

SUMMER 2018

Singleton Edit



SINGLETON
COUNCIL

From the Mayor

If Santa could pack a bypass into his sleigh and gift wrap more passenger train services, it'd be a very happy Christmas indeed for Singleton.

But while we mightn't see a Christmas miracle this year, there is progress being made. We know that advocating to other levels of government for the infrastructure we need to address issues such as traffic congestion and more public transport is a major priority for people in our community, and they look to Council to be doing that. So I've spent a good part of this year actively talking to the right people in the State Government to ensure Singleton is at the forefront of their decision-making.

Singleton has been fortunate of late with the announcement of more than \$1.3 million under the Stronger Country Communities Fund to deliver eight projects including a new roof for the Singleton Historical Museum and upgrades for Howe Park, Lake St Clair and the Civic Centre, to name a few. At time of writing, we're also waiting on the outcome of our application for half of the cost of the \$8.5 million Singleton Road Upgrade program under the Resources for Regions fund.

Council has made significant progress to balance our financial management while still delivering projects the community needs. But the bottom line is, we need more help from the Government to deliver the Singleton our community deserves. With a State election looming in March 2019, my Christmas wish is that we'll see even more attention for Singleton in the coming months.

Best wishes to you and your family for a wonderful Christmas and a happy and healthy new year.

Cr Sue Moore | Mayor of Singleton

From the General Manager

It's the time of the year to reflect on our successes over the past 12 months and with Singleton Council's Annual Report for 2017/2018 recently finalised, it's easy to see there's plenty to celebrate.

Council set an overall target to deliver 95% of our Operational Plan and I'm proud to say we ticked that box, and then some. Flick through the pages of the report (available on Council's website) and you'll see a range of ways we're serving our community. For example, 15,470 people visited our Youth Venue in 2017/2018, while 69,056 people visited our Library, borrowing 111,359 items. We're working with community groups and tourism organisations to develop and capitalise on opportunities for Singleton. And we've drafted a new Heritage Conservation Management Plan and started to implement the Singleton Urban Stormwater Plan.

That's in addition to delivering our \$18.5 million capital works program to provide the infrastructure essential to our community, and managing Council's financial position to record a positive operating performance result – meaning we're driving efficiencies to ensure we're not spending more than what comes in through operating revenue.

And of course, we are about to celebrate completion of the much-anticipated Riverside Park that commenced construction earlier this year. It's a wonderful way to launch into the festive season with Christmas on John Street and a new destination for the school holidays. I look forward to seeing the enjoyment that will come from this facility and wish you all a happy and safe holiday season.

Jason Linnane | General Manager



Steve and Mimi Summers

SMOOTH PLANNING FOR A DREAM HOME

For Mimi and Steve Summers, moving to Branxton and into their very own chateau was born from a desire to incorporate their love of design, style and the outdoors into the every day. Like thousands of other Aussie families, the design-savvy couple ditched hectic city life in favour of a tree change in the Singleton local government area.

The couple's stunning home took out the 2018 HIA Housing Award for the Luxury Custom Home category in October. But even more satisfying was the design and construction process.

Steve and interior designer Mimi, who runs Luxe Home Designs and Decor, said the formalities of development approval were effortless thanks to Singleton Council's streamlined planning process, with fast processing times and an "accountable" DA tracker.

"We have remarked several times over how fantastic our development application experience was. From the moment we hand-delivered our DA to the front counter in Singleton, the staff were marvellous and answered all of our queries. The transparency was really good—it was a streamlined customer experience," Mr Summers said.

Mrs Summers said it was a really nice client experience that made the realisation of Chateau Hunter Valley so smooth. "Any questions about the process we were unsure of, they answered. It was a really nice, refreshing experience," she said.

"I loved following the DA through the tracker, and the insight that gave us into what else was happening in the area."

Singleton Council General Manager Jason Linnane said Chateau Hunter Valley was yet another example of how Council works with the community to create prosperity. Council's planning team delivered approvals for 297 projects with a total value of \$59 million in 2017/2018.

