



| Summer Edition

SINGLETON EDIT

W singleton.nsw.gov.au



SINGLETON
COUNCIL

From the MAYOR



2020 has certainly been a year of trials and challenges. Even if we could have foreseen what was to come, I doubt we could have believed it. Unprecedented bushfires and a global pandemic have put us all the centre of history this year, living out what the generations to come will learn about in the text books of the future.

Yet there are plenty of positives that we can take away from 2020. This year has taught us that the spirit of resilience is well and truly alive in Singleton and our villages. Some of our biggest successes have been as a direct response to the drought, bushfires and the global pandemic, bringing the community together even when we were forced to be apart.

As a case in point, Council's \$2 million Community Support Package is now in the rebuild phase, offering assistance to everyone in our community adversely financially affected by COVID-19. It included funding for organisations such as Singleton Neighbourhood Centre and the Salvo's to help people in need, and in a unique partnership with the Singleton Business Chamber, to support the resilience and vitality of our local businesses. A follow-up survey is currently in progress to ensure the initiatives are appropriate and making a difference.

We can't forget either that we recorded a significant tick on our Advocacy Agenda, with changes to the administration of the NSW Government's Resources for Regions program to tie the amount available for each region to the value of mining employment. In this first year under the reforms, Singleton was eligible to apply for a total of \$4.5 million, and we worked with our community on a list of applications covering infrastructure and programs to support our community now and into the future. With the announcement of the successful projects recently, it's a good way to mark the end of 2020 and launch into 2021 with plenty of optimism.

Following news of Federal Government funding, I'm looking forward to progress on the Singleton bypass with a concerted effort to ensure the State gets the design right, and more broadly, planning for the economic future of Singleton through the Hunter Joint Organisation of Councils' Foundation 2050, the Committee for the Hunter and the Regional Australia Institute. We're also painting a new outlook on arts and culture for Singleton that includes construction of a new arts centre and the delivery of cultural programs to further strengthen our connectedness to each other and our place in the world.

I wish you and your loved ones a safe and happy Christmas, and a bright and – I hope – more normal 2021.

Cr Sue Moore | Mayor of Singleton

From the GENERAL MANAGER



While the COVID-19 pandemic wrought extreme changes in our daily lives and forced Council to examine the way we operate in an ever-changing environment, what never wavered was our commitment to delivering the services essential to our community – no matter what. That doesn't mean we got it spot on every time, but we did give 110% effort in extraordinarily challenging times.

In reflecting on the year that was, many of our staff cited the highlights as being able to rise to the challenge of continuing to work, either onsite or remotely, to provide critical functions. That included the basic need to turn on the tap or flush the toilet, through to human contact – albeit remotely – as demonstrated by virtual library programs and youth services.

In the bleakness of lockdown, what kept our teams going was the focus on who and what we were working for: to have our parks and sportsgrounds in tip top shape when outdoor recreation could resume; to continue to deliver capital projects such as the new Townhead Park playground to surprise and delight our littlest residents; to keep our roads safe; and to tick off those development applications for renovations as people sought to make their homes sanctuaries in ways we'd never considered.

So, it's even more appropriate that as 2020 comes to a close, we are launching into 2021 with a renewed vigor on customer service and our commitment to making your interactions with Council as positive and meaningful as possible.

The draft Customer Service Strategy will be presented to Council's final ordinary meeting of the year on 21 December 2020, outlining our approach to delivering high quality customer experiences across all of our facilities and ultimately, better outcomes for our community.

At the same time, I encourage you to tell us where we can improve in our operations, and on a bigger scale, how we can create the community you are proud to be part of now and in the future.

You can do that by providing feedback on the documents we have on public exhibition at any point in time, by lodging a customer request via our online portal or by contacting our Customer Service team, and especially by being an active participant in the development of our Community Strategic Plan in 2021.

Merry Christmas to you and your family, and I look forward to working with you in the year to come.

Jason Linnane | General Manager



Facility leads ANIMAL WELFARE STANDARDS

Singleton's much-anticipated new Animal Management Facility will soon be open for business, launching into the new year with an industry-leading and environmentally sustainable solution to animal welfare. After years of planning, construction of the \$1.67million building, located on Dyring Road, was designed and constructed with input from Council's Rangers to ensure it was fit for purpose, exceeding animal management practices and allowing room for future expansion.

Justin Fitzpatrick-Barr, Council's Director Infrastructure and Planning, said the Animal Management Facility was an important project for the community and backed the hard work of Council Rangers to care for impounded animals with a focus on reuniting beloved pets with their owners or finding new homes.

The new facility includes 16 dog pens and a separate quarantine pen, along with a large cat room, toilet, shower, laundry, reception and office area.

