescales 2050 (2036-2065) and 2070 (2056-2085). The IPCC's Representative Concentration Pathways (RCP) 4.5 and 8.5 are used. RCP 4.5 models mean global warming of between two to three degrees Celsius and is the most likely future scenario based on current climate commitments. RCP 8.5 is a mean global warming of four degrees Celsius or more. This is considered a worst-case scenario.

Current climate models do not account for global climate tipping points. This means that the effects of tipping points are typically not included in climate projections and impact assessments. Breaching global climate tipping points represents significant risks on top of the changes typically described in climate assessments. The effects of breaching certain tipping points may include abrupt changes to the El Niño Southern Oscillation, rainfall patterns, and rainfall variability that are not represented in climate model projections, on top of the main consequences of more rapid warming and sea-level rise.

While days above 35°C and Forest Fire Danger Index (FFDI) are not direct indicators of drought, they describe weather conditions that often occur alongside drought or are exacerbated by drought.

Regional drought climate indicators:

-  Generally decreasing trends in annual precipitation across the region, worsening into the far term
-  Reduction in soil moisture levels across all scenarios modelled
-  Increasing temperatures are likely to be the primary driver of increased frequency and severity of evapotranspiration and drought conditions
-  Other climate and weather-driven events like heatwaves and bushfires / grass fire may compound broader impacts from drought events.

Below projections of these indices use an ensemble of CSIRO's Electricity Sector Climate Information (ESCI) datasets (days above 35°C and days above an FFDI of 25).⁵

Griffith City		2050		2070	
Variable	Climate model reference period	RCP4.5	RCP8.5	RCP4.5	RCP8.5
Root soil moisture	15% [#]	↓ 0.019 mm [^]	↓ 0.019 mm [^]	↓ 0.013 mm [^]	↓ 0.026 mm [^]
Annual total precipitation	414 mm	↑ 1 mm	↓ 7 mm	0 mm	↓ 15 mm
Days above 35°C	31	49 ↑ ¹⁸	55 ↑ ²⁴	Data unavailable	
Days with FFDI above 25	53	67 ↑ ¹⁴	74 ↑ ²¹		

Leeton		2050		2070	
Variable	Climate model reference period	RCP4.5	RCP8.5	RCP4.5	RCP8.5
Root soil moisture	16% [#]	↓ 0.023 mm [^]	↓ 0.025 mm [^]	↓ 0.015 mm [^]	↓ 0.031 mm [^]
Annual total precipitation	422 mm	↓ 3 mm	↓ 10 mm	↓ 9 mm	↓ 19 mm
Days above 35°C	30	47 ↑ ¹⁷	53 ↑ ²³	Data unavailable	
Days with FFDI above 25	51	64 ↑ ¹³	71 ↑ ²⁰		

Murrumbidgee		2050		2070	
Variable	Climate model reference period	RCP4.5	RCP8.5	RCP4.5	RCP8.5
Root soil moisture	12% [#]	↓ 0.015 mm [^]	↓ 0.013 mm [^]	↓ 0.007 mm [^]	↓ 0.021 mm [^]
Annual total precipitation	385 mm	↓ 6 mm	↓ 3 mm	↓ 4 mm	↓ 17 mm
Days above 35°C	30	47 ↑ ¹⁷	53 ↑ ²³	Data unavailable	
Days with FFDI above 25	54	68 ↑ ¹⁴	74 ↑ ²⁰		

Narrandera		2050		2070	
Variable	Climate model reference period	RCP4.5	RCP8.5	RCP4.5	RCP8.5
Root soil moisture	14% [#]	↓ 0.019 mm [^]	↓ 0.018 mm [^]	↓ 0.009 mm [^]	↓ 0.023 mm [^]
Annual total precipitation	436 mm	↓ 3 mm	↓ 9 mm	↓ 7 mm	↓ 18 mm
Days above 35°C	30	47 ↑ ¹⁷	53 ↑ ²³	Data unavailable	
Days with FFDI above 25	48	62 ↑ ¹⁴	68 ↑ ²⁰		

[#] Mean water content as a percentage of capacity.

[^] Change (mm/yr) in relative soil water content of the 1976-2005 reference period's relative soil water holding capacity.

⁵ CSIRO n.d., ESCI Climate Data, Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources. Available at: <https://www.climatechangeinaustralia.gov.au/en/projects/esci/esci-climate-data/>

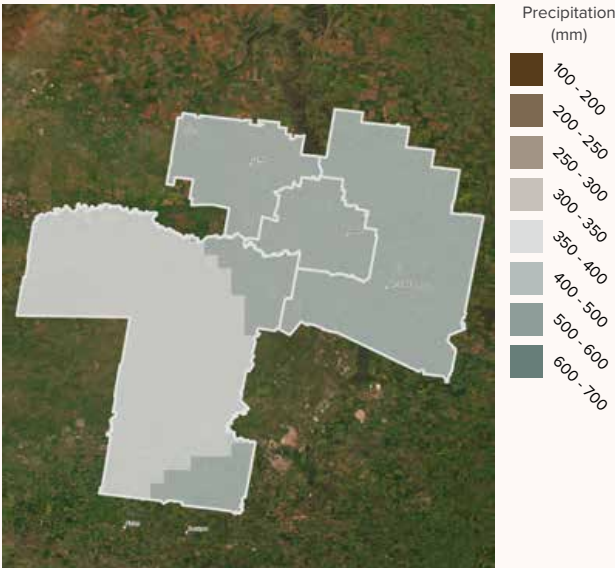
Annual precipitation

Considering the modelled scenarios for precipitation, all see either a minimal change or a reduction in annual total rainfall by 2050. Under the RCP4.5 scenario, this annual reduction lessens in severity in Murrumbidgee and Narrandera by 2070; but, grows in Griffith and Leeton.

Under the RCP8.5 scenario by 2070, the reduction in annual rainfall grows significantly across each LGA over the course of the two decades. This is notable for Murrumbidgee, as it has the lowest rainfall rate in the climate reference period and the most significant reduction from 2050 (-3mm) to 2070 (-17mm) under this scenario (Figure 12).

Figure 12 — Annual precipitation changes across the region.

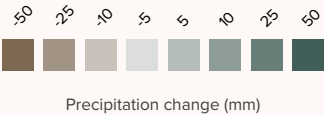
Climate model reference period



2050 (RCP4.5)



2070 (RCP4.5)



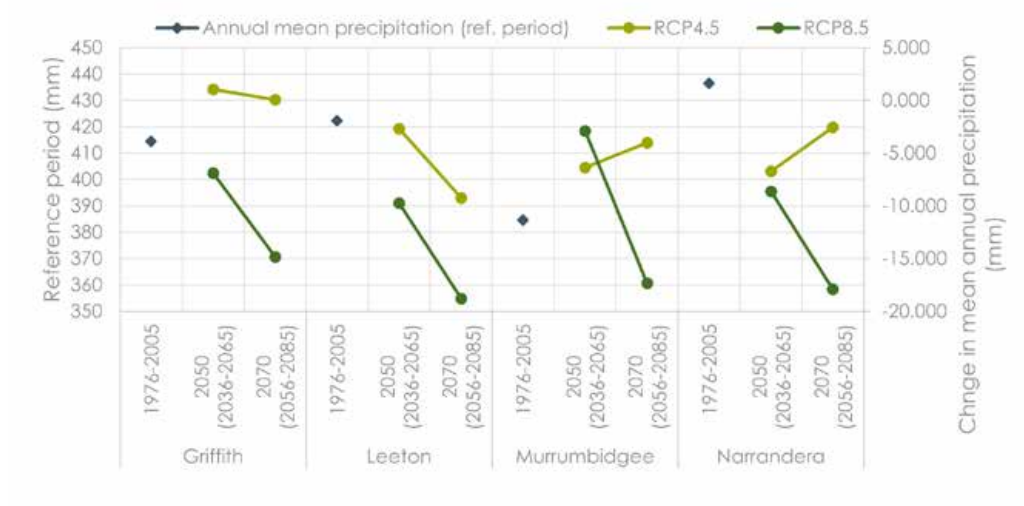
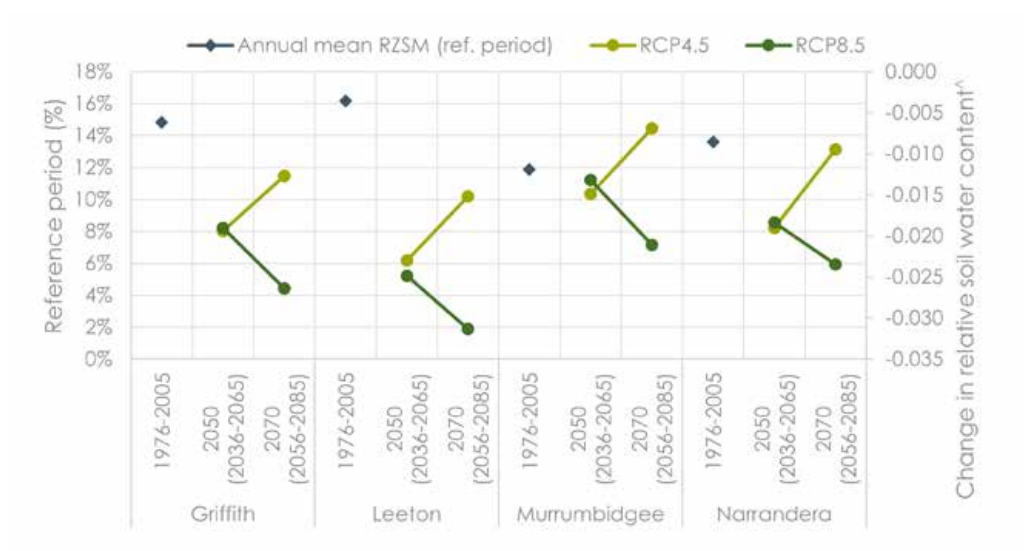


Figure 13 — Annual mean precipitation future climate projections, by LGA

Root zone soil moisture

Root zone soil moisture (RZSM) is presented as a percentage of total capacity during the baseline reference period and as a change of millimetres per year of the climate adjusted scenarios.

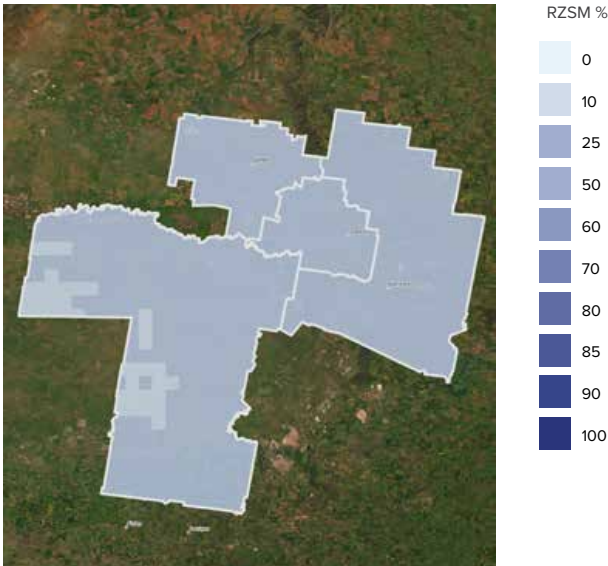


Root zone soil moisture

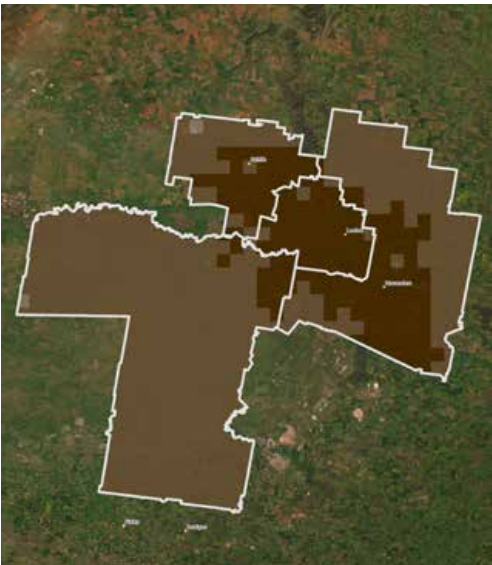
Under all four future scenarios modelled, each is set to see an annual reduction in root zone soil moisture. However, under the RCP4.5 scenarios, the reduction does lessen from 2050 to 2070. Under the RCP8.5 scenarios, the annual reduction increases to 2070 (Figure 14 — Root zone soil moisture future climate projections, by LGA). The reduction, both in 2050 and 2070, is most intense in Griffith and Leeton.

Figure 14 — Root zone soil moisture future climate projections, by LGA

Climate model reference period



2050 (RCP4.5)



2070 (RCP4.5)

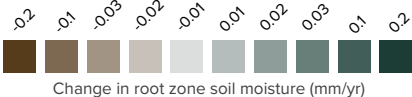
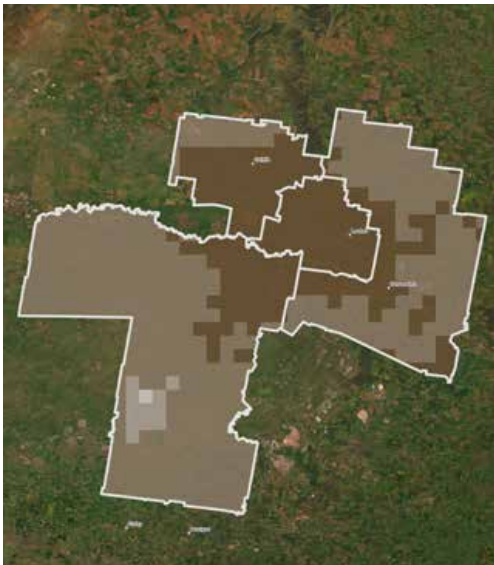


Figure 15 — Annual change in root zone soil moisture

What does the climate data tell us?

The region will continue to be susceptible to the impact of drought which can be protracted events, such as the Millennial drought, or relatively shorter time periods of high intensity.

Climate projections indicate an increase in drought risk, which worsens in the far-term under a higher emissions scenario.

Potential increases in frequency and severity of drought conditions will be largely driven by temperature, evapotranspiration and reduced soil moisture in the Western Riverina region.

Relevance of climate change in the neighbouring Alpine region

In addition to the climate projections for the Western Riverina region, climate change impacts in the Snowy Mountains (Alpine region) must also be considered given the reliance of inflows directed from the Snowy Scheme into the Murrumbidgee catchment. Over time, reduced snowpack, rainfall, changes to landform, erosion and runoff, and increased temperatures in the Snowy Mountains region is likely to have an impact on the Western Riverina.

