



**O4.**

# **Operational Plan**

2024–2025



# Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the importance of tradition, history and culture to Aboriginal people including the existence of unknown stories held by First Nations Peoples. As an organisation that works with water and land, we acknowledge and value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sustainability practices in land and culture and acknowledge our responsibility to work together with the Traditional Custodians of land and waterway areas managed by Rous County Council.

We acknowledge this relationship and deeply value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditional laws, knowledge and lessons about places and sustainability. Through our reconciliation activities, we aim to restore ecological, cultural, and social values that are unique to our region.

# Foreword

On behalf of Rous County Council, I am pleased to present our Operational Plan for 2024-2025. This is the final year of the current Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework and the conclusion of this term of Council.

This Operational Plan describes the actions Rous will undertake in the 2024-25 financial year towards meeting the commitments of our Delivery Program adopted in 2022-23. The Delivery Program is our Council's commitment about what we will do in this council term to achieve the strategic objectives established in our Business Activity Strategic Plan.

This Operational Plan will be resourced through the annual Budget and Statement of Revenue Policy (available on Council's website).

We will continue to partner with our region's councils to provide the quality services Rous is well known for across bulk water supply, weed biosecurity and flood mitigation, and in doing so, support a sustainable and productive community.

This year, Rous will progress its relocation to a new site at Gallans Road, Ballina. This will enable business efficiencies and service improvements and see more of our staff working together under one roof.

The Future Water Project will also continue to be a priority as we continue to see progress being made to understand the many multi-faceted elements of the various options available. Some of that work will inevitably inform business planning and decisions beyond water security. With the potential for new property assets, such as bores or water treatment plants, there is an opportunity to reimagine our business processes to optimise efficiency, effectiveness and safety across our multiple sites, including Gallans Road.

Positioning Rous to be able to effectively meet the future needs of the region will require transformative change. This is a key challenge given the backdrop of successive years of natural disasters and a pandemic, and the toll that has had on our people and the community. Throughout this Operational Plan are tangible actions designed to build a strong foundation for change - for our people and the business - focusing on our Vision to thrive and evolve as a valued regional service provider.

**Phillip Rudd**  
*General Manager*



# Our leadership team



**Phillip Rudd**  
*General Manager*



**Helen McNeil**  
*Group Manager  
Organisational Services*



**Andrew Logan**  
*Group Manager  
Planning and Delivery*



**Adam Nesbitt**  
*Group Manager  
Operations*



**Geoff Ward**  
*Group Manager  
Transformation and Strategy*



**Guy Bezroucho**  
*Project Manager  
Relocation and Properties*



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## How will the Operational Plan be realised?

See our:

- Annual Budget and Statement of Revenue Policy
- Resourcing Strategy: 2022-2032.

These documents (and reporting of their progress and Rous's performance) can be found on Council's website: [www.rous.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rous.nsw.gov.au)

Version	Purpose and description	Date adopted by Council	Resolution no.
0.1	Draft Operational Plan 2022-2023 endorsed at 11 May 2022 Council meeting for public consultation.	11/05/2022	17/22
1.0	Endorsed by Council at its meeting 15 June 2022.	15/06/2022	28/22
1.1	Draft Operational Plan 2023-2024 endorsed at 19 April 2023 Council meeting for public consultation.	19/04/2023	13/23
2.0	No public submissions, therefore considered endorsed by Council at its April meeting.	19/04/2023	13/23
2.1	Draft Operational Plan 2024-2025 endorsed at 17 April 2024 Council meeting for public consultation.	17/04/2024	11/24
3.0	Endorsed by Council at its meeting 19 June 2024.	19/06/2024	24/24