The planning team was also recognised recently for its digital transformation of the development approvals process after taking out the Planning Cultural Change at the Local Government Week Awards.

"We might be a small council, but there's enormous innovation and hard work happening right across our organisation every day to best deliver the important services our community desire and deserve," Mr Linnane said.

"We love hearing from people who are satisfied with the service they've received from Council and it's great for us to see the role we play in enabling people to build their dreams.

"A project such as Chateau Hunter Valley is a spectacular case in point, and just another example of how the incredible process innovation we are seeing here at Council is making a real difference to real people."

Riverside cheer

The much anticipated Riverside Park will be unwrapped on Friday 7 December as part of Singleton's premier Yuletide event, Christmas on John Street, delivering a whole new way to play just in time for the holiday season.

Singleton's most anticipated Christmas present, the all-new Riverside Park, is about to be unwrapped.

Santa will come to town on Friday 7 December 2018 for Singleton's biggest community Christmas party, Christmas on John Street, with roving entertainment, live music, market stalls, food trucks and children's activities from 5.30pm. But the curtain raiser will be the official opening of Riverside Park at 4pm.

With three- and two-storey slides from two architectural towers, a rope bridge, water play and spaces for children of all ages, Council's Manager Strategy and Engagement Natalie Zagninski said Singleton's most unique playground would be another reason for people to come and check out the festivities.

"Christmas on John Street has become the unofficial start of the holiday season for Singleton, and we could think of no better way to launch Riverside Park than in conjunction with one of our most popular community events," she said.

“ Christmas On John Street has become the unofficial start of the holiday season for Singleton ”

"All the things people love about Christmas on John Street will be there again this year, including a children's area on Castlereagh Street complete with jumping castle, face painting, animals from Oakvale Farm and craft with the teams from Singleton Youth Venue and OOSH (Out of School Hours), on-stage entertainment as well as roving performers, markets, food trucks and of course fireworks.

"But there are plenty of new additions as well. We are really excited about our Santa grotto, where we will bring the North Pole to Singleton for families to have a free photo with Santa Claus himself that will be available to download from Council's Facebook page. We're hoping to see lots of people head along for a look at Riverside Park and stay for all the entertainment to follow," Ms Zagninski said.

Kieren Fitz-Gibbon, Council's Manager Major Projects and Contracts, said he was excited to see the transformation of Riverside Park from construction site to adventure playground.

"During the course of a project, the design can change but Riverside Park has kept closely to the architect's drawing and we've been getting a lot of positive feedback from both the community and contractors about the park's unique aspects," he said.

"What we have is an architecturally-designed, fully-enclosed space where parents can relax and have a coffee while the kids play. I'm really looking forward to the opening day and seeing the finished result."

As well as being a destination for families, Riverside Park is another piece in the Town Centre transformation. Planning is underway for the second stage of the Town Centre Masterplan works, which will focus on providing a gateway entry into Singleton from the Campbell Street turnoff from the New England Highway, to the intersection with John Street and south into the Town Centre.

Mr Fitz-Gibbon said Riverside Park would compliment the ongoing Masterplan works.

"As well as the curves in the design of Riverside Park, there'll be an array of colours in the soft fall, pavement and the shade sail, and lots of use of Singleton red and grey in keeping with the CBD upgrade," he said.



Construction Coordinator Major Projects Tony Iuliano, Coordinator Community Participation Claire Briggs and Manager Major Projects and Contracts Kieren Fitz-Gibbon at work on Riverside Park.

BUDGET ADDS UP TO POSITIVE RESULT

Singleton Council has ended the 2017/2018 year with a \$1.6 million surplus (excluding capital grants and contributions) after a \$1.1 million deficit the previous year.

Council also recorded a positive result when measuring operational income against operational expenditure. Anthony Egan, Council's Director Corporate and Community, said the improved net operating result recorded in Council's audited statements was attributable to a range of measures to ensure Council's long-term sustainability.