The water from the Alps which flows through to the Basin and the irrigation schemes is of high significance, supporting ecosystem services of national economic, social and environmental importance. With the water held in high regard now, every gigalitre flowing from the Alps catchment to the Basin is likely to be more important in the future.

Climate projections for the NSW Alpine region indicate continued warming and drying – with winter temperatures increasing by more than 2°C in the far future and spring rainfall projected to decrease by 20 percent in the far future.

Through an increase in temperatures and changes to rainfall patterns, there are subsequent impacts to the quantity of both surface water and groundwater, with some projections showing that, across the Alpine region, there is likely to be a reduction in surface-water run-off in the future.

Climate change threats to the natural condition of the catchments may also impact high quality water delivery from the Alps. This includes water yield, water flow regimes and water quality.

Further investigation is needed to understand how the projected reduction in surface water run-off in the Alpine region, and other influencing processes on water yield and delivery within the Alps, interacts with the run-off generally received through the Murrumbidgee catchment. With the Murrumbidgee and Murray water catchments receiving inflows from the Snowy Scheme under the Snowy Water Licence, future reviews based on building a climate-based understanding will need to be considered.

Clear reliance is evident on the water quantity and quality from the Alpine region to other catchments, importantly the Murrumbidgee catchment, and broader considerations to the contribution it makes to agricultural production and other industries in the Basin.



Image: 'A Country Life' (Brett Collins)

Western Riverina Regional Drought Resilience Plan

Trends, stressors and shocks

To support preparedness and planning for drought we must also consider other trends, stressors and acute shocks, beyond the climate, that may amplify drought impacts into the future. These can influence our resilience to different conditions, circumstances and scenarios. It is also important in terms of governance arrangements and strategic priorities to ensure broader actions are cognisant of interaction with drought in our communities.



Economic

- Water policy and water allocation changes
- Cost of farming with rising inputs
- The state of the national economy, commodity prices, market volatility and interest rates
- Fuel prices and transport costs
- Positive impacts of strategic road connectivity on market access
- Major project investment decisions, both private and public
- Changing farm enterprise ownership models and their scale
- Energy access
- Transition to renewable energy sources



People and community

- Service availability, particularly health and community services
- Workforce shortages, and worker attraction and retention to regions
- Demographic shifts in population (ageing population and youth retention)
- Housing availability and new dwelling supply
- Costs of living pressures and local discretionary spending
- Urbanisation and population mobility trends



Environmental

- Widespread invasive species
- Feral animal numbers
- Land use conflicts, particularly on primary production areas
- Loss of riparian habitat
- Water management within the Murray-Darling Basin
- Water infrastructure projects and funding decisions
- Soil erosion
- Water licensing arrangements to improve environmental flows
- Climate change

Western Riverina in Australia's future drought context

At the national level, a consequence of the most recent drought (2017-2019) was increased pressure on Australia's food security. Grain was imported to feed stock and the nation. Similar imports in 2006-7, 2003-4, and 1994-5 correlate to the worst drought related cropping years in recent decades. Since this event in 2019, Australia's population has grown from 25.5 million to 27.2 million, with continued growth projected. This growth adds to the demand on available water and increases the pressures on food insecurity into the future. Any response to drought, particularly within the productive area of the Western Riverina, fits within the context of a strategic view of national food and water security. This would consider the potential scenarios of water availability, as well as the related potential biosecurity risks. Subsequent revisions of the Western Riverina Regional Drought Resilience Plan will monitor the development of a national policy response to this trend, and reflect community views to advocate more on this significant issue.

Our drought resilience

Drought resilience can be considered against three macro indicators, each with their own influencing factors. Considering how this plan can address all these factors ensures we can address all aspects of the system.



Economic resilience

Continuity
Employment
Diversity



Environmental resilience

Infrastructure and built assets
Natural processes
Land management



Social resilience

Personal wellbeing
Decision making capacity
Community wellbeing

A snapshot of vulnerability and resilience to drought

The Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences' (ABARES) has developed an index that ranks remote, rural or regional agriculturally dependent communities (at the LGA level) according to their potential to be adversely affected by drought.

The result is a snapshot based on drought exposure and drought sensitivity at the farm level (farm sensitivity), the reliance on employment in agricultural production industries (community sensitivity), the adaptive capacity of a LGA to drought based on economic diversity, and a final combination of the potential drought impact.

The data comprises data variables and indicators which have been combined and ranked. Scores are not necessarily representative of the magnitude of impact, rather it positions the sensitivity with respect to other LGAs assessed. There is a strong link to employment in agricultural production, particularly for community sensitivity which may not be representative of broader community sensitivity detailed throughout this plan.

Community Vulnerability and Resilience to Drought Index (measured from 0 [lowest] to 1 [highest])				
LGA	Farm sensitivity	Community sensitivity	Economic diversity	Potential drought impact
Griffith City	N/A*	0.30	0.53	0.20
Leeton Shire	N/A*	0.27	0.59	0.18
Murrumbidgee	0.76	0.58	0.16	0.90
Narrandera Shire	N/A*	0.32	0.47	0.22

* Insufficient data for broadacre farm samples in the region

The ABARES CVRDI scores indicate for the region:

- Some evidence of farm-based exposure, which is linked to both exposure to climate variability, and the effects that has on farm outcomes
- A low to moderate level of community dependence on agricultural activity in terms of employment
- Some demonstrated economic diversity highlighted by a strong regional centre offer, service industry and economic output
- A low to higher level of overall potential drought impact, particularly in Murrumbidgee noting it has a particularly strong agriculture sector with high value agriculture commodity output (while potential drought impact measures farm sensitivity and community sensitivity, whether there is lasting loss or harm depends on a community's adaptive capacity).

While the region is susceptible to future drought impacts, and this is more apparent for Murrumbidgee compared with other LGAs, its economic diversity supports a level of adaptive capacity in some areas of the region. Levels of community connection and social capital, along with diversified economic development opportunities, offer key opportunities to aid immediate as well as long-term drought resilience. Murrumbidgee's proximity to the regional centres of both Griffith and Albury potentially moderate drought vulnerability scoring through access to employment and services in relative proximity.

The above provides a snapshot of community vulnerability to drought, though a number of limitations are noted. As this plan details, impacts in the Western Riverina extend to broader pressures on water availability, and subsequent impacts to community and economic outputs.



Drought action plan

The drought action plan for Western Riverina incorporates priorities for drought resilience across strategic pathways for action. The action plan provides:

- Details of specific actions against each pathway
- The alignment of the action to an implementation pathway
- Anticipated stakeholders

Timeframes are indicative and are dependent upon opportunities and timing for funding and other variables.

While Council is listed next to a number of actions, this is generally in anticipation of advocating and leading next steps of the action rather than sole responsibility in delivery. Many of these actions are of a scale or fall outside council operations and require funding and resourcing from other levels of government or input from industry.

A program logic approach was used to match the drought resilience needs illuminated by the engagement feedback with pragmatic actions. The degree to which the actions contribute to our movement along the resilience 'theory of change' journey is also detailed. This is about whether the actions 'absorb, adapt or transform' how we collectively prepare for and grow our resilience to drought effects. This scale also helps us to understand the level of effort and the timeframes associated with each action.

Pathways for change

This drought action plan establishes a framework to guide focus and efforts in response to community needs and community strengths highlighted through engagement. The action plan spans six strategic pathways, reflecting the three systems of drought resilience of community, economic, and environmental characteristics. These strategic pathways are:

-  Anticipate water availability
-  Proactively manage business interests
-  Support off-farm diversification
-  Grow local co-operative service provision
-  Support community cohesion
-  Embed environmental stewardship and sustainable agricultural practices

These pathways can be approached at different scales. This can be by different actors and through a range of mechanisms over time from transformative resilience actions at a large scale to proactive resilience actions by individuals and the more formal or common pathways.

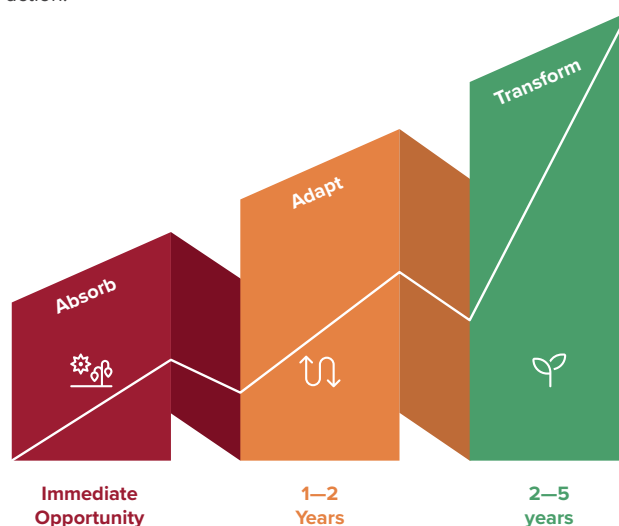


Figure 16 — Resilience theory of change

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**Pathway 1 –
Anticipate water availability**

The region’s social and economic resilience is inextricably linked to water availability. Reducing the inherent uncertainties of water availability is critical to the ongoing sustainability of the region.

This is particularly the case with the evolution of the water market in NSW, whereby water allocations have been decoupled from land ownership. The ability to trade water unlocks an additional revenue stream for those farmers who hold those allocations, but it also creates challenges for those farmers who have to purchase both land and water allocations. In times of drought, they could be left with a farm (and its associated debt obligation) and having to purchase water temporarily at a high price due to reduced availability.

Key actions under this pathway to build resilience include:

- Increasing collective understanding of water market dynamics – including communicating the risks of temporary allocation purchases
- Improving water allocation forecasting
- Improving access to and awareness of climate forecasts for dryland farmers
- Considered and well-informed planning for water infrastructure programs and management

ID	SPECIFIC ACTION	IMPLEMENTATION PATHWAY	STAKEHOLDER(S)
1.1	Develop an agreed approach for drought fodder management/distribution with improved governance arrangements overseen by a local independent authority (e.g. using Stock Saleyard operations as a model)	Adapt to strengthen preparedness and ensure coordination of processes	Council
1.2	Councils to review town water supply restrictions policies and approaches to providing emergency water supplies, recognising the wellbeing benefits of towns being “green” even during dry times, and include water use efficiency approaches.	Adapt to strengthen preparedness and support common good outcomes	Council
1.3	Undertake an independent assessment of the Lake Coolah development proposal with consideration to multiple objectives including flood mitigation, wetland enhancement and water delivery system efficiency	Transform the long-term economic stability through catalyst projects	Council
1.4	Councils to review stormwater management and town sewerage discharge strategies and approaches to maximise opportunities for reuse of water resources	Adapt to strengthen preparedness through continuous improvements	Council
1.5	Work with International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage Australia and Irrigation Australia to promote the bench marking of irrigation scheme delivery efficiencies, and explore a “5 Star” approach – that will support regional marketing of agricultural products	Adapt to leverage existing strengths	Industry groups
1.6	Deliver continuing education / training program on the operation of water markets, with irrigators as the target audience	Adapt through increased local understanding of the system	Industry groups Irrigators
1.7	Work with the NSW Government to introduce training and programs for primary producers to further develop rainfall and weather intelligence using drought signals / indicators for use in conjunction with soil moisture and other weather data.	Adapt through improved processes to complement planning	Council State Government
1.8	Promote engagement with the One Basin CRC projects delivered through the Griffith Hub, and explore the possibility of a Centre of Irrigation Excellence building upon the existing Irrigation Research and Extension Committee model.	Transform through increased capacity and recognition of local strengths	Council



**Pathway 2 –
Proactively manage
business interests**

Strength of small business is a feature of the region whether it's fuel, cafes, hairdressers, mechanical or the local accountant. While drought generally impacts farmers first, the flow-on effects are felt across towns and communities through business impacts and in-turn, employment and expenditure.

Resilient, diverse and prepared businesses are better positioned to ride the peaks and troughs when they are planned for and anticipated. A range of pressures exist outside of drought times which requires strategic long term planning to address, while more agile initiatives provide interventions during drought, and are effective where planned for in advance. Priority action areas include:

- Support for businesses to adapt and prepare
- Ensuring the region has the right skills, and attracts new skills for confident business growth
- Ensure business has the information they need to operate effectively.

ID	SPECIFIC ACTION	IMPLEMENTATION PATHWAY	STAKEHOLDER(S)
2.1	Investigate the reintroduction of previous Services Australia farm exit program	Adapt to facilitate business transition	Council Services Australia (Federal Government)
2.2	Investigate potential to fund local application (using a co-operative approach) of the NSW Farmers' Federation "Ag Career Start" program	Adapt to strengthen preparedness and build local capacity	Council
2.3	Undertake a more detailed analysis of economic flows / benefits done by ABARES prior to the next drought (taking milling and downstream activities into account)	Adapt to strengthen preparedness through understanding of the system	Council
2.4	Undertake a review across all the local education service provider course and curriculum offerings to meet local agricultural industry and supply chain needs including opportunities for rural cadetships, apprenticeship advisors, and how to increase housing with a link to trade apprenticeships	Transform the long-term economic stability through catalyst projects	Council TAFE NSW Local education providers
2.5	Support small businesses with computer and internet training	Absorb immediate action to support community capacity	Council State Government
2.6	Promote the benefits of "lifestyle" driving the purpose of business / financial / succession planning, and promote the benefits and delivery of business plans e.g. for improved access to capital	Adapt to strengthen preparedness	Council
2.7	Promote drought assistance programs or financial subsidy programs to "supply chain" businesses when they are impacted by agricultural clients who are impacted by drought	Adapt to support endurance during drought	Council Business owners and operators
2.8	Engage a project officer to help local businesses (small to large) develop their own drought resilience plan - and facilitate access to grant funding from various agencies	Adapt to strengthen preparedness	Business owners and operators Council
2.9	Provide training to local providers on responding to tenders	Absorb immediate action to support local capacity	Council
2.10	Provide local support to Services NSW / Concierge service to provide opportunities for workers displaced by drought to get other local short-term work	Adapt to strengthen preparedness and mobilise workforce supply	Council State Government
2.11	Promote the need to broaden the rules for "backpacker" workers to attract more workers for agricultural related industries	Transform the long-term economic stability through catalyst projects and ensure workforce supply	Federal Government
2.12	Promote opportunities in alternate industries that suit available soils, water and climatic conditions.	Transform the long-term economic stability through catalyst projects	Council State Government
2.13	Review / update regional economic development strategies to include promotion of non-water based industries, agricultural industries that align with available soils and water, and others that take advantage of available products	Transform the long-term economic stability through catalyst projects and diversification of economy	Council State Government
2.14	Undertake regional internet/phone service audit for digital access, along with an energy access audit and advocate for improved connectivity	Absorb immediate action to inform advocacy of key barriers	Council
2.15	Advocate for improved consistency in funding for the Rural Financial Counselling Service to support local business operators to take proactive steps toward enhanced drought resilience	Absorb immediate action to provide continuity of services	Council
2.16	Develop a "Generation Ag Link" program modelled on the CSIRO program "Generation STEM Link"	Adapt to strengthen preparedness by building capacity and local industry understanding	Industry groups



**Pathway 3 –
Support off-farm
diversification**

The region boasts many economic development opportunities which over time will offer varied income and productivity opportunities. Some of these opportunities are truly transformative and offer long term prospects for change, growth and stability. As an agriculturally based economy, there is benefit in:

- › Leveraging existing tourism assets as a major economic pillar
- › Building the financial strength of all businesses regardless of sector or scale
- › Diversifying the regional economy through manufacturing and value adding agriculture
- › Keeping our towns active and attractive.