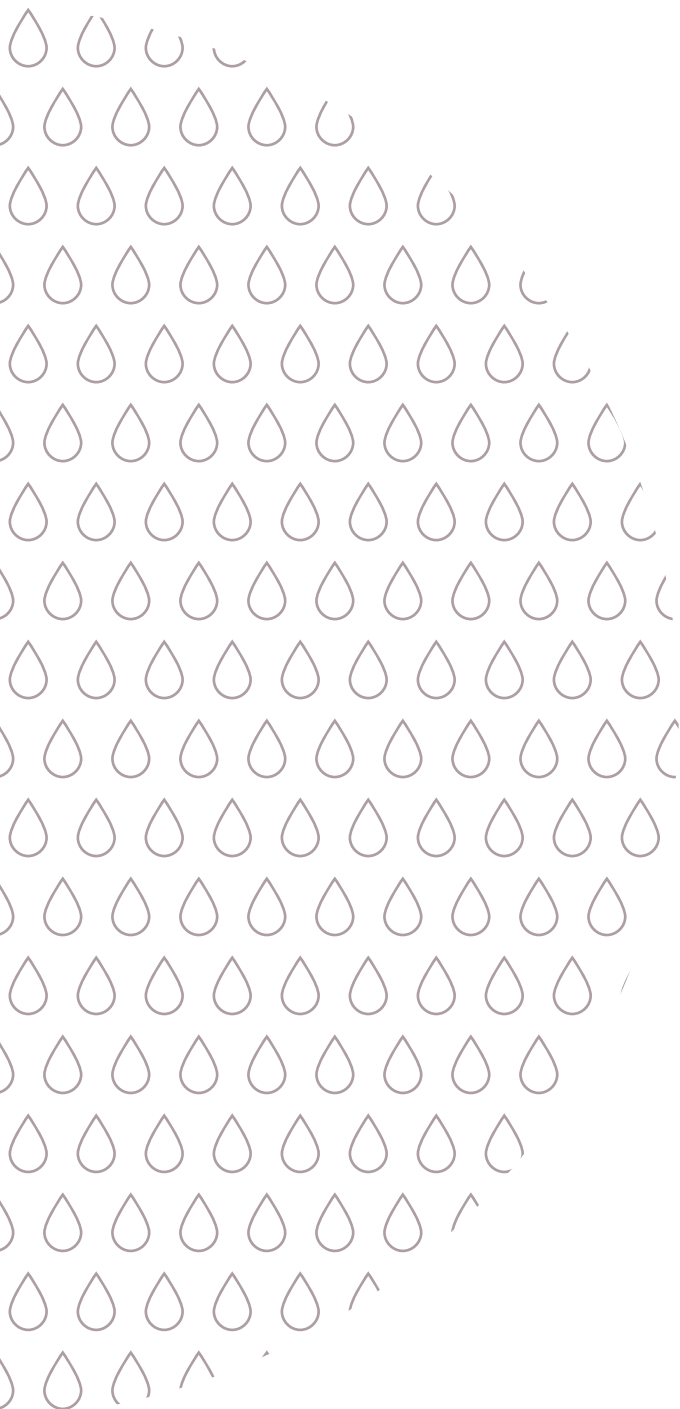
A new annual Operational Plan will be prepared to commence at the beginning of each new financial year.

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## Our Mission

Partner with our constituent councils to provide quality services that support a sustainable and productive region.

## Our Vision

Thrive and evolve as a valued regional service provider.

## Our Values

Staff developed and adopted a set of values that we use as a guide for how we act and behave:

- **Safety** – safety first 24/7
- **Teamwork** – one team, one purpose
- **Accountability** – own it, solve it, achieve it
- **Respect** – be honest, be fair.



# About us

Rous is a county council created under the *Local Government Act 1993*, with three core functions that it undertakes for the local councils of the areas within which it operates (known as constituent councils).



## Bulk water supply

- Regional water supply authority providing water in bulk to the council areas of Ballina (excluding Wardell), Byron (excluding Mullumbimby), Lismore (excluding Nimbin), and Richmond Valley (excluding land to the west of Coraki).
- Regional supply network includes approximately 40,100 connections within the reticulation areas of the constituent councils, and around 2,030 retail connections to the Rous trunk main system. A population of over 100,000 is serviced by this water supply system with the actual area of operations being approximately 3,000km<sup>2</sup>.
- Principal water supply source is Rocky Creek Dam, situated 25 kilometres north of Lismore near the village of Dunoon.