"Council is committed to the welfare of impounded animals, and our main priority is to provide a high standard of care. Our new Animal Management Facility allows us to continue to deliver on our commitment to re-home as many unclaimed, stray and surrendered companion animals as possible through rescue services," Mr Fitzpatrick-Barr said.

"It also affords us the opportunity to expand our ranger services in the future, including further community education and microchipping."

Design and construction of the building also incorporated sustainable design principles, with consideration of materials to reduce noise, harness solar energy and capture water.

"Along with the latest animal welfare code of practice and handlers' requirements, the design phase also included environmental considerations including building position and design to encourage air flow, disease and contamination requirements, and the combination of high thermal mass materials and insulation to provide natural heating and cooling," Mr Fitzpatrick-Barr said.

"The building also uses solar power, rainwater and wastewater reuse. Other design elements include acoustic design measures as required by the development approval to minimise impact on neighbouring residents, and enhanced footings and slab in consideration of the highly reactive clay soils on the site."

The result is an industry-leading facility that is already attracting attention from other councils.

"This project is a great outcome for our community, the staff who will use it and the animals that will temporarily pass through it," Mr Fitzpatrick-Barr said.

"We're really confident this new facility meets the needs of companion animal management now, and will set the bar for the years to come."

.....

CSP Strategy: Provide safe and well-maintained facilities and infrastructure

 General Manager Jason Linnane (left), Mayor of Singleton, Cr Sue Moore and Council Ranger Michael Larsen.

COVER IMAGE: Council's Coordinator Community Participation Claire Briggs, Team Leader Parks Trent Chalmers, Parks Management Officer Mitch Moy, Singleton Rotarians Phil Sheen, Isabella Bailey, (front row) and Andrew Almond, Mayor of Singleton, Cr Sue Moore and Singleton Rotarian John Henderson.



Making MERRY

With strict rules around what we can't do, the Singleton community is banding together for a sleigh of initiatives that we can do to support each other this Christmas

A little Christmas magic never goes astray, but Mayor of Singleton, Cr Sue Moore said an extra big dose was needed this year with the ongoing impacts of drought, bushfire and COVID-19.

And there's plenty of fairy dust on hand as Singleton Council teams up with Singleton Business Chamber and Singleton Rotary to help spread the spirit of Christmas a little further without the traditional Christmas on John Street community event.

That includes a relocation of the community Christmas tree to Pritchard Park, a trail of fairy lights down John Street to a Christmas display in Singleton Library, and initiatives to encourage businesses to compete for the best decorated window and young shoppers to spot Santa's little helpers keeping watch in our favourite businesses.

A further contribution from Council's Community Support Package will also be shared among four local organisations with \$500 each for The Salvation Army Singleton,

Samaritans Foundation, Singleton Neighbourhood Centre and St Vincent De Paul Society – to help deliver joy to everyone in our community this Christmas Day.

"After an unusual and challenging year, we all need a little festivity more than ever. So, it's disappointing that COVID-19 restrictions mean we can't come together for our traditional holiday event," Cr Moore said.

"But rather than dwelling on what we can't do, there's still plenty we can do to raise Christmas spirit in our Town Centre, and more importantly encourage us all to celebrate what we have achieved by supporting each other and our economy. I'm hopeful what we've come up with will help to spread cheer and raise the sense of community right across our local government area."

The Christmas festivities are further measures under Council's Community Support Package and the Spend in Singleton campaign, in partnership with Singleton Business Chamber.



Decorated businesses are vying for a \$1,500 Spend in Singleton gift card for first prize, plus a \$500 Spend in Singleton gift card for the community organisation of their choice. Shoppers can also be in the running for an early Christmas present with 50 Spend in Singleton gift cards valued at \$25 each for children who spot one of Santa's little helpers in their favourite business. All the details about how you can get involved are on page 8.

Sue Gilroy, President of Singleton Business Chamber, said she hoped plenty of people would head into the Town Centre for a dose of Christmas merriment.

"COVID-19 restrictions don't mean we can't celebrate Christmas and the festive season. There's nothing like decorations and fairy lights to lift our Christmas spirits and a wide range of retailers to make gift shopping easy, right here in town," she said.

Vicki Brereton, Council's Director Organisation and Community Capacity said Council's Community Support Package was about more than money.

"It's about recognising what we can all do to pitch in and make life a little bit brighter for everyone – and that's never more important than at Christmas," she said.

"We've tallied up more than \$2 million in programs and initiatives under the Community Support Package with the help of the Singleton Business Chamber and BHP since it was launched in May.

"With all the challenges our community has faced this year, it's wonderful that we can all work together to help make Christmas merry for everyone."