ID	SPECIFIC ACTION	IMPLEMENTATION PATHWAY	STAKEHOLDER(S)
3.1	Councils to have a strategy for future land release and development, potentially adopting a “cooperative model” approach	Absorb immediate action to identify site potential	Council
3.2	Build on the Regional Arts Development Program - Regional Cultural Tourism report	Absorb immediate action to build existing work foundations	Regional Arts Network Council
3.3	Advocate for public service remote area benefits to attract and retain critical services and workforce	Transform the long-term economic stability through continuity of services	Council
3.4	Develop an Ag Industry focussed “Job Keeper” type program (taking principles from the Farm Household Allowance program delivered by Services Australia) for application during drought.	Transform the long-term economic stability through continuity of operations	Industry groups State Government
3.5	Promote agritourism and a viable diversification strategy	Adapt to strengthen preparedness through economic diversification	Council Tourism organisations
3.6	Promote value added manufacturing for existing and emerging agricultural commodities, such as almonds, grapes, citrus, sugar plum etc	Adapt to strengthen preparedness through economic diversification	Industry groups
3.7	Investigate a Geographic Indicator designation that would support sustainability accreditation for the Western Riverina agricultural industries	Adapt to leverage existing strengths	Industry groups
3.8	Develop public works / maintenance program of works e.g. town revitalisation, roadside clean-up / maintenance, farm clean outs to be done during drought	Adapt to inform preparedness through ready made actions with impact	Council
3.9	Schedule training during “down time” to upskill people in the agricultural industry	Adapt to strengthen preparedness	Farm business owners and operators
3.10	Outside of drought, promote availability of water in towns as an opportunity for new businesses – include in Economic Development strategies	Adapt to strengthen preparedness through economic diversification	Council
3.11	Promote National and State support for regionalisation strategies such as the Regional Development Australia “Country Change Riverina and Murray” strategy (to encourage movement from cities to regional areas)	Transform the long-term economic stability through continuity of services	Federal Government State Government
3.12	Facilitate affordable housing, fast track land development, explore community cooperative approach and private / public partnerships with Council	Transform the long-term economic stability through catalyst projects	Council State Government
3.13	Upskill and build capability of local providers in diverse business areas to allow them to compete in the tender and procurement process during drought that support broader business offers.	Adapt to strengthen preparedness through economic diversification	Council



**Pathway 4 –
Grow local co-operative
service provision**

The co-operative model of business and service provision in this region is truly unique. It is not found in many other parts of Australia at such a significant scale and could support the region's long-term resilience and prosperity. It is borne from a generational legacy of the collaboration needed to operate and maintain the complex irrigation schemes that thread through the landscape. Without co-operation, in this landscape, water availability would not exist.

Expanding this co-operative model beyond its irrigation roots is already evident, with pubs and rice mills already emerging to trade using this model of ownership and operation. Extending this model further into retail, grocery, aged care, and possibly even housing is arguably not too much of a stretch to achieve.

This pathway seeks to focus on this demonstrated strength of collaboration and cooperation in Western Riverina communities. This builds on these existing tangibles and non-tangible cultural assets to maintain baseline service provision for key sectors, and support social and community fabric and morale during drought times through enabling mechanisms that drive locally cooperative outcomes.

ID	SPECIFIC ACTION	IMPLEMENTATION PATHWAY	STAKEHOLDER(S)
4.1	Establish ongoing “Wellbeing Hubs” connecting community organisations to landholders, business and the community and develop action plans for priorities of each hub	Transform into the long term supporting continuity of services and community network capacity	Community organisations Council
4.2	Develop cooperative structure models for a range of situations along with guidelines to encourage people and corporations to co-invest in community services	Transform into the long-term supporting continuity of services and community network capacity	Community organisations
4.3	Promote programs, financial planning advice and funding available from providers including Services Australia	Adapt to broaden clarity and uptake of programs	Services Australia Council
4.4	Councils to consider the provision of more ‘drop in’ style community services to support locals especially in drought when costs can prohibit travel	Absorb to strengthen local access to support	Council
4.5	Link community-based investment in local infrastructure (e.g. ongoing social activities) with LGA programs including for social connectivity and for places of refuge linked to floods / bushfires etc.	Adapt immediate actions to support ongoing preparedness	Council
4.6	Undertake an audit of Council roads to identify priorities for an “Infrastructure Betterment” program to make access to farms more resilient to droughts, floods and other events	Adapt to direct future funding and support movement networks	Council Landowners



**Pathway 5 –
Support community
cohesion**

Cohesive and connected communities are a key ingredient to support drought resilience. Drought, as opposed to other hazards, can divide communities through isolation. Strong community connections are therefore critical in ensuring community care and wellbeing, looking out for mates and providing mutual relief.

This was a clear priority identified by the community through the plan engagement process. Community connection, participation and identity are already strengths of the Western Riverina and need to be maintained and bolstered.

This pathway seeks to build on the existing community strength of the Western Riverina region to support cohesiveness of the social fabric and morale during drought times by:

- › Supporting strong social cohesion
- › Attracting and retaining social and cultural events
- › Maintaining an inclusive community.

ID	SPECIFIC ACTION	IMPLEMENTATION PATHWAY	STAKEHOLDER(S)
5.1	Include delivery of hard copy documents to households in communications strategies (where requested)	Absorb immediate action support accessibility	Council State Government
5.2	Advocate for additional subsidies during drought for youth sport and support similar initiatives such as “Active Farmers”	Adapt to utilise existing initiatives and programs	Council
5.3	Councils and community groups to drive / facilitate / promote volunteerism and develop a steering committee (or similar) to direct volunteer deployment in times of drought	Adapt to strengthen preparedness and capability to respond	Council Community groups
5.4	Develop written and visual history of the region (providing a way for intergenerational involvement and connection)	Transform into the long term through retaining regional identity	Council
5.5	Develop a list of groups and associations seeking volunteers, based on examples such as SES community actions teams – link to “Community Hub” Actions	Adapt to strengthen preparedness and capability to respond	Community groups
5.6	Council to promote and deliver free “Big Social” events	Adapt to strengthen preparedness and support role of community networks	Council Community organisation
5.7	Support existing and promote new “Food Festival” programs to show case locally grown products – invite celebrity chefs	Adapt the long-term economic stability through catalyst projects	Council Destination groups
5.8	Develop a local “Drought Self Help” kit (similar to Red Cross kit)	Adapt to strengthen preparedness	Council
5.9	Build on and expand the “Teach the Teachers” program relating to agricultural production and experiences of living in rural communities	Adapt to strengthen preparedness and connection to the region	Council Industry groups Schools
5.10	Support excursions from city schools to the region and continue to support “Boys to the Bush” program	Adapt to strengthen preparedness build understanding across region to urban areas	Council Community organisations Department of Education
5.11	Explore opportunities for mentor programs for both men and women, and promote existing programs focused on rural leadership and change makers	Adapt through capacity building of locals	Council Community organisations
5.12	Support delivery of drought resilience programs within schools	Absorb immediate action to strengthen preparedness	Schools
5.13	Continue to invest in the maintenance and enhancement of community facilities to support community cohesion during times of drought	Absorb immediate action to strengthen preparedness	Council
5.14	Work with Indigenous groups to “co-solve” water issues	Transform the long-term economic stability through catalyst projects	Council First Nations groups



**Pathway 6 –
Embed environmental
stewardship and
sustainable agricultural
practices**

The health of the landscape is integral to our economic and community wellbeing. Retaining soil moisture in the landscape and topsoil retention are clear drought impact reduction pursuits. Pest and weed management offer further opportunities to stem landscape degradation.

Areas for action include supporting land management and maintaining and enhancing biosecurity.

ID	SPECIFIC ACTION	IMPLEMENTATION PATHWAY	STAKEHOLDER(S)
6.1	Promote and support Landcare in providing opportunities for landholders to demonstrate the benefits derived from their business and land practices (including use of photo diaries)	Adapt to support resilient landscapes	Landcare
6.2	Support Landcare and associated programs and advocate for continuity of funding on programs that focus on climate ready revegetation and improving native seed supply	Adapt to support resilient landscapes	Landcare
6.3	Promote a policy for fixed riparian zone / corridors for reconstruction and restoration	Adapt the long-term economic stability through catalyst projects	Council
6.4	Support actions for on-going carp management within the region's waterways	Absorb immediate actions to support ongoing efforts	State government agencies
6.5	Advocate for and ensure understanding of the impacts of future reviews of the Snowy Water Licence	Adapt into long-term to maintain economic stability	Council Industry groups
6.6	Link Landcare with Regional Services Australia to identify funding opportunities for involvement in farm management professional development opportunities	Adapt the long-term economic stability through catalyst projects	Landcare
6.7	Promote the landscape and production benefits of sustainable and restorative agricultural practices and focus on driving buy-in through initiatives such as mapping of land use capability.	Adapt to support resilient landscapes	Industry groups Landcare
6.8	Work with First Nations peoples to bring First Nations ecological practice back to Country	Transform through actions building partnerships and resilient landscapes	First Nations groups
6.9	Support the establishment of Landcare groups across each of the council areas	Adapt to support resilient landscapes	Council Landcare
6.10	Develop a program to focus on improvements to road side revegetation for connected corridors	Adapt to support resilient landscapes	Council

Implementation






The Western Riverina Regional Drought Resilience Plan relies on collaborative implementation approaches involving a range of stakeholders.

The action plan for drought resilience spans the drought cycle and its interaction with the community, that is before, during and recovery from drought. The actions to implement cover levels of government, community and industry groups, service providers, not-for-profits, landowners, and local communities with actions that have effect at different points of the drought cycle. This includes short, medium and long term opportunities, and interventions that are strategic by strengthening preparedness or are agile and ready to be implemented when enduring drought.

Pathways implementation

The purpose of the action plan is to inform future drought funding and ongoing preparedness across the region. Stakeholders work together regionally to build drought resilience in the economy, environment and our communities, proactively and pragmatically.

The action plan has been drawn together through community expression, existing initiatives and background data. In developing this action plan, it is noted that:

-  actions are purposefully listed with multiple stakeholders, and unspecified timeframes or funding to acknowledge that delivery is dependent on a range of variables
-  roles and responsibilities are flexible, including for local governments. The plan is owned by the region. Any stakeholder can start an action that is within their capacity
-  implementation will occur through participation of all stakeholders over time as priorities, resources and funding arise
-  some actions are indeed underway by various stakeholders, the purpose of maintaining them in the action plan, is that the community has advised that the action is integral to drought resilience.
-  as a regional plan, the actions are collective and collaborative

Stakeholder roles in implementation

DESCRIPTION

An **advocate** actively supports a position, action or policy. The task is outside the advocate's jurisdiction, capacity or resourcing and advocacy is required to engage with those parties with capacity to deliver. For example, telecommunications advocacy.

A **partner** joins others in a common cause or action where roles and responsibilities are shared across areas of expertise. Each partner brings an element to the action for joint delivery. For example, region-wide strategic initiatives.

A **lead** is in control of an action. The action may still involve partners or other roles, but the action is reliant upon a lead party due to their technical or other expertise. E.g. Health or counselling matters

An **owner** is the only party that can undertake or permit the action. E.g. local government as public asset owners

A **supporter** is united with others in the need or benefits of the action but potentially does not have a major role. The action is led or owned by others. E.g. A supporter may provide assistance in kind, technical advice or donations to action leaders

A **stakeholder** is anyone who has an interest in the project, program or action. Stakeholders will have varying degrees of involvement from owner to advocate and all points between.

A **deliverer** is responsible for implementation and outcomes of an action or funded program. e.g. Community agency delivering social aid programs.

A **funder** provides the funding arrangements. The party is not involved with scoping, executing or delivering the program but may require some outcome reporting or evidence. e.g. the government grant funding for a pest control program delivered by others.

Governance structure

Implementation of the regional drought resilience plan is to be driven by a collaborative and multi-disciplined drought resilience project control group (PCG). Membership will be broadened to provide an integrated and coordinated approach to drought resilience efforts.

This will enable the PCG to adopt agile approaches and shift priorities as needed depending on changing circumstances, and as opportunities arise. Despite this, all actions remain relevant in terms of maximising funding opportunities. This also allows expertise across the strategic pathways, and for partnerships to evolve as funding and priorities arise

A Chair of the PCG will be selected.

A PCG Terms of Reference is to be prepared for its membership to guide its function. The Terms of Reference could include:

- > Role and purpose and connection to the RDRP
- > Stakeholder and membership lists
- > Meeting arrangements, (potentially quarterly) and responsibilities of attendees
- > The circumstances of a quorum and decision making protocols
- > The election or rotation of a chair person
- > An action plan for the first 60 days or 12 months including delivery of the priority actions with the implementation funding; and
- > A process for reflection and nominating next priority actions.

A Memorandum of Understanding may also be required.

PCG meetings should be held in different localities across the region over time.

Monitoring, evaluation and learning framework

The drought action plan incorporates a large suite of projects and actions, some offer immediate opportunity, some are medium-term items and others are longer-term transformational opportunities. Not all actions can be focused on or delivered at once. The 'absorb, adapt, transform' framework will guide the PCG in terms of its implementation and coordination of activities and funding pursuits, and will enable a flexible and agile approach as drought conditions change, guiding the focus.