## Weed biosecurity

- Local Control Authority responsible for administering the ***Biosecurity Act 2015***, working with landholders and the community throughout the region to address weed biosecurity matters.
- Undertake a wide range of activities to combat the spread of targeted weeds across the local government areas of Ballina, Byron, Lismore and Richmond Valley (including on behalf of Kyogle and Tweed Shire as part of a fee for service arrangement).

## Flood mitigation

- Flood Mitigation Authority operating across the Ballina, Lismore and Richmond Valley local government areas.
- Responsible for the construction and replacement of a range of flood mitigation infrastructure, mostly in rural areas, including the routine maintenance of canals and floodgates and related natural resource management activities.

## What else do we do?

We have some commercial property interests.



# Introduction



This Operational Plan details the activities and actions Rous will undertake during this financial year to achieve our Delivery Program commitments. The Operational Plan identifies the programs, projects, capital works and other activities we will deliver this year within our annual budget.

The Plan is underpinned by the social justice principles of access, equity, participation and rights – ensuring fairness in all that we do.

The themes and direction established in our Business Activity Strategic Plan and Delivery Program flow through to this Operational Plan:

Business Activity Strategic Plan: A snapshot	
Theme	What does it mean? What does it look like?
<b>1. Sustainable delivery</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable service provision in relation to water supply, flood mitigation and weeds management.</li> <li>• Financial sustainability of the organisation (including in relation to its workforce and asset management responsibilities).</li> <li>• Environmental sustainability in relation to our operations.</li> <li>• Planning for and responding to climate change impacts in the environment.</li> </ul>
<b>2. External relationships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relationships Rous has with constituent councils, customers and the broader Northern Rivers community, State and Commonwealth government.</li> <li>• Opportunities for partnerships and collaboration to achieve desired outcomes for our customers and community more effectively and efficiently.</li> </ul>
<b>3. Our people</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our workforce – ensuring we have the right people with the right skills in the right place to achieve our objectives within a Values-based culture.</li> <li>• Creating a working environment and a workplace culture where our people value their work and feel valued by the organisation and its customers.</li> </ul>
<b>4. Leadership and innovation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our role as a regional leader.</li> <li>• How we conduct ourselves as an organisation.</li> <li>• How we use technology and apply innovation to be more effective and efficient.</li> </ul>

# Where are we now?



The table below provides a summary of the operating environment for Rous County Council at the time the Delivery Program was adopted in 2022-23. This Operational Plan is designed to help address the key challenges and opportunities that have been identified and contribute to the achievement of our strategic objectives.

Key themes	Key challenges and opportunities
<b>1. Sustainable delivery</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We are seeing climate change impacts, including increases in weed infestations, sea level rises affecting the performance of our flood mitigation assets, and more extreme flood and drought events.</li> <li>Opportunity to clarify Rous's role in relation to flood mitigation in the context of our relationship with others.</li> <li>The region's growth will continue to impose pressure on Council's infrastructure.</li> <li>Opportunities for simplifying and streamlining organisational processes and governance in an increasingly regulated sector.</li> <li>Risk to water availability if Rous is unable to supply enough water to a growing population (increasing water restrictions may result).</li> <li>Effective identification and mitigation of uncertainty to ensure Rous can meet its objectives.</li> </ul>
<b>2. External relationships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low level of community awareness and understanding about Rous's role and services.</li> <li>Opportunity to enhance partnerships with constituent councils to complement each other's work (e.g. through joint planning, stakeholder engagement, resource sharing).</li> <li>Rous has differing and fragmented roles across its operational footprint.</li> <li>Opportunity to lead and deliver targeted engagement and education outcomes.</li> </ul>
<b>3. Our people</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attraction, retention and succession planning challenges.</li> <li>Pressure of increased training requirements.</li> <li>Adequacy and appropriateness of facilities for a growing organisation.</li> <li>Promote a safety culture supported by effective, efficient and practical safe systems of work.</li> </ul>
<b>4. Leadership and innovation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opportunity to move from just a service provider function to take on more of a regional leadership role for those matters relating to our core business.</li> <li>There is no centralised funded authority that oversees the health of the Richmond River system.</li> <li>A revised best practice framework is being developed for water in NSW.</li> <li>State Government policy lags contemporary approaches to water, and State Government planning does not always align with local strategic planning.</li> </ul>