"2017/2018 is the second of the four-year Special Rate Variation that has been applied to assist Council with improving its financial position," he said.

"In addition, Council has been working within an operation budget that has been frozen for the past two years. These measures combined mean Council is now tracking towards an improved financial position."

Council's consolidated operating performance ratio, which measures how Council's operational revenue exceeds expenditure, stood at 2.31% – meaning Council received adequate income to cover the costs of operations.

That's an improvement on negative results the previous year of -1.63% and -4.04% in 2016.

Singleton also improved its debt service cover ratio to 7.9, up from 6.3 in 2017, which demonstrates the availability of operating cash to service debt including interest, principal and lease payments.

However, the audited reports show more investment is required to bring Council's assets up to a satisfactory or better position with an infrastructure backlog of 2.5% in 2018, up from 2.2% in 2017.

The infrastructure backlog demonstrates what proportion the backlog is against the total value of Council's infrastructure.

"Council's financial statements also identified that Council is required to spend more funds on renewing our building and infrastructure assets, to ensure the sustainability of the assets," Mr Egan said.

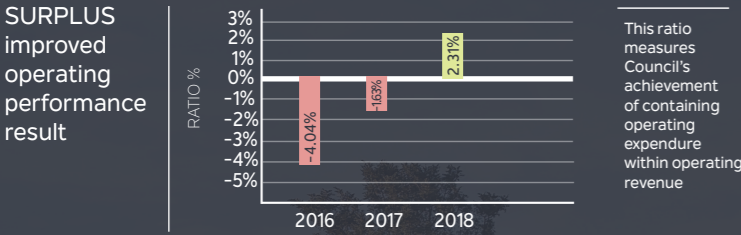
"This is being achieved through the funding obtained from the Special Rate Variation.

"Some of the actions achieved as a result of the special rate include sealing of a 700 metre section of Putty Valley Road, gravel road resetting at Long Gully Road, Mt Royal Road and Carrowbrook Road, the Blaxland Avenue cycleway upgrade and Council's contribution to the Singleton Regional Livestock Market upgrade."

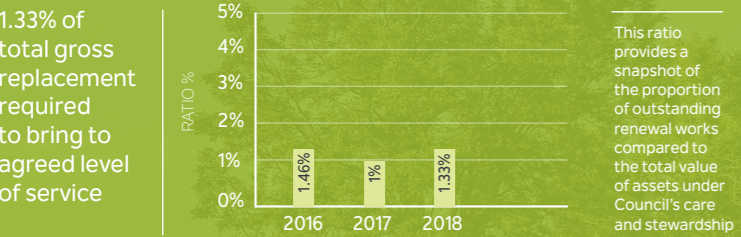


Senior Plant Operator Mark Thornton and Plant Operator Darryl Solman on Glendonbrook Road.