Other stakeholders are able to use the plan to support funding and grant applications at any time, as desired. Opportunities for collaborative delivery partnerships, where two stakeholders may wish to provide similar projects, should be explored

This system will:

- Provide regular opportunities to define when conditions are changing locally; and
- Catalyse a change in focus to respond to the needs of the changing conditions.

This ensures a level of agility is adopted with regard to the implementation approach. Local governments may wish to apply more objective targets for immediate actions or further incorporate the outcomes of this plan into the local government reporting framework to ensure delivery.

As immediate efforts in response to the action plan are delivered, broader efforts across collaborators is guided in its approach, underpinned by this plan which enables stakeholders to work towards and contribute to regional drought resilience outcomes, including those at the local and property level.

The drought resilience action plan also requires that a 'lessons learned' posture is adopted, ensuring new information, knowledge, approaches and science is rolled into implementation delivery as a guiding principle. This will mean that over time, the drought resilience action plan may be adapted to reflect new learnings and the adjustment of intervention pathways as required. The PCG is responsible to conduct an annual lessons learned review, with changes to inform action moving forward.

The drought resilience action plan has been thoughtfully designed to not only guide collective effort and action but to enable adaptation through ongoing monitoring, evaluation and learning.

The Regional Drought Resilience Plan is a 10-year plan, to be reviewed after five years.

An annual monitoring program to inform adaptive learning is outlined below. Addendums to this plan can be made, to reflect these learnings over time and ensure the document maintains pace with changing circumstances and maturation of drought preparedness activities.

Tracking progress and reporting

Action-based project tracking against the drought resilience action plan, the principles and objectives of the plan should be undertaken on an annual basis. This tracking and reporting shall be the responsibility of the implementation PCG chair, unless otherwise delegated. Likewise, an annual evaluation process will be conducted by the PCG, guided by the evaluation questions that follow.



Image: Jerilderie Grain Storage and Handling

Western Riverina Regional Drought Resilience Plan

Key evaluation questions

These key evaluation questions are high level questions designed to frame the analysis of progress and performance of the Western Riverina Regional Drought Resilience Plan against the above framework. These key evaluation questions may help to structure annual tracking and reporting.

PROPERTY	EVALUATION
Effectiveness and Outcomes	What have been the outcomes (intended, unintended, positive and negative) of the plan implementation process and progress?
	To what extent has progress contributed to or furthered the principles and objectives of the regional drought resilience plan?
	Has the plan been used for or otherwise supported successful funding and grant applications?
	To what extent have stakeholders outside the PCG responded to the plan's content?
	Have any barriers or challenges been identified throughout the implementation of plan, and what solutions to address these have been identified?
Drought resilience maturation	<p>To what extent has efforts in implementing the plan contributed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Creating stronger connectedness and greater social capital within communities, contributing to well-being and security? ➤ Empowering communities and businesses to implement activities that improve their resilience to drought? ➤ Supporting more primary producers and land managers to adopt whole-of-system approaches to natural resource management to improve the natural resource base, for long-term productivity and landscape health?
Stakeholder engagement	In what ways are the PCG and other stakeholders collaborating and collectively contributing to efforts outlined by the action plan?
	In what ways has the plan provided inclusive involvement across sectors, disciplines and communities?
	In what ways has the plan been able to support individual stakeholder goals, objectives and aspirations with regard to drought resilience?

The reporting may be undertaken using a range of tools to capture experiences and perspectives from across the PCG, allied stakeholders as well as the communities of Griffith City, Leeton Shire, Murrumbidgee and Narrandera Shire more broadly. These tools may include:

- Meetings and event data capture
- Targeted meeting / interviews with stakeholders
- Survey data
- Case studies and data from the PCG
- Media, including social media; and
- Funding and grant applications.

Achieving the plan's outcomes

A further opportunity for the PCG to measure the contribution to or achievement of the plan's outcomes is by using local data to assess specific outcomes. The data sources or indicators will need to be selected by the PCG and can provide insights as to how the plan is tracking against the resilience theory of change. Outcomes include (but are not limited to):

STRATEGIC PATHWAYS	OUTCOMES
Anticipate water availability	1 Community infrastructure is resilient and helps to reduce disruptions
	2 Capacity to make informed decisions through local knowledge, access to data, intelligence and innovate tools is increased
Proactively manage business interests	3 Agricultural productivity in the region is sustained
	4 Increased capacity to meet local procurement demands and local employment
Support off-farm diversification	5 Employment loss is avoided or minimised, ensuring livelihood are maintained
	6 Reduced decline of gross regional product relative to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Non-drought periods > Previous drought periods > Other regions in NSW, Victoria and South Australia
Grow local co-operative service provision	7 Community partnerships are strengthened through program delivery
	8 Services are retained in the region, and offered in local centres
Support community cohesion	9 Capacity and capability of community groups is strengthened
	10 Mental health services are available and are accessible
Embed environmental stewardship and sustainable agricultural practices	11 Environmental degradation of landscapes and waterways is reduced throughout and emerging from drought
	12 Increase in activities relating to environmental restoration

Learning

Regular (annual) monitoring provides the ability for reflection and learning. The progress tracking and reporting methodology, using key evaluation questions, will present specific insights in terms of those opportunities to build in 'lessons learned' through engagement across stakeholders with a role in drought resilience. These lessons should, on an annual basis, be contemplated with regard to the drought action plan to determine any relevant updates, new insights, intelligence and technologies that can be integrated to ensure the action plan keeps pace with a growing drought resilience maturation across systems and sectors.

This process will ensure the action plan remains a 'live document' that appropriately supports and services the needs of all stakeholders and importantly, those of the Western Riverina communities in preparation for, endurance of, and recovery from drought.

Concepts to guide adaptive learning as part of plan implementation are included at Appendix B. These items will help navigate maturation of this plan over time.

Appendix A — Drought history

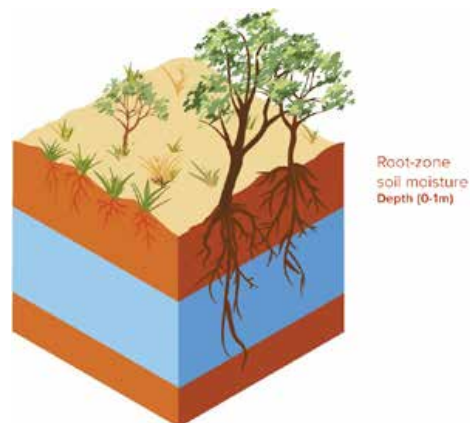
Precipitation and root zone soil moisture are considered as indicators of drought according to the Bureau of Meteorology's Australian Water Resources Assessment Landscape (AWRA-L) service. Root zone soil moisture is a calculation of the upper and lower soil layers in the AWRA-L, which represents the water-holding capacity of the top one metre of soil. Root zone soil moisture and precipitation rates are each useful indicators of future drought potential.

Locally, some of the most impactful periods of drought include the late 1910s, the World War II drought, 1967, 1982 to 1983, 2006 and the 2017-2019 drought.

Some of the continent's most impactful droughts in recent recorded history have affected the region. Here, we consider the significant drought periods identified by the Bureau of Meteorology:

- > 1914 to 1915
- > 1937 to 1945 (World War II drought)
- > 1965 to 1968
- > 1982 to 1983
- > 1997 to 2009 (Millennium drought)
- > 2017 to 2019

Below, we consider these droughts and the changes in conditions against a present-day baseline of 2002 to 2022*.



(Source BoM, 2024)



Image: Irrigation channel Leeton Shire (David Single)

Western Riverina Regional Drought Resilience Plan

1914-1915

Nationally, this drought was short but notable, primarily due to the failure of national wheat crop. This drought was driven by a strong El Nino, with drought conditions first becoming evident in 1914. Rains improved in 1916 but began to decrease again over the subsequent years (1918 and 1919).

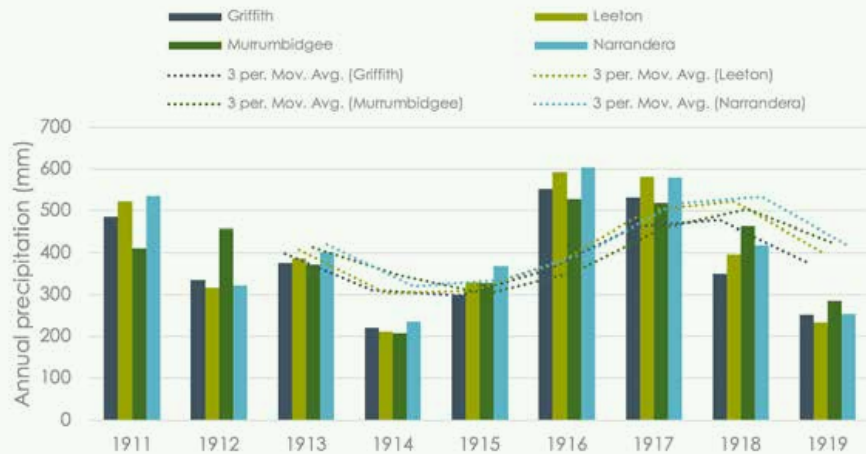


Figure 17 — Yearly precipitation (absolute), by LGA (1910 to 1918)

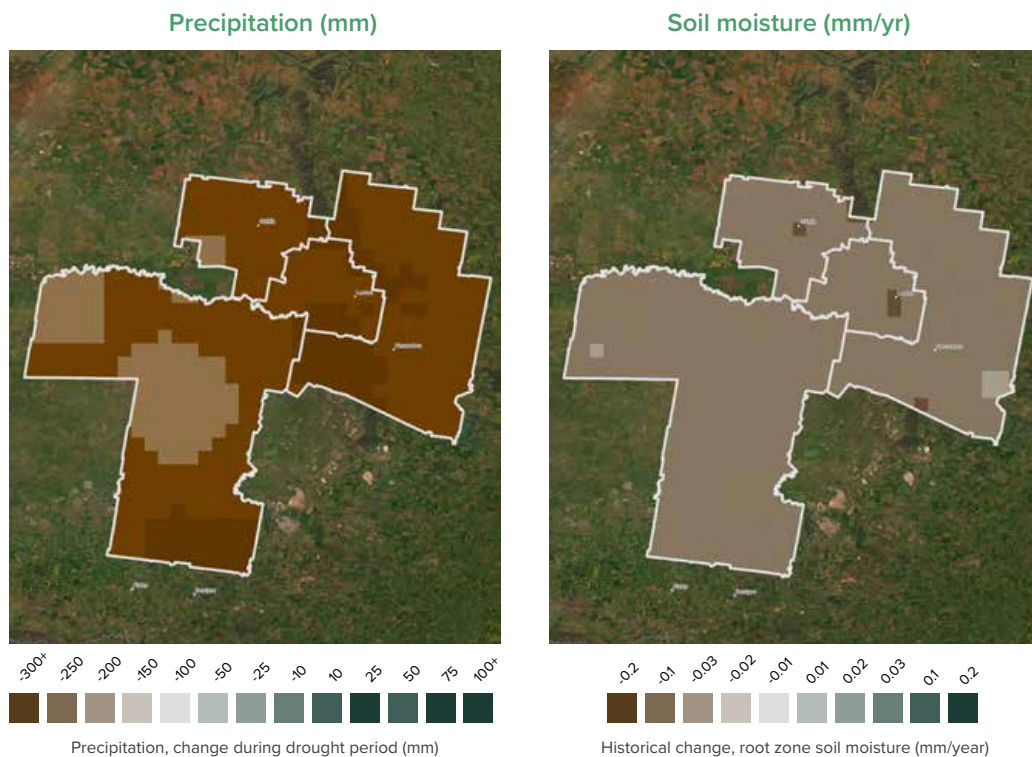


Figure 18 — Changes in conditions during drought against a present-day baseline of 2002 to 2022

1937 to 1945 (World War II drought)

This drought period was characterised by several breaks (1939 and 1942-1943), but significant periods of dryness. Rainfall rates were lower in 1937-1938 and 1940-1941. For the Western Riverina, 1940 was the most notable year, with extremely low rainfall totals across the entire region.



Figure 19 — Yearly precipitation (absolute), by LGA (1934 to 1948)

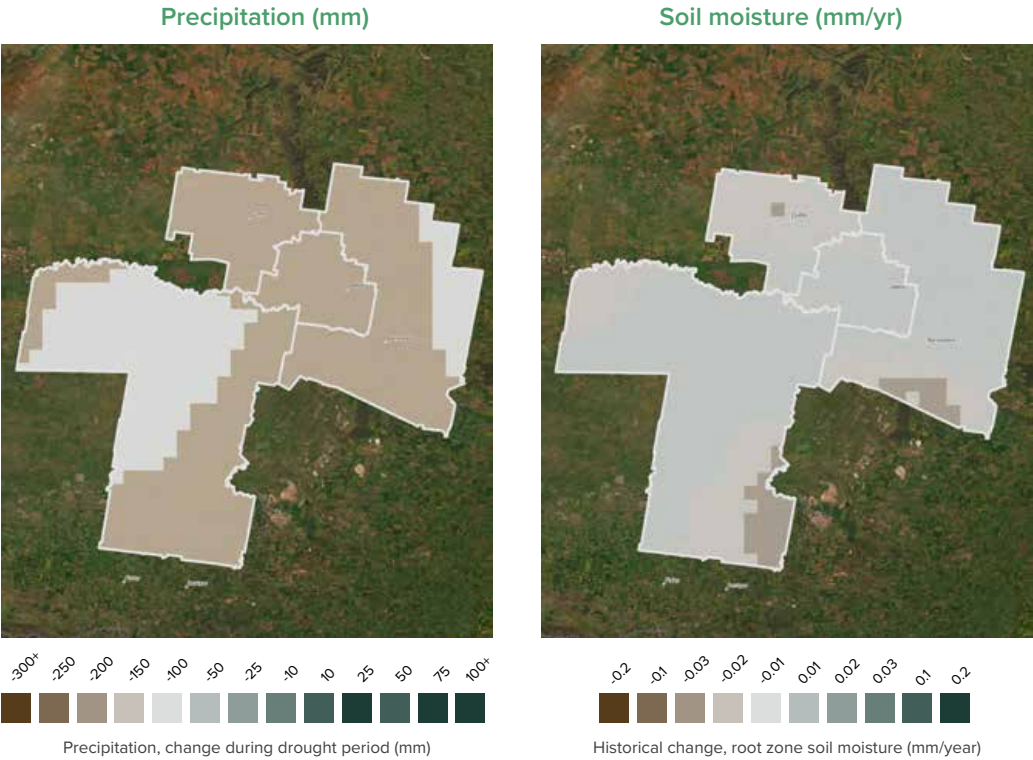


Figure 20 — Changes in conditions during drought against a present-day baseline of 2002 to 2022

1965 to 1968

The 1960s was generally dry across the continent. Drought developed in 1964 in northern New South Wales and had extended across most of the country by the following year. This was evident across the region, with lower rates of rainfall and soil moisture across much of the region. 1967 was the most severe year, with annual rainfall rates across each LGA below 200 mm.