# Our Operational Plan

**Where do we want to be at the end of this financial year?**

(Our financial-year goals.)

**How will we get there?**

(Our projects, programs, actions and budget considerations.)

**How we will know we are on track?**

(A measure or indicator that provides a way of assessing whether our projects, programs and actions are effective.)

# 1. Sustainable delivery



**Business priorities** include:

- Contributing to the protection and enhancement of our region's environment and natural resources.
- Taking steps to strengthen our response to climate change impacts and reducing our carbon emissions.
- Planning for future demands as our region's population grows.
- Sustainably using our available resources.
- Sound business planning and ongoing improvement.

Ref	Activities to get there	2024-25 actions	What is being measured	Target	Who
<b>1.1</b>	<b>A healthy environment</b>				
1.1.2	Sustainable river system health through natural resource management.				
	Deliver the activities in the Catchment Management and Coastal Zone Management plans.	Undertake scheduled 2024-25 actions in the Catchment Management Plan. <i>A1: Catchment landholder education and awareness.</i> <i>A2: On-site sewerage management system planning and policy review.</i> <i>A3: Development planning and policy review.</i> <i>A4: Spills and containment emergency response and notification protocol.</i> <i>A5: Rous catchment water quality monitoring program.</i> <i>A6: Rous catchment surveillance program.</i> <i>A7: Intensive pesticide sampling program.</i> <i>A8: Investigate potentially harmful contaminants.</i> <i>A9: Performance monitoring and review of actions.</i> <i>RC10: Rocky Creek Dam on-going catchment controls.</i> <i>RC12: Rocky Creek buffer zone maintenance.</i> <i>RC13: On-going collaboration with National Parks and Wildlife Services.</i> <i>WR14: Wilsons River Source on-going catchment controls.</i> <i>WR16: River Reach Plan extension.</i> <i>WR17: Wilsons River Source buffer zone maintenance.</i> <i>EC18: Emigrant Creek Dam on-going catchment controls.</i> <i>EC20: River Reach Plan extension.</i> <i>EC21: Emigrant Creek Dam buffer zone maintenance.</i> <i>EC22: Trial farm-based erosion management plan.</i> <i>EC23: Pesticide notification.</i> <i>DD24: Potential Dunoon Dam buffer zone maintenance.</i>	% of scheduled Rous activities completed.	At least 90%.	CCAM