Council's Parks Management Officer Mitch Moy, Singleton Rotarian Phil Sheen, Coordinator Community Participation Claire Briggs, Singleton Rotarian Andrew Almond, Mayor of Singleton, Cr Sue Moore, Singleton Rotarian John Henderson, Singleton Rotarian Isabella Bailey and Team Leader Parks Trent Chalmers.

TRE CHRISTMAS TRANSFORMATION FOR HISTORIC LANEWAYS

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas in two historic laneways as yuletide cheer takes over Singleton Town Centre, with the community encouraged to be part of the unwrapping of a mural in the lane beside Tre Bella hairdressers at 96 John Street this December.

Bourke's Arcade between 126 and 128 John Street is also targeted for some Christmas magic as part of Singleton Council's Streets As Shared Spaces – Living Laneways project, which was successful in receiving a \$500,000 NSW Government grant.

Along with decorations including a town Christmas tree in Pritchard Park and fairy lights to festoon the trees in John Street, the Tre Bella laneway and Bourke's Arcade will be merry and bright – literally – with removable solar-based lighting, planters and greenery, and seating to entice Christmas shoppers to pause and enjoy the spirit of the season.

The centrepiece will be a new mural by established Singleton artist Sally Hinchcliffe, to be created in sections in the Tre Bella laneway over the next few weeks.

"We hope people will be drawn to the Town Centre by all the festivities of the season, and we also want to encourage people to be active participants in the transformation of the Tre Bella laneway as the mural unfolds," Vicki Brereton, Council's Director Organisation and Community Capacity said.

"It would be great to see people regularly coming back to see what's happening next and to be part of the whole experience of the buzz of Christmas in our town centre."

Planning is also underway for a range of projects in the laneways at 95 John Street (the old Civic Video building), Burns Lane (between Shaddock Real Estate and Sportspower Singleton) and Soapsuds Lane in 2021, including an international collaboration.

“We hope people will be drawn to the Town Centre by all the festivities of the season

Financial performance

2020 / 2021

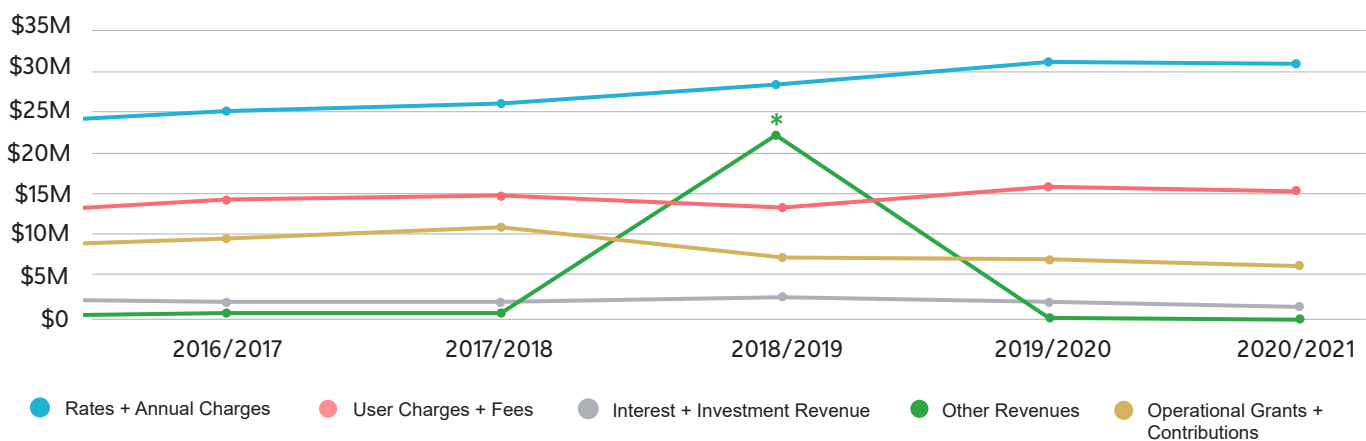
HIGHLIGHTS

- Continued downward pressure on operating expenses since 2016
- Rates and charges consistently among the lowest of Hunter councils
- 3 consecutive budget surpluses
- Greater focus on maximising opportunities for Interest and Investment revenue
- Increase in asset rehabilitation expenditure
- Increase in funds invested