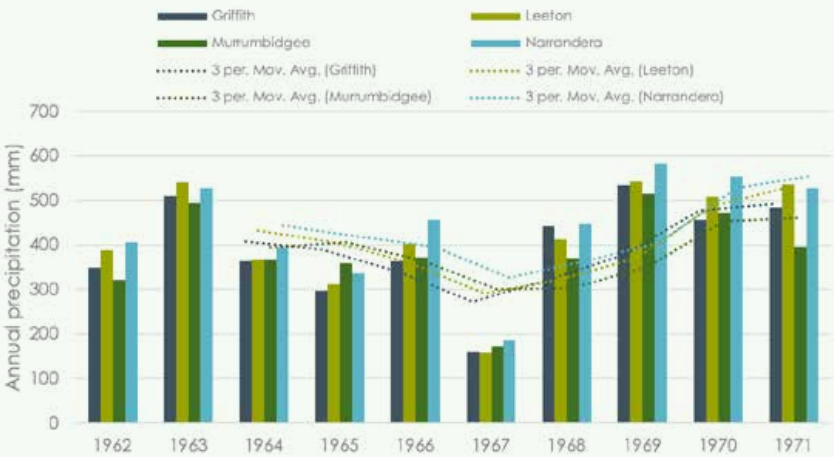
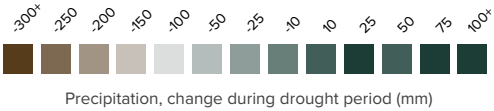
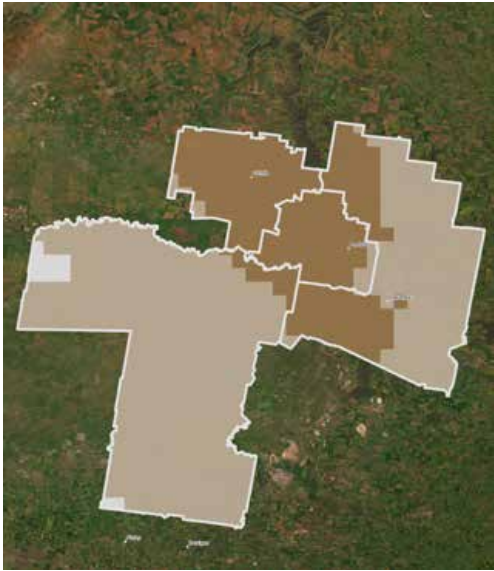


Figure 21: Yearly precipitation (absolute), by LGA (1962 to 1971)

Precipitation (mm)



Soil moisture (mm/yr)

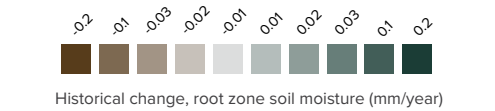
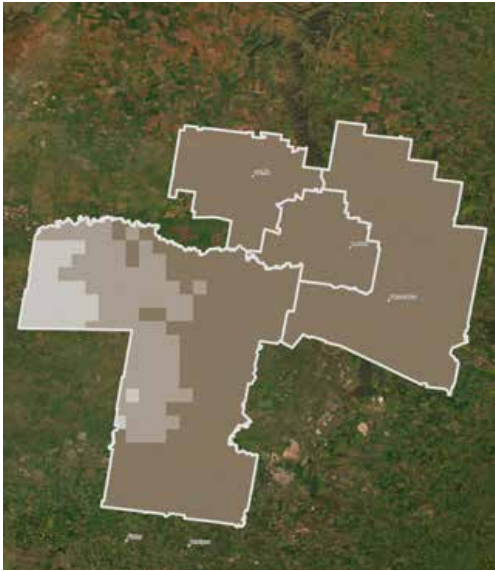


Figure 22: Changes in conditions during drought against a present-day baseline of 2002 to 2022

1982-1983

Despite being only one year long this was one of Australia's most severe droughts in the 20th century. A very strong El Nino led to these drought conditions. The region experienced widespread dryness.



Figure 23: Yearly precipitation (absolute), by LGA (1979 to 1986)

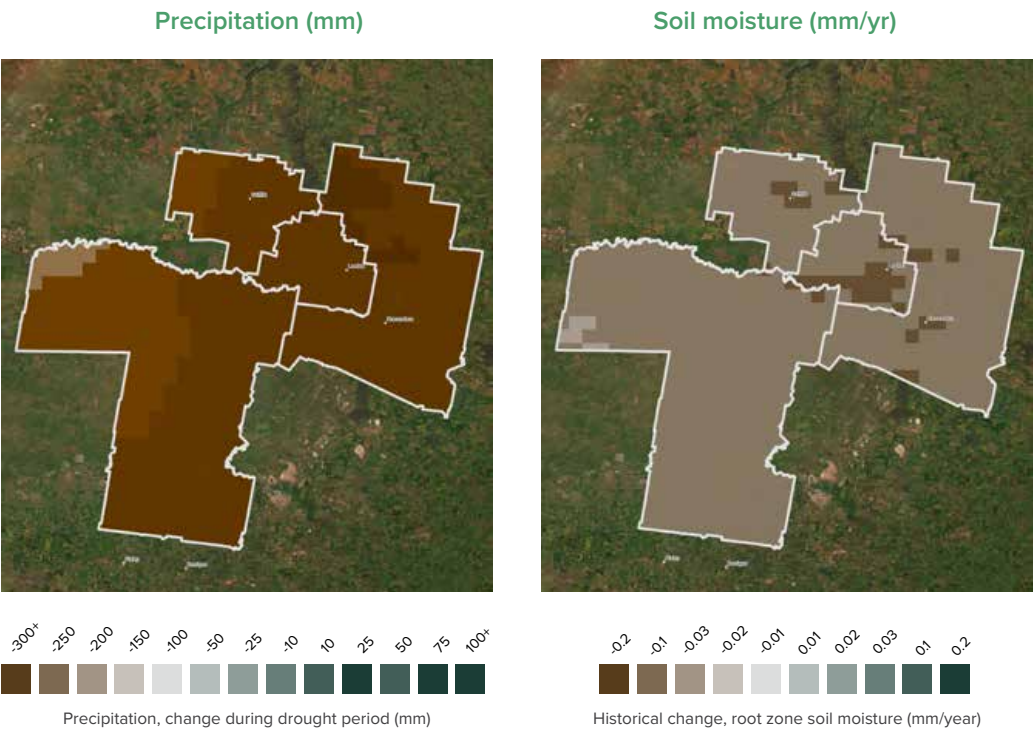


Figure 24 — Changes in conditions during drought against a present-day baseline of 2002 to 2022

1997 – 2009 (Millennium drought)

The Millennium drought was a long-lasting period of dryness, most severe in densely populated areas of the south-east and south-west of the country. For the Western Riverina region, the beginning of this period was relatively unimpactful, as from lower levels in 1997, based on rainfall and soil moisture figures. It is not until 2001 when there is a dry spell into 2005, and then a severe dry year in 2006.

Editor's note: The maps below show significant rainfall and higher soil moisture over this period, despite it being identified as a drought. This discrepancy is likely due to the reference period used to produce these maps (2002 – 2022) and that there was significant dryness in the latter half of that period. This result is then compounded by the short-lasting periods of rainfall decline during this long drought period (1997 – 2009). Therefore, leading to the appearance of increased rainfall and soil moisture compared to the reference period.



Figure 25: Yearly precipitation (absolute), by LGA (1994 to 2012)

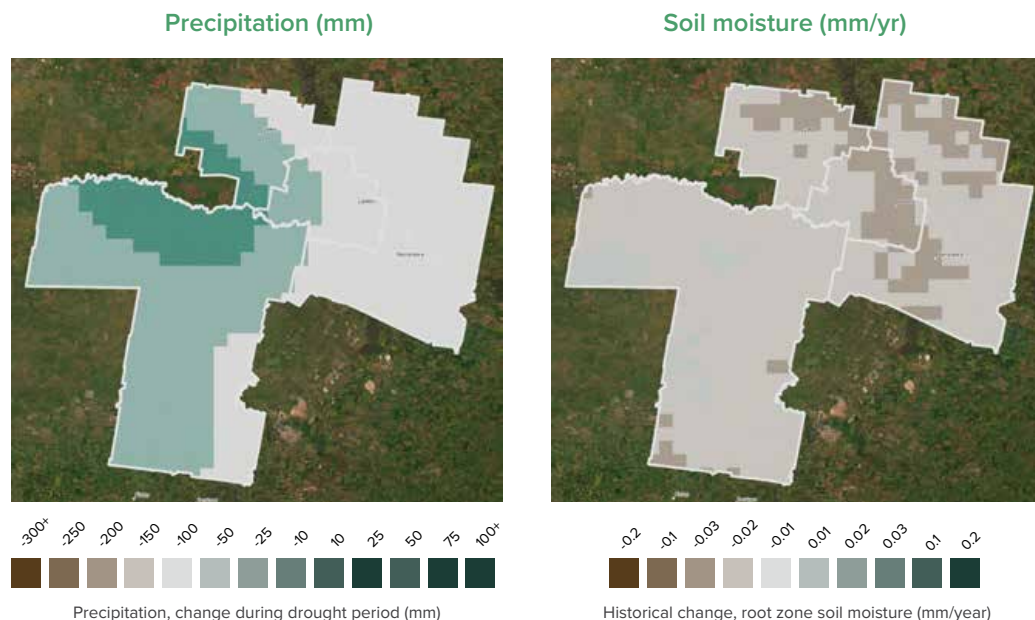


Figure 26: Changes in conditions during drought against a present-day baseline of 2002 to 2022

2017-2019

Following a wet 2016, dry conditions returned in 2017 across south and eastern Australia. This was a sustained multi-year period of dryness, unprecedented in recorded history. A strong Indian Ocean Dipole was a significant contributor to dry conditions the second half of 2019, leading into significant 2019/2020 bushfire season. The region was similar affected during this period, with widespread low rainfall and low soil moisture.

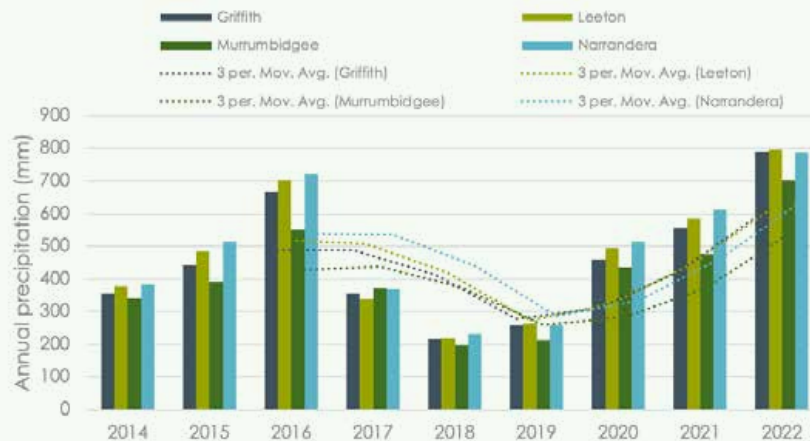


Figure 27 — Yearly precipitation (absolute), by LGA (2014 to 2022)

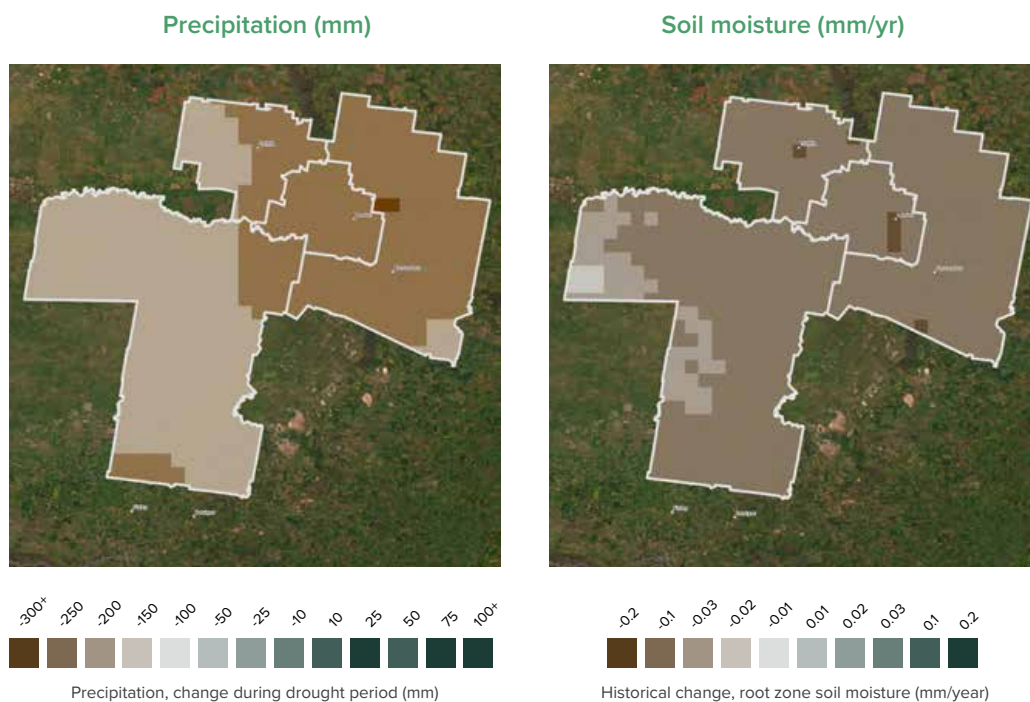


Figure 28 — Changes in conditions during drought against a present-day baseline of 2002 to 2022

Appendix B – Concepts to guide adaptive learning

As part of learning processes through the implementation, this appendix provides key considerations to guide further iterations and amendments to this RDRP. As drought resilience processes mature, the ability for further robust adaptation pathways to be implemented will emerge.

The table below captures specific items identified for integration as part of future plan iterations.