Ref	Activities to get there	2024-25 actions	What is being measured	Target	Who
1.1.2	Sustainable river system health through natural resource management <i>continued.</i>				
		Undertake scheduled activities in stages 2-4 of the Richmond River Coastal Management Program (on behalf of Rous, Ballina, Lismore, Richmond Valley and Kyogle councils). <i>Stage 2: Determine risks, vulnerabilities and opportunities.</i> <i>Stage 3: Identify and evaluate options.</i> <i>Stage 4: Prepare, exhibit, finalise, certify and adopt the Coastal Management Program.</i>	% of scheduled activities in stages 2-4 completed.	At least 90%.	CCAM
	Deliver the activities in the Northern Rivers Watershed Initiative.	Undertake Year 1 actions (planning phase).	Project plans and agreements in place for all program areas.	100%.	CCAM
1.1.3	Enhance the region's biosecurity through combatting the spread of targeted weeds.				
	Deliver the activities of the Weed Action Plan and program.	Deliver scheduled 2024-25 actions in the Weed Action Plan.	% of scheduled WAP actions completed.	At least 95%.	WBBERM
		Deliver weed biosecurity services in accordance commercial fee-for-service arrangements (Kyogle Shire Council, Tweed Shire Council).	% of service level agreement requirements delivered.	100%.	WBBERM
1.2	Responding to climate change				
1.2.1	Achieve carbon neutrality.				
	Develop and commence delivery of our Renewable Energy and Emissions Reduction Plan.	Deliver scheduled 2024-25 actions in the Renewable Energy and Emissions Reduction Plan.	% of listed actions completed.	At least 90%.	IPM
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nightcap Water Treatment Plant - solar photovoltaic and battery energy storage system.</li> </ul>	Installation completed.	By 30 June 2025.	IPM
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review opportunities for demand scheduling optimisation on existing assets.</li> </ul>	Internally produced report completed.	By 30 June 2025.	SPE / DEM
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate the types and number of electric vehicle (EV) chargers to be installed at Gallans Road administration building and other potential priority sites.</li> </ul>	Internally produced report completed.	By 30 June 2025.	SPE
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement trial program of electric vehicle (EVs) within motor vehicle fleet.</li> </ul>	Number of EVs in fleet.	At least 1.	HSELM
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plant trees to contribute to offsetting Rous's carbon emissions.</li> </ul>	# of trees planted (for future sequestration on Council land).	4000.	WBBERM
			# of trees planted (on non-Council land).	2500.	CCAM / WBBERM
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement measures to support the resilience of vegetation against fire.</li> </ul>	% of scheduled actions in the Buffer Zone Management Plan completed.	At least 90%.	WBBERM

Ref	Activities to get there	2024-25 actions	What is being measured	Target	Who
1.2.2	We are prepared and able to respond to climate change impacts.				
	Deliver strategic review of Flood Mitigation function, incorporating data arising from 2022 flood events, and confirm Rous's role in the region.	Strategic review of Flood Mitigation function complete.	Review reported to Council and Rous's role confirmed.	By June 2025.	GMPD
		Progress the transfer the Lismore Levee Scheme to Lismore City Council as per Council resolution [37/23].	Position agreed between Rous and Lismore City Council.	By June 2025.	GMPD
1.3	<b>Water security, quality and sustainable consumption</b>				
1.3.1	Short-term (to 2040) water supply demands are able to be met.				
	Deliver the Future Water Project.	Deliver scheduled 2024-25 actions in the Future Water Project 2060. <i>Stage 1:</i> Continue the implementation of the Alstonville Groundwater Scheme. Continue the implementation of the Woodburn Groundwater Scheme.. <i>Stage 2:</i> Continue the planning and investigations for a groundwater scheme at Tyagarah. General: Review Intergrated Water Cycle Management Strategy..	% of scheduled actions completed.	At least 90%.	FWPM
1.3.2	Source options to meet long-term water supply demands are better understood.				
	Undertake further investigations of Stage 3 sources.	Investigate potential to source groundwater from the Richmond Area Coastal Floodplain Alluvial Groundwater Source.	Initial results available.	By June 2025.	FWPM
		Investigate options to optimise the Wilsons Rivers source licence.	Report on options and feasibility completed.	By June 2025.	FWPM
		Undertake Cultural Heritage and Biodiversity Assessments for the potential Dunoon Dam.	Reports completed.	By June 2025.	FWPM
1.3.3	Our water supply is valued and used responsibly				
2.3.2	Water consuming businesses and industry are engaged to promote sustainable water consumption.				
	Deliver the Regional Demand Management Plan.	Undertake scheduled 2024-25 actions in the Regional Demand Management Plan.	% of scheduled actions completed.	At least 90%	WSO
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RES1: Implement behaviour change pilot to understand community attitudes to responsible water use.</li> </ul>	Pilot program designed, approved and implemented.	By 30 June 2025.	WSO
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RES2: Implement residential rebate / incentive program.</li> </ul>	Number of rainwater tank rebates approved.	Within approved budget.	WSO
			Number of instances of promotional opportunities.	Where participants heard about the program.	WSO