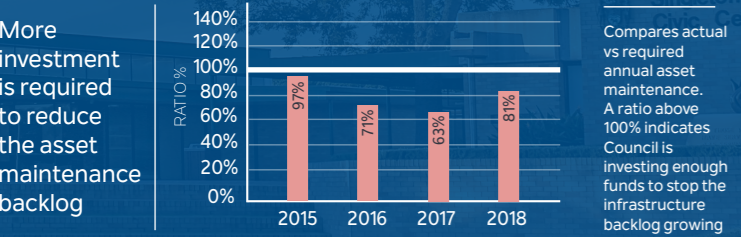
OPERATING PERFORMANCE RATIOS



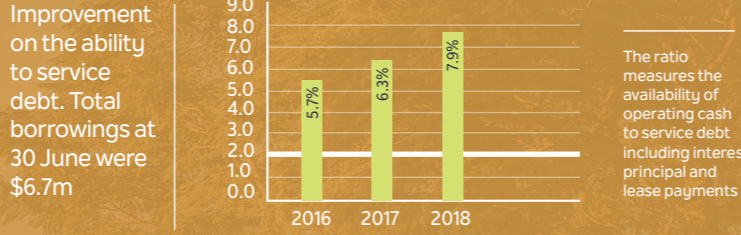
INFRASTRUCTURE RATIOS



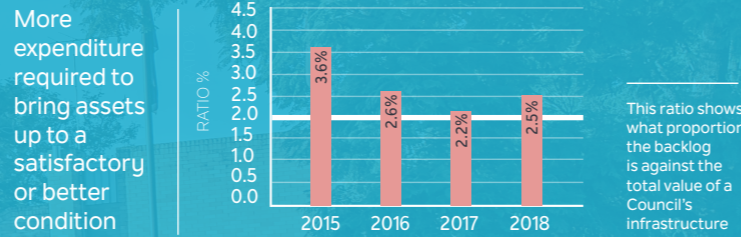
INFRASTRUCTURE RATIOS



DEBT SERVICE COVER RATIO



INFRASTRUCTURE RATIOS



FUNDING BOOSTS RURAL ROADS

Glendonbrook Road is in line for more special treatment in 2019/2020 after Singleton Council received \$189,000 in Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) funding under its Repair and Improvement of Regional Roads (REPAIR) Program.

It follows \$50,000 from the program for Glendonbrook Road in the current financial year, taking Council's rural roads spending to \$2.7 million.

Peter McMurray, Council's Manager Infrastructure Strategy and Planning said the 2019/2020 funding continued the upgrades to Glendonbrook Road, including the rehabilitation of an 800 metre stretch completed recently.

"Glendonbrook Road is an important route between Singleton and Dungog and Singleton and Gresford, and is well-used by locals and visitors with motorbikes and caravans alike," he said.

"There has been steady progress to widen and rehabilitate sections of the road surface, particularly at the Dungog end.

"This funding will supplement money from the Special Rate Variation to allow us to continue progress on the road with \$55,000, as well as \$134,000 for the rehabilitation of a 500 metre section of Elderslie Road."

Rural roads account for 683 kilometres of Council's 866 kilometre road network across the local government area.

Mr McMurray said as well as Glendonbrook Road, projects were scheduled for Falbrook Road, Middle Falbrook Road, Wand Road, Lemington Road, Glen Oak Access, Goorangoola Road and Broke Road.

"It's interesting to note that Singleton has the third biggest geographical area in the Greater Metropolitan Newcastle and Hunter area after North Coast and Upper Hunter councils, and while the greatest proportion of our population is concentrated in the urban town centre, we have an extensive rural road network linking to neighbouring LGAs," he said.

"We are very fortunate in Singleton that our roads are kept to a high standard, including 85 per cent of the road network that are either very good or satisfactory condition. The Special Rate Variation has helped ensure those high standards are kept with works such as those on Glendonbrook Road, and funding programs such as REPAIR mean we can also expand our rural road works to include more roads across our local government area."

2017/2018 BY NUMBERS

Visitors

12,578

VISITOR INFORMATION
& ENTERPRISE CENTRE

69,056

SINGLETON LIBRARY

15,470

SINGLETON YOUTH
VENUE

151,968

GYM & SWIM AND THE
HEIGHTS SPORTS CENTRES



3110.91 ML

WATER TREATED
BY COUNCIL



\$12.4M

GRANTS RECEIVED
BY COUNCIL



\$59M

DEVELOPMENT
APPROVAL VALUE



297

DEVELOPEMENT
APPROVALS



41,613

ANIMALS THROUGH
LIVESTOCK MARKET



\$18.5M

SPENT ON CAPITAL
WORKS



7,816

CUSTOMER REQUESTS
CREATED



18,699

CUSTOMER
SERVICE CALLS

Families enrolled

100

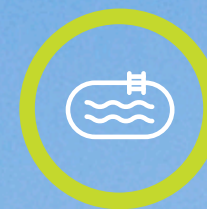
LONG DAY CARE

79

OOSH

41

MOBILE PRESCHOOL



150

POOL INSPECTIONS
BY COUNCIL



SINGLETON
COUNCIL

CONNECT WITH US