NO.	ASPECT OF CONSIDERATION
Expansion of drought resilience relative to diverse stakeholder groups	
1	<p>Expand on what drought means to different segments of the region's community and industries, and adaptation pathways to 'maintain, modify or transform' to grow drought resilience.</p> <p>As implementation of this foundational RDRP occurs, and monitoring, evaluation and learning processes are undertaken, opportunity will arise to advance the concepts of resilience theory, and make more clear how the adaptation pathways are continuously improving and escalating to underpin drought resilience maturation.</p>
2	<p>Continue to engage with diverse community and industry groups to advance implementation of the plan.</p> <p>Future plan updates could capitalise on the community's desire to be engaged and involved in the plan's delivery by acknowledging the role that key knowledge holders could play. Stakeholder engagement could be expanded to include direct participation of different drought vulnerable groups including gauging their capacity to participate and how best to engage with them moving forward. This information could be used to better target vulnerable residents and ensure adequate supports are in place to involve different community segments.</p>
Expansion of resilience adaptation pathways	
3	<p>Use diverse quantitative and empirical evidence on the potential impact of the interaction of historical and projected drought with key economic and social variables over time, such as demographic changes, shifts in the diversity of businesses, and livelihoods and employment opportunities for different community segments, in emergent versus declining types of industries, and in labour mobility among different industry and sectors.</p>
4	<p>Further develop the theory of change to aligns the plan's objectives and actions towards reaching its intended outcomes, including the degree to which the proposed actions contribute to adaptation and transformation.</p>
5	<p>Expand on the interrelationships between economic, social and environmental factors across existing and updated documents, plans and strategies, and describe how these relationships influence potential cascading impacts of drought.</p>

NO.	ASPECT OF CONSIDERATION
Expansion of resilience adaptation pathways (cont)	
6	Future plan updates could profile drought impacts for those non-agricultural sectors identified as key sectors in the community, such as mining, renewable energy, health care and social assistance and tourism sectors. Such a profile could include an exploration of how these sectors can build resilience or drive transformation through learning, preparedness and planning.
7	Future plan updates could develop a suite of plausible future scenarios through a participatory process and based on climate, drought and other drivers of change. The development of future scenarios could consider how trends, shocks or stresses (including drought) will interact with and likely affect the region's economic, social and environmental characteristics, and the implications for diverse stakeholder groups. This exercise will also assist these stakeholders to explore and identify actions and pathways that assist with building resilience under different plausible future scenarios.
Resilience action planning	
8	Establish resilience indicators for each of the plan's 'priority areas', using baseline observations drawn from the MEL process within the initial years of plan implementation.
9	Future updates could provide more information to substantiate the assumed mechanisms by which its actions can be achieved, and to what extent they align with the broader objectives and outcomes of the plan.
Implementation	
10	As implementation advances, expand the implementation content of the plan with respect to its governance arrangements and the function / operation of the PCG.
11	<p>As partnership arrangements and relationships are built through this foundational plan, more information could be built on the main purpose of each collaboration setting clear intent and requirements, alongside specific measures. This can provide greater structure to partnerships, which may be a focus under each pathway.</p> <p>The types of partnerships and activities sought may influence these reporting arrangements. Review of partnership may be ongoing to ensure appropriate representation of groups, including First Nations communities and non-farming populations.</p>
12	Future plan updates could provide more explicit descriptions of what external support is required for successful implementation.
13	Future updates to the plan may provide further detail on the sequencing of actions, as these are prioritised and refined and as funding becomes clearer.

NO.	ASPECT OF CONSIDERATION
Monitoring, evaluation and learning framework	
14	<p>Further develop structured approaches to capturing lessons from performance measures, linked with monitoring in addition to lessons from annual evaluations currently identified in the MEL. Integrate lessons learned from the plan's existing evaluation questions back into the plan's actions.</p> <p>Continue to enhance and mature the plan's MEL processes over time as the plan transitions from foundational into a performance posture.</p>
15	<p>Further develop performance indicators tied to actions in the plan's MEL plan. This will improve accountability by showing the degree to which proposed priorities and actions contribute to the plan's articulated vision and outcomes. This could include using quantitative and empirical evidence for key economic and social variables over time. This could include evidence that helps to track demographic shifts, changes in the diversity of businesses, livelihoods and employment opportunities for different community segments in emergent versus declining types of industries. It could further include evidence of labour mobility among different industry and sectors in order to assess actions focused on economic diversification.</p>
Resilience assessment	
16	<p>Ensure future iterations of the plan are qualified by a review of the Resilience Assessment components to identify key circumstantial changes which have occurred.</p>
17	<p>Continue to build upon and refine the program logic approach embedded within the Resilience Assessment that supported the development of the current plan, into a well-developed theory of change that provides a detailed and explicit causal mechanisms and valid assumptions by which the plan, through its implementation, will deliver the desired outcomes and impact.</p>





Candidate Information

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Griffith City Council acknowledges the Wiradjuri people as the traditional owners and custodians of the land and waters, and their deep knowledge embedded within the Aboriginal community.

Council further pays respect to the local Wiradjuri Elders, past, present and those emerging, for whom we acknowledge have responsibilities for the continuation of cultural, spiritual and educational practices of the local Wiradjuri people.

[Click to find out more about Council and our region](#)

**Council's
Website**



**Delivery
Program**



**Annual
Report**



**Community
Profile**





Welcome

A message from the Mayor, Doug Curran.

Thank you for your interest in the General Manager role at Griffith City Council.

This is an important position for our city and our organisation.

After many years of strong leadership under Brett Stonestreet, who has served as General Manager since 2011, we're preparing for a new chapter. We're looking for someone who understands local government, believes in public service, and is ready to step into a role that carries both responsibility and opportunity.

Griffith is a regional city with a clear sense of itself. Declared a city in 1987, we've grown steadily and now support a population of over 27,000 across 1,639 km².

Our city offers a blend of lifestyle with all the urban opportunities you would expect from a regional city evidenced by the \$250M Griffith Base Hospital Redevelopment due to open mid-2025. As outlined later in the document, in addition to the new and expanded health services, Griffith also has many high-class education, sporting and cultural facilities.

We're part of a region built on agriculture, migration, innovation and hard work. People here take pride in their community and look out for one another. The city has a strong economy, a multicultural identity, and a lifestyle that's easy to settle into - and hard to leave.

Council has set clear directions for the years ahead. We're focused on growth and sustainability - economic, environmental and social. We want to improve how we work with and for our community, sharpen our service delivery, and ensure we make thoughtful use of the resources we have. There's no appetite here for showy plans with no follow-through - we want to finish what we start, keep things practical, and keep the doors open.

The General Manager will play a central role in helping Council deliver on its commitments. You'll need to be a steady hand on the wheel, but also willing to test new approaches. We're after someone who listens well, communicates clearly, and brings people along with them. You'll work closely with a stable, experienced elected body, lead a workforce of more than 400 people, and help shape what this city looks like in ten, twenty, thirty years' time.

I appreciate your interest and encourage you to explore this opportunity further.

Councillor Doug Curran Mayor

Griffith City Council



General Manager

The Position

This is a job for someone who knows how to sit with complexity. Not just the big-picture vision stuff, but the daily work of leading an organisation: making decisions, managing risk, navigating difficult conversations, and helping people stay focused on what matters.

As General Manager of Griffith City Council, you'll work alongside the Mayor and Councillors to help shape the future of a regional city that's growing steadily. It's a community with deep cultural roots and strong ideas about who it is. Council wants a leader who listens, who gets things done properly, and who's not afraid to try a different way if the usual one doesn't work.


The role covers a lot of ground. You'll be managing services, budgets, infrastructure and staff - over 400 people look to this role for leadership and direction. The focus is on doing what we can afford to do and doing it well. Not chasing every opportunity but choosing the right ones and finishing what we start.

You'll be expected to:

- **Keep a clear line of sight on the city's long-term goals, while staying grounded in the present.**
- **Lead an organisation that values service and says yes when it can, and when it can't, finds another way.**
- **Support a workplace culture that is responsive, honest and helpful.**
- **Work closely with Councillors, staff and the community - communicating clearly, making decisions based on data, and owning the difficult bits.**

Griffith is looking for someone who'll get involved, not just at work, but in the life of the place. You'll need to be confident in your judgement, respectful in your dealings, and steady when things get messy - which they sometimes do.

There's no need to reinvent the wheel here. But you will need to keep it turning, with care, skill and a clear sense of direction.



General Manager

Steer Griffith's Growth and Strengthen Its Community Connections

About Griffith City
Griffith City Council is responsible for a vibrant, diverse, and growing regional city in the heart of the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area. With a population of over 27,000, Griffith is known for its strong agricultural foundations, thriving food and wine sector, and a growing reputation as a centre for innovation and regional opportunity. Griffith is also a city with a rich cultural diversity and a proud community spirit. Located within easy reach of Sydney and Melbourne, it provides a lifestyle that balances both the tranquility of regional living with access to urban conveniences.

The Position
This is a significant leadership role with broad responsibility. As General Manager, you'll lead a workforce of more than 400 staff and work closely with the Mayor and Councillors to deliver the goals set out in the Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework. You'll be expected to maintain the momentum of growth while navigating the challenges of financial sustainability, infrastructure planning, service delivery and community expectations. We're seeking someone with demonstrated senior executive experience - ideally within local government or in a complex public or private sector setting. You'll need strong financial and strategic acumen, excellent judgement, and the ability to communicate with clarity and confidence across all levels. Your leadership style will be collaborative, inclusive, and grounded in integrity.

What's on offer
This is a long-term opportunity for someone committed to public value and community leadership. Griffith offers a genuine regional lifestyle with access to excellent health, education and recreational options, cultural diversity, and a supportive professional environment. You will also receive:

- An attractive remuneration package is on offer, including a very competitive salary
- Access to a leaseback vehicle allowance
- A leadership role in a thriving region with a safe and caring community

Council welcomes interest from Australian and international candidates and supports equity and diversity in its recruitment process.

To Apply
Please visit our website lsgg.au/executive-vacancies and review the **Information Pack** and **Position Requirements**. Once you have read these please contact Steven Pinnuck on 0439 310 205 for a confidential discussion regarding the position. **Applications close 5pm Monday 26 May 2025.**

LGSG
Your Local Government specialists servicing Australia and New Zealand.
lsgg.au • hello@lsgg.au • 02 8765 1200



Key Challenges for the role and for Council

- Working with Council to lead the growth of the city while maintaining service standards.
- Balancing financial sustainability with the need for community development.
- Advocating to the Federal Government for better outcomes for the Griffith LGA and the region from the Murray Darling Basin Plan.
- Fostering social cohesion and a sense of unity within a diverse community.
- Navigating the evolving demands of housing, infrastructure, and urban planning.
- Ensuring the environment is preserved while supporting economic growth.
- Ensuring high level communication and engagement between the Council, staff, and community.
- Addressing emerging issues like the future of health, education, and industry diversity.
- Leading the development and implementation of innovative, cost-effective solutions.
- Maintaining a forward-thinking approach to the region's economic and social development.



General Manager



The Person

This role needs someone who knows how things work - and who's willing to keep learning when they don't.

To step into the position of General Manager at Griffith City Council, you'll need a strong track record in senior leadership, ideally within local government or a similar public sector environment. You'll bring experience managing complex operations, people, and budgets, and you'll know how to balance long-term planning with the everyday demands of a busy, public-facing organisation.

Formal qualifications in business, management, public administration or a related field will be important - but so is the kind of experience that teaches you how to handle pressure, back your judgement, and stay calm when opinions collide.

This is a job for someone who can:

- Read a room, hold a line, and know when to shift gear
- Make decisions based on good evidence, not noise
- Communicate clearly, even when the message is tough
- Build trust with Councillors, staff and the community
- Promote Council's view point and negotiate successful outcomes with Politicians and bureaucrats of both State and Federal persuasion
- Manage money carefully and plan for the future
- Support and stretch a leadership team without hovering
- Spot opportunities without chasing every trend

Total Remuneration Package

A TRP (cash and Superannuation) in the range of \$340K to \$360K will be negotiated with the successful applicant.

- Base Salary from to \$303,571 to \$321,429 per year
- Superannuation (@12% of base salary – from 1 July 2025)
- Relocation assistance
- Health and wellbeing programs
- Council provides a Motor Vehicle for business and private use with a private use after tax contribution from the salary with an option for a Novated lease.



The job will ask a lot of you. People will want your attention, your opinion, your presence. Some days you'll be steering strategy; others you'll be helping someone unpick a policy detail or deal with a messy complaint. You'll need to carry decisions that won't always be popular, and still front up the next day ready to listen again.

Griffith is looking for someone who'll make the city their home, not just their posting. Someone who gets local government, flaws and all, and still wants to do it well. Who's thick-skinned enough to cop criticism, but open enough to keep learning. Who understands change, but doesn't get swept away by it. Someone who'll help others grow, and have the support around them to keep going too.

You don't need to have all the answers. But you do need to know the questions worth asking - and have the courage to stay in the room while people figure them out.



General Manager

7



Key Selection Criteria

Within the application form you are required to provide a response to the following Key Selection Criteria:

Essential Criteria

1. An appropriate tertiary qualification suited to the role, or equivalent experience at an executive level.
2. Previous experience within a General Manager role, or alternatively, within a Director / Corporate level, with an engaged leadership style.
3. Highly developed communication and interpersonal skills to inspire and positively influence organisational culture and to deliver community focussed outcomes.
4. Ability to drive productivity, effective implementation of strategic plans and team pride in serving the community whilst ensuring best practice governance practices are implemented.
5. Experience in overseeing the delivery of legacy projects to a high standard and establishing best practice project management.
6. Demonstrated ability to undertake a discerning review of council finances and identify and implement initiatives to improve financial performance and sustainability;
7. Demonstrated ability to think strategically, drive and lead the implementation of strategy with a focus on performance and continuous improvement.
8. Australian Drivers Licence.

Desirable Criteria

1. Local Government experience at a senior leadership level



General Manager

Recruitment Process

The position is being advertised in May with a closing date of **Monday 26 May 2025**

Initial Conversation



Prior to an Application being submitted, a discussion regarding the position, and determination of your suitability for the role will need to be undertaken with Steven Pinnuck ph. 0429 310 205.

All enquiries will be dealt with in the strictest confidence.

Date

to Monday 26 May

Short Listing



A short list of candidates for interview with the Interview Panel will be selected.

**From Wednesday
28 May**

Hogan Assessment & Reference Checks



Will also be carried out for shortlisted candidates. You will need to nominate referees in your application or after being advised of being successful with an upcoming interview. That said, we do NOT contact referees without first confirming such with the applicant.