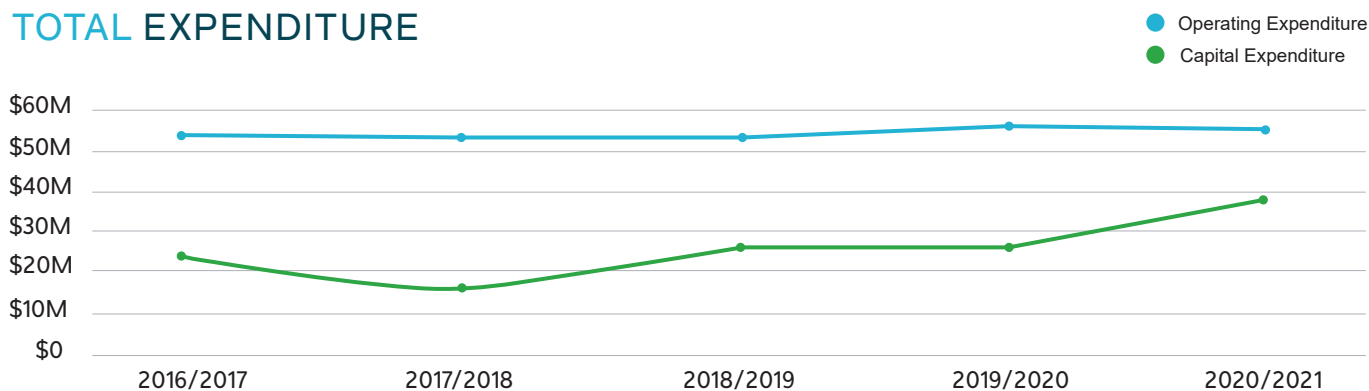
FINANCIAL RESULTS (BEFORE CAPITAL GRANTS + CONTRIBUTIONS)



INCOME FROM CONTINUING OPERATIONS



TOTAL EXPENDITURE





After decades of discussions and strong community demands for action to address road and drainage issues on Singleton's Kelso Street, a \$1.5 million project is set to get underway in the first of a three-phase approach to address the issue.

The scope of works includes the renewal of the road pavement, stormwater drainage upgrade, construction of footpath, kerb and gutter installation, water main replacement and implementation of a 5t load limit which is slated to commence in January 2021.

The design was a result of extensive community consultation on concept options and was endorsed by Council in February 2019. Works have been scheduled to commence in January to minimise disruption to residents by enabling greater planning time and avoiding the Christmas shutdown period.

Justin Fitzpatrick-Barr, Council's Director Infrastructure and Planning, said Council and the contractors would be in contact with the impacted residents to keep them informed about what was happening throughout the duration of works, including an information session in December 2020.

"The issues affecting Kelso and surrounding streets have a long history stemming from the absence of drainage infrastructure that results in flooding for residential properties," he said.

"Council appreciates the frustration experienced by residents and after years of discussions and possible solutions, it's great to finally see some action on the ground.

"It's important to note that this is the first stage in a longer-term project and while these works will help to improve the situation, it will not solve all flooding issues.

"Stages 2 and 3 are planned to occur across three years and will involve installation of a large underground stormwater well with a pumping system. These stages are currently the subject of preliminary design, investigation and costing."

Mr Fitzpatrick-Barr said Council was also mindful of the sensitivities around the location.

CSP Strategy: Provide safe and well-maintained facilities and infrastructure



Council's Infrastructure Programming Coordinator Sam Masoomi and Project Engineer Sam Walker.

Light up *your* business in Singleton



Vote for your favourite decorated business by scanning the QR code instore or visit [W spendinsingleton.com.au](http://W.spendinsingleton.com.au)

VOTING CLOSSES 11.59PM SUNDAY 20 DECEMBER 2020

The winning business will receive a \$1500 Spend in Singleton gift card plus a \$500 Spend in Singleton gift card for a community organisation of their choice

Two highly commended businesses will each receive a \$500 Spend in Singleton gift card plus a \$150 Spend in Singleton Gift Card to donate to a community organisation of their choice

Santa's Little Helpers Competition

Spot a Santa's Little Helper hiding in participating Singleton stores and you could win a \$25 Spend in Singleton gift card. There's 50 to be won! Register your sighting by scanning the QR code instore or visit [W spendinsingleton.com.au/Christmas](http://W.spendinsingleton.com.au/Christmas)

COMPETITION CLOSSES 11.59PM SUNDAY 20 DECEMBER 2020

Full terms and conditions are available at [W spendinsingleton.com.au/Christmas](http://W.spendinsingleton.com.au/Christmas)

Winners will be announced on Monday 21 December 2020 via livestream at the Singleton Business Chamber Facebook page: [@SingletonChamberofCommerce](https://www.facebook.com/SingletonChamberofCommerce)



T 02 6578 7290
E council@singleton.nsw.gov.au
W singleton.nsw.gov.au

12 - 14 Queen Street
Singleton NSW 2330



SINGLETON
COUNCIL