**From Thursday 29
May**

Interviews



Interviews will be held **in Griffith, Friday 13 June 2025**. If you are selected for interview, Council will meet the reasonable cost of travel and accommodation, with meals and refreshments excluded should you be required to travel over 200km. You will be required to submit a claim to LG Services Group with accompanying receipts.

Friday 13 June 2025



About Council

The Griffith City Council oversees a thriving and innovative regional capital with a vibrant lifestyle and diverse economy. We embrace our community, heritage, culture and environment.

The Council was constituted in 1928 and known at the time as Wade Shire Council until the 1st of January 1982, Griffith Shire Council between 1982 and 1987 and then declared a City Council from the 1st of July 1987.



Elected Council

The nine members of the Council are elected for a four-year term and carry out their duties under the provisions of the Local Government Act and Regulations. The Mayor of Griffith City Council is popularly elected every four years by the people and each year a Deputy Mayor is elected by the members of the Council.

Our Vision

Our community vision is designed to encourage commitment to our future and a sense of common purpose and responsibility. It reflects the kind of community we will be in 2035.

The concept of a regional capital is a Federal Government initiative and Griffith is currently recognised as the regional capital of Western Riverina. Our vision will be achieved through the implementation of the strategies based on the four core themes outlined in our Community Strategic Plan – We are Griffith 2025 - 2035:

- **Leadership**
- **Liveability**
- **Growth**
- **Sustainability**

These themes are clearly interwoven and positively impact on each other. They are the cornerstone for our community's progress and success. Overall, the people of our community make us unique. It is important our vision contains quality of life, prosperity and connectivity.



General Manager

Griffith City Council Organisation Structure

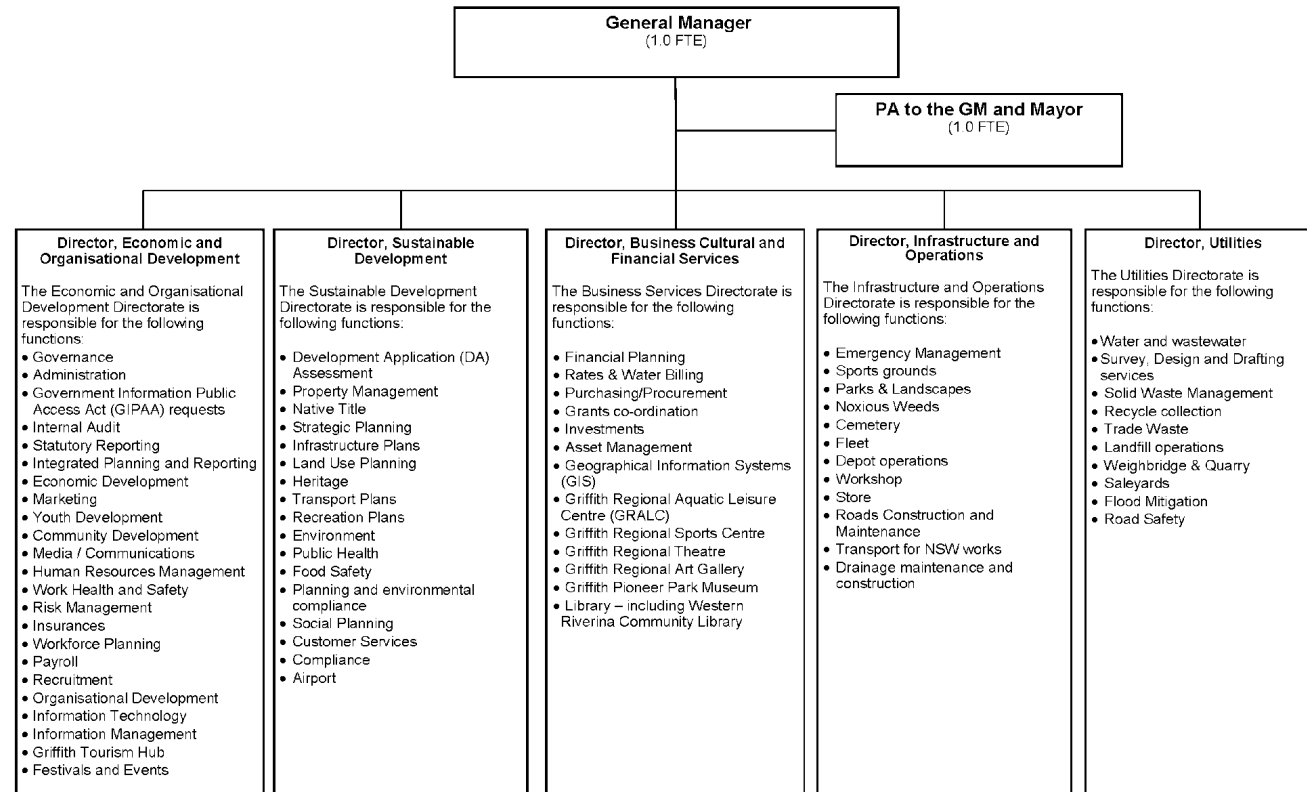


Figure 1

Updated 17/09/2024

General Manager

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Griffith

“Griffith is a progressive and inclusive community where our vibrant culture is celebrated and every individual feels valued, safe, and inspired to grow”

We are ideally located between the major cities, 573km south-west of Sydney, 463km north of Melbourne and 350km north-west of Canberra.

Our beautiful green and open landscape is what many dream of – the perfect place to enjoy a unique lifestyle. With so much to offer including affordable housing, diverse employment opportunities and a wide range of community infrastructure, services and lifestyle activities, there is no better place to set up home.

The City welcomes people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds as a valued part of our community. Griffith is a diverse community with over 22% of our people born overseas.

The Council supports this diversity through a variety of projects, programs and partnerships such as the celebration of Harmony Day in March each year and working with key organisations to hold events such as Refugee Week, NAIDOC Week, Griffith multicultural festival and regular Citizenship Ceremonies.

The Wiradjuri people are the traditional custodians of the land, and we value their connection to the natural environment and respect their cultural beliefs and traditions.



General Manager

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Economy

Australian regions are the lifeblood of our economy and provide untapped potential for development and growth.

Griffith was established in 1916 as part of the NSW State Government's Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area project to supply irrigation from the Murrumbidgee River.

Initially known for dryland cropping and livestock production, the Western Riverina became prominent in rice, cereals, citrus, grapes and fruit production.

Recently, producers have adopted more sustainable farming practices and further diversified into high value, long yield crops such as nuts, cotton, olives and vegetables.

The emergence and growth in poultry production has been significant, with wine production, ranging from boutique wineries to some of the largest in the world, also playing a big part in our region's growth. Griffith's largest industry is the manufacturing industry, employing 2,910 people with an output of \$1.1B in 2023.

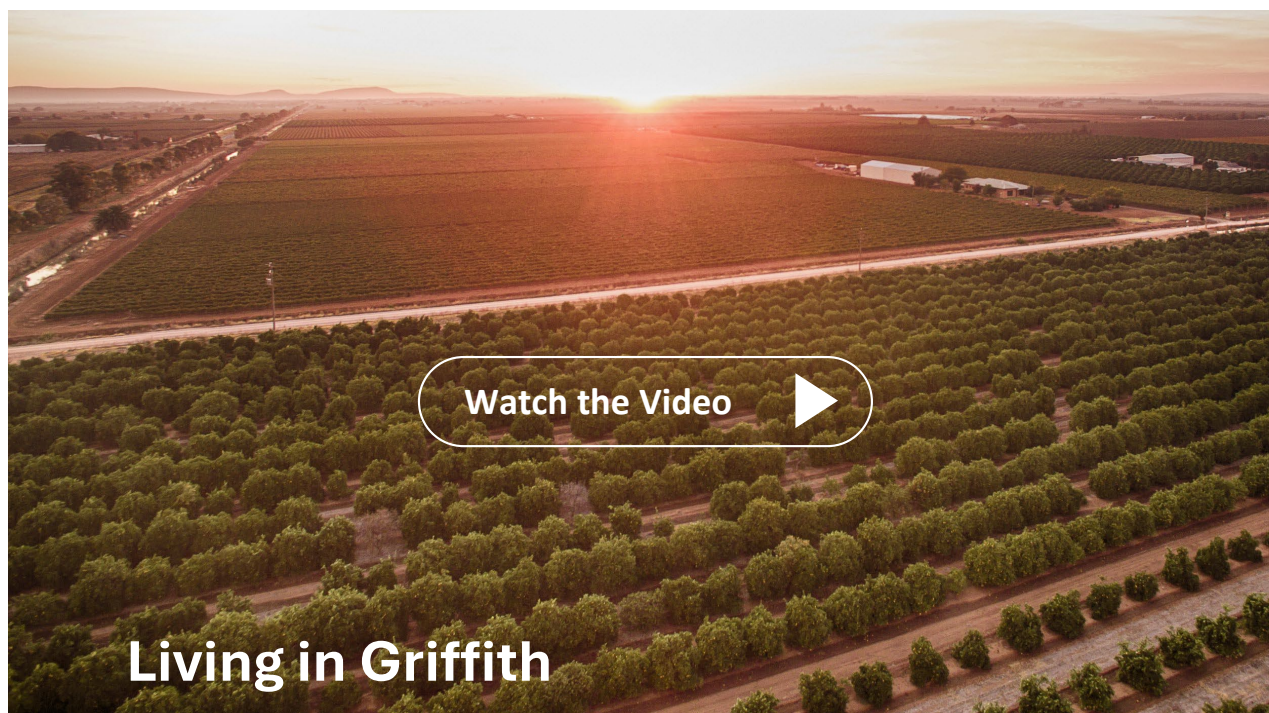
A key feature of the Western Riverina region is the scale of its operations and the intensity of investment in the agribusiness, food and beverage manufacturing sectors. Griffith is the headquarters to some of Australia's most innovative and sustainable industry leaders.

The Council is committed to assisting potential investors, forging close relationships with the business community and providing the necessary resources to help local businesses thrive.



General Manager

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Griffith is one of Australia's most vibrant and cosmopolitan regional centres.

It exudes a rich blend of cultures and traditions and today, more than seventy nationalities add to our cultural tapestry including Italian, Indian, Afghani and Pacific Communities.

The Riverina is one of the most diverse and productive regions in Australia, contributing over \$5 billion annually to the national economy. Griffith is the agricultural powerhouse of the Riverina, servicing a population catchment of over 55,000.

Life in Griffith revolves around food, wine, sport and family. The annual festivals are a wonderful time to visit, as they showcase our local food and world-class wines, friendly people and colourful cultures. But it also has many wonderful opportunities for employment and people seeking a tree change.

Eat Local

The foodie scene in Griffith is gaining momentum with the return of young entrepreneurs growing family businesses and investing in new ones.

Chefs are crafting menus sympathetic to seasonality and what's produced locally; the dishes change daily, are creative, and simply delicious.

Good food has always been at the heart of Griffith, and the city has an enviable reputation for excellent multi-cultural cuisine offerings.

With more than 40 eating houses in Griffith the range is extensive and all occasions, from a special night out, through to a quick bite with the family, are covered.



General Manager

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Arts

Griffith Regional Theatre is the Western Riverina's premier performing arts centre with a 523-seat auditorium and state-of-the-art sound and lighting equipment. The Theatre offers a wide variety of touring and local performances including drama, dance, circus, music, comedy and children's theatre.

Griffith Regional Art Gallery is centrally located in the main shopping centre and occupies a leased space in the eastern wing of the significant 1939 Art Deco War Memorial Building. ...The gallery, although small, has a lovely sense of space due to the 4.2 metre high ceilings and natural timber floors of cypress and tallowwood.

The Griffith Regional Art Gallery represents one of the creative faces in the Western Riverina Region.

Events

Griffith City Country is a vibrant community with many events and festivals throughout the year designed to showcase our abundant attractions including wine and food, agriculture and Italian and multicultural heritage.

April - Griffith Easter Party

October - Griffith Spring Fest

August - Griffith Italian Festival

October - Griffith Multicultural Festival

October - Griffith Agricultural Show

Every Sunday - Griffith Rotary Market



General Manager

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Education

Griffith is well serviced by all stages of education

5 - Preschools

8 - Childcare Centres

13 - Primary Schools

3 - High Schools

Kalinda School (Schools for specific purposes)

TAFE NSW

UNSW Rural Clinical School

Country Universities Centre – Western Riverina

Western Riverina Community College

Western Riverina Community School



General Manager

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Position Description

POSITION TITLE:	GENERAL MANAGER
SECTION	GENERAL MANAGER
DIRECTORATE:	EXECUTIVE SERVICES

1. REMUNERATION

Senior Staff Contract

2. REPORTING STRUCTURE

a) Directly responsible to:

Mayor & Council

b) Positions directly reporting to this position:

Director - Economic & Organisational Development
 Director - Sustainable Development
 Director - Business Cultural & Financial Services
 Director - Infrastructure & Operations
 Director - Utilities
 Personal Assistant to the General Manager & Mayor

3. PURPOSE

The General Manager will provide inspirational and authentic leadership for the organisation to develop a workplace culture that mirrors Griffith City Council's vision and values and to achieve great outcomes for the community.

The role is responsible for the delivery of the integrated planning and reporting process including the Community Strategic Plan, Operational and Management plans.

The General Manager will ensure processes and systems are in place to comply with all relevant legislation and appropriate management of risks. The General Manager will exercise the functions of the Council as delegated to the position and to ensure appropriate delegation is in place throughout the organisation. Section 335 of the Local Government Act provides the specific functions of the General Manager.



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4. RELATIONSHIPS

The following are examples of relationships that it is anticipated the position will have:

Internal

- Directors (Senior Management Team)
- Mayor
- Councillors
- Level Three Managers
- Employees
- Volunteers

External

- Members of Parliament
- Officers of relevant government departments and councils
- Suppliers and service providers
- Community & Business organisations
- General public
- Key regional groups
- Government Departments and Agencies
- Media
- Developers
- Contractors and Consultants

5. CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Policies and Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comply with Local Government (State) Award • Comply with Council's Code of Conduct, Policies and Procedures at all times • Maintain organisational confidentiality • Comply with the requirements of Anti-Discrimination legislation, including Equal Employment Opportunity and all legislative requirements relevant to the position • Comply with and ensure compliance with Council's Code of Conduct, Policies and Procedures within all areas of responsibility • Ensure the implementation and compliance of appropriate and current Policies and Procedures within all areas of responsibility • Actively participate and contribute to the development of plans, policies and procedures
Customer and Community Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure an efficient, courteous and professional service to internal and external customers at all times • Present a positive image of Council at all times • Promote a culture of understanding exceeding customer expectations • Ensure effective community consultation and communication strategies are implemented for service delivery and projects where appropriate



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Work, Health and Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all work is performed in accordance with requirements of Work, Health and Safety policies, procedures and legislation • Report all incidents, hazards and risks to the immediate supervisor • Maintain and use personal protective and safety equipment as applicable to the role • Actively participate in Work, Health and Safety activities • Monitor work practices to ensure proper employee health and safety and respond to identified risks in a timely manner and in compliance with Council's Work, Health and Safety framework • Acquire and maintain knowledge of Work Health and Safety matters • Ensure all staff are properly trained in all relevant aspects of health and safety applicable to their role • Ensure that contractors meet all requirements for Work Health and Safety and monitor for ongoing compliance
Teamwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively participate as a member of the relevant Council section and department • Promote and maintain harmonious relationships in the workplace • Ensure workgroups within all areas of responsibility work cohesively towards the achievement of Council objectives • Ensure all conflicts are managed in accordance with policies and procedures and in a timely manner • Promote a culture that encourages and values the contribution of staff to the achievement of Council activities
Record Keeping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure accurate and timely record keeping in accordance with Council's requirements • Promote responsible and accountable practices for keeping full and accurate records and information in relation to corporate activities and decisions
Training and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively participate in Council's training and development programs as required • Identify and ensure the delivery of relevant training for staff in areas of responsibility
Continuous Improvement and Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the development of more efficient work practices • Ensure the ongoing evaluation and review of work practices and processes within all areas of responsibility to ensure they are effective and efficient and implement improvements where appropriate • Promote a culture of change and innovation by encouraging new ideas • Identify and propose additional business opportunities that enhance Council's existing capabilities



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Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the protection of the environment when undertaking all Council activities Consider the protection of the environment in decision making and in the undertaking of all Council activities Consider the protection of the environment in decision making and in the undertaking of all Council activities
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perform other duties as required consistent with the level of competencies of the position Ensure efficient and appropriate use of Council resources when carrying out work Accomplish tasks while working under limited / minimum supervision Work with allocated resources and budget to meet or exceed expectations of Council Administer and ensure efficient and appropriate use of Council resources

6. PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES

- Development of entrepreneurial business opportunities for the City which are of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefit to the community.
- Development of financing strategies to support replacement of aging infrastructure and development of new infrastructure for a growing city.
- Building relationships and partnerships with Local, State and Federal government organisations to optimise strategic positioning for the City as a growing regional centre.
- Driving a cultural change process within the organisation to further develop performance improvement, service delivery effectiveness and customer focus.
- Pivotal involvement in working with the Council in reviewing, refining and pursuing the City's strategic direction.
- Acting as the primary link between Councillors and the organisation, providing assistance to Councillors in developing policy.
- Communicating and promoting Council's policies to the community.

7. KEY DUTIES

Provision of effective leadership and direction to Council by:

- Development of Council's & the Communities strategic planning documents in accord with the Local Government Act 1993 as amended
- Development of all relevant Integrated Planning and reporting documents.
- Development of a performance measurement framework which effectively measures the performance of the Council, General Manager and the organisation against the strategic planning documents and Delivery Programme.
- Ensuring effective staff development, technology and service delivery strategies are developed and implemented to ensure that the organisation achieves its objectives and develops a reputation as a leader in the local government sector.



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- Providing direction, people management and control of Council's human resources, through effective leadership and direction to staff, human resource planning, staff development and performance management.
- Supporting the office of the Mayor by providing accurate and timely advice on Mayoral initiatives, promoting the reputation of the Office of the Mayor in all communications and liaising with the Mayor on all issues of organisational and political significance.
- Maintaining an effective working relationship with the Mayor and Councillors by ensuring accurate and timely management reporting to Council on budget issues, programs and other major developments which affect the overall effectiveness of Council, as well as ensuring the effective implementation of Council's resolutions, policies and decisions.

Ensuring effective financial management of the Organisation by:

- Developing annual budgets that are integrated with Council's corporate plan.
- Providing the Council with reports on its financial position and its relation to Council policy.
- Monitoring Council's budget.
- Maintaining financial systems and controls to ensure financial targets are achieved.
- Compliance with all statutory accounting and reporting requirements.

Implementing Council's investment management strategy which is consistent with Council's agreed investment objectives, involving a review of all financial resources and investment interests, with regular reporting on investment performance.

Developing and implementing an economic development plan for the City consistent with Council's strategic direction and management plan.

Ensuring the effectiveness of managing relationships with Federal and State Government agencies and other key stakeholders such as the community and business partners in a way which is consistent with Council's policy and management plan.

Effectively managing Council's corporate governance obligations and initiatives, including development of risk minimisation and fraud prevention strategies.

8. COMPULSORY REQUIREMENTS OF THE POSITION

The successful candidate may be required to undertake a pre-employment drug and alcohol test and achieve a satisfactory outcome



9. KEY SELECTION CRITERIA

ESSENTIAL

- An appropriate tertiary qualification suited to the role, or equivalent experience at an executive level.
- Highly developed communication and interpersonal skills to inspire and positively influence organisational culture.
- Ability to drive productivity, effective implementation of strategic plans and team pride in serving the community.
- Experience in overseeing the delivery of legacy projects to a high standard and establishing best practice project management.
- Appreciation of and ability to lead best practice governance.
- Demonstrated ability to undertake a discerning review of council finances and identify and implement initiatives to improve financial performance and sustainability;
- Previous experience within a General Manager role, or alternatively, within a Director / Corporate level, with an engaged leadership style.
- Demonstrated ability to think strategically, drive and lead the implementation of strategy with a focus on performance and continuous improvement.
- Strong skills in corporate planning, financial management, project management and resource management
- Proven ability to engage stakeholders and the community to deliver customer focused outcomes
- Australian Drivers Licence.

DESIRABLE

- Tertiary qualifications in business/management or related discipline.
- Local Government experience

10. CRITICAL PHYSICAL FACTORS

Described below are the critical physical factors (CPF) associated with this role. The CPF are an indication of the types of duties expected of an employee fulfilling this role. Employees and candidates should be aware that they may be required to perform tasks up to and including these CPF as an inherent requirement of their employment.

KEY

O Occasional: exposure to the physical factor less than twice a week on average
 F Frequent: exposure to the physical factor 3 - 4 times a week on average
 C Constant: exposure to the physical factor more than 5 times a week on average
 R Repetitive: exposure to the physical factor multiple times in an hour
 N/A Not Applicable
 ≡ Winter
 * Summer



Demands	Description	Frequency				
		O	F	C	R	NA
Physical Demands of Job Tasks						
Kneeling/Squatting	Tasks involve flexion/bending at the knees and ankle, possibly at the waist in order to work at low levels	X				
Leg/Foot Movement	Tasks involve use of the leg and or foot to operate machinery	X				
Hand/Arm Movement	Tasks involve use of hands/arms - e.g. stacking, reaching, typing, mopping, sweeping, sorting, and inspecting.				X	
Bending/Twisting	Tasks involve forward or backward bending or twisting at the waist.		X			
Standing	Tasks involve standing in an upright position without moving about		X			
Driving	Tasks involve operating any motor-powered vehicle			X		
	Tasks involve driving vehicle on unsealed roads.		X			
Sitting	Tasks involve remaining in a seated position during task performance				X	
Reaching	Tasks involve reaching overhead with arms raised above shoulder height or forward reaching with arms extended.				X	
Walking/Running	Tasks involve walking or running on even surfaces				X	
	Tasks involve walking on uneven surfaces		X			
	Tasks involve walking up and / or down slopes	X				
	Tasks involve walking whilst pushing/pulling objects	X				
Climbing	Tasks involve climbing up or down stairs, ladders, scaffolding, platforms, trees, onto plant			X		
	Tasks involve climbing over or under machinery					X
Working at heights	Tasks involve making use of ladders, foot stools, scaffolding, etc. anything where the person stands on an object other than the ground.					X
Lifting/Carrying	Tasks involve raising/lowering or moving objects from one level/position to another, usually holding an object within the hands/arms	X				
	Tasks involve raising/lowering or moving objects from one level/position to another, usually holding an object within the hands/arms for an extended period - e.g. whipper snipper.	X				
	1. Light lifting/carrying (0-9 Kg)	X				



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Demands	Description	Frequency				
		O	F	C	R	NA
	2. Moderate lifting/carrying (10-15 Kg)	X				
	3. Heavy lifting/carrying (16 Kg and above)					
Restraining	Tasks involve restraining animals / objects					X
Pushing/Pulling	Tasks involve pushing/pulling hand powered objects away from or towards the body. Also includes striking or jerking. - e.g. hammer, hoe.					X
	Tasks involve pushing/pulling powered objects away from or towards the body. Also includes striking or jerking. - e.g. chainsaw, whipper snipper, jackhammer, drills, grinders.					X
Grasping	Tasks involve gripping, holding, clasping with fingers or hands.				X	
Manual Dexterity	Tasks involve fine finger movements - i.e. keyboard operation, writing, tightening a nut.				X	
Sensory Demands of Job Tasks						
Sight	Tasks involve use of eyes (sight) as an integral part of task performance - i.e. looking at screen/keyboard in computer operation, working in dark environment, etc.				X	
Hearing	Tasks involve working in a noisy area - e.g. boiler room, kitchen, workshop and/or operation of noisy machinery/equipment	X				
Smell	Tasks involve the use of the smell senses as an integral part of the task performance - e.g. working with chemicals	X				
Exposure to Chemical Hazards						
Dust	Tasks involve working with dust - e.g. sawdust					X
Gases	Tasks involve working with gases					X
Fumes	Tasks involve working with fumes - i.e., which may cause problems to health if inhaled.					X
Liquids	Tasks involve working with liquids which may cause skin irritations if contact is made with skin - e.g. dermatitis					X
Working Environment						
Temperature	Tasks involve working in temperature extremes and exposure to outdoor elements - e.g. working in a cool room, working outdoors, boiler room		X			
Confined Spaces	Tasks involve working in confined spaces which may affect individuals with claustrophobia	X				



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11. AUTHORITY TO ACT

Delegations set out in the Council's delegation register.

12. AMENDMENT TO THIS POSITION DESCRIPTION

This position description may be amended from time-to-time and any changes will be communicated in writing.

Position Description Reviewed: March 2025

Job Evaluation Assessment Date: Not applicable

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This Position Description is a broad description of the accountabilities, duties and required capabilities relating to this Position. The role and position are dynamic and may evolve and change over time in line with changing strategic and operation requirements.

I have signed below in acknowledgement of reading, understanding and accepting the contents of this document. I accept that, with consultation, my duties may be modified by Council from time to time as necessary.

Employee Name:	
Signature:	
Date:	





Your Executive Recruitment Team

We are pleased to introduce our executive recruitment team as your designated point of contact for this executive role. Should you require additional information or have any inquiries, we warmly encourage you to reach out to them. They will be more than happy to assist you throughout the process



Steven Pinnuck
Senior Executive Advisor

Steven will personally oversee the executive search and recruitment effort and will draw on his extensive network to identify and attract high-quality candidates.

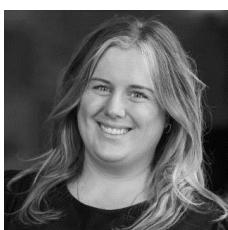
P. 0429 310 205
E. steven.pinnuck@lgsg.au



Terrey Kiss
Senior Executive Advisor

Terrey will assist with the executive search and recruitment effort and will draw on his extensive network to identify and attract high-quality candidates.

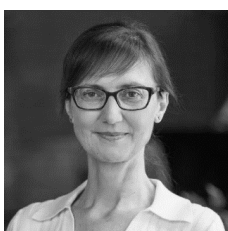
P. 0427 273 197
E. terrey@lgsg.au



Emma Constantino
Business Executive

Emma Constantino is our Business Executive at LG Services Group, where she plays a key role in managing our day-to-day operations.

P: 0432 589 348
E. emma@lgsg.au



Di Hyland
Recruitment Coordinator

Di provides recruitment administration support, coordinate Hogan profiling, interviews and background checks.

E. di@lgsg.au



General Manager



Once you have reviewed the information pack, and if you believe your skills align with what Council is seeking, please phone:

Steven Pinnuck
Senior Executive Advisor
P. 0429 310 205
E. steven.pinnuck@lgsg.au
www.lgsg.au

Terrey Kiss
Senior Executive Advisor
P. 0427 273 197
E. terrey@lgsg.au
www.lgsg.au

Prospective candidates must not contact Council unless to seek information that is readily available to members of the public.



General Manager

About Griffith City

Griffith City Council is responsible for a vibrant, diverse, and growing regional city in the heart of the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area. With a population of over 27,000, Griffith is known for its strong agricultural foundations, thriving food and wine sector, and a growing reputation as a centre for innovation and regional opportunity.

Griffith is also a city with a rich cultural diversity and a proud community spirit. Located within easy reach of Sydney and Melbourne, it provides a lifestyle that balances both the tranquillity of regional living with access to urban conveniences.

The Position

This is a significant leadership role with broad responsibility. As General Manager, you'll lead a workforce of more than 400 staff and work closely with the Mayor and Councillors to deliver the goals set out in the Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework. You'll be expected to maintain the momentum of growth while navigating the challenges of financial sustainability, infrastructure planning, service delivery and community expectations.

We're seeking someone with demonstrated senior executive experience – ideally within local government or in a complex public or private sector setting. You'll need strong financial and strategic acumen, excellent judgement, and the ability to communicate with clarity and

Steer Griffith's Growth and Strengthen Its Community Connections

confidence across all levels. Your leadership style will be collaborative, inclusive, and grounded in integrity.

What's on offer

This is a long-term opportunity for someone committed to public value and community leadership. Griffith offers a genuine regional lifestyle with access to excellent health, education and recreational options, cultural diversity, and a supportive professional environment. You will also receive:

- An attractive remuneration package is on offer, including a very competitive salary
- Access to a leaseback vehicle allowance
- A leadership role in a thriving region with a safe and caring community

Council welcomes interest from Australian and international candidates and supports equity and diversity in its recruitment process.

To Apply

Please visit our website lgsg.au/executive-vacancies and review the **Information Pack** and **Position Requirements**.

Once you have read these please contact **Steven Pinnuck** on **0429 310 205** for a confidential discussion regarding the position.

Applications close 9am Monday 26 May 2025.



Leadership. Recruitment. Performance.

Your Local Government specialists
servicing Australia and New Zealand.

lgsg.au • hello@lgsg.au • 02 8765 1200