Ref	Activities to get there	2024-25 actions	What is being measured	Target	Who
1.3.3	Our water supply is valued and used responsibly <i>continued.</i>				
2.3.2	Water consuming businesses and industry are engaged to promote sustainable water consumption <i>continued.</i>				
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NRES2: Implement sustainable water partner program; NRES3: Implement audit of Council facilities and operations.</li> </ul>	Number of water audits completed for target non-residential users.	Upward trend on previous year.	WSO
			Number of non-residential users that have completed works and accessed a rebate.	Upward trend on previous year.	WSO
			Number of instances of promotional opportunities (program and users).	Upward trend on previous year.	WSO
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DMR3: Reporting of customer data and consumption.</li> </ul>	Water loss indicators and targets developed and reporting commenced.	By 30 June 2025.	WSO
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EDU1: Implement education and engagement tools.</li> </ul>	Number of education and engagement tools prepared and channels disseminated (where and how many).	Trend compared to previous year.	WSO
			Number of education and engage opportunities delivered.	Trend compared to previous year.	WSO
			Feedback received and level of stakeholder satisfaction as indicated through survey.	Trend compared to previous year.	WSO
<b>1.4</b>	<b>A sustainable Council</b>				
1.4.1	Our resources are planned, prioritised and implemented to ensure Rous's sustainability.				
	Maintain and implement the Resourcing Strategy.	Undertake scheduled 2024-25 actions in Asset Management Plans as per LTFP and QBRS adjustments.	% of scheduled actions in Capital Works program completed on time and within original budget.	At least 70%.	IPM
			% of Fleet replacement program completed.	100%.	HSELM
		<b>Flood mitigation</b>			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Drains and canals.</li> </ul>			FMM
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Floodgate outlets.</li> </ul>			FMM
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Floodgate replacement program (high / medium risk).</li> </ul>			FMM
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lifting gear replacement program.</li> </ul>			FMM
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Levee inspection and heavy maintenance.</li> </ul>			FMM



Ref	Activities to get there	2024-25 actions	What is being measured	Target	Who
1.4.1	Our resources are planned, prioritised and implemented to ensure Rous's sustainability <i>continued</i> .				
		<b>Retail water</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bulk water filling stations - power supply upgrade.</li> </ul>			IPM
		<b>Bulk water - trunk</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Broadwater 150 upgrade (at reservoir).</li> <li>Byron 200 - mains renewal - 375.</li> <li>Valve replacement program.</li> <li>St Helena 300 upgrade - 375.</li> <li>Wilsons River elevated crossing Bexhill.</li> </ul>			DE
		<b>Source - Emigrant Creek Dam</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outflow monitoring / causeway safety access - construction of retaining wall and causeway.</li> </ul>			IPM
		<b>Water - treatment plant - Nightcap</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nightcap WTP: Main Switchboard and DAFF saturator upgrade.</li> <li>Nightcap WTP: Biological activated carbon turbidity meters and ozone sidestream dosing.</li> <li>Nightcap WTP: Biological activated carbon renewals.</li> <li>Nightcap WTP: Wastewater renewals.</li> <li>Bulk chemical storage.</li> </ul>			EPE
					PE
					IPM
					IPM
					IPM
		<b>Water - treatment plant - Emigrant Creek</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emigrant Creek WTP: Floatation.</li> <li>Emigrant Creek WTP: HCl dosing.</li> <li>Emigrant Creek WTP: Lime pH correction.</li> </ul>			PE
					PE
					PE
		<b>Water - general</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bulk meter renewal program.</li> <li>Water loss implementation (Rous network).</li> </ul>			DEM
					DEM

Ref	Activities to get there	2024-25 actions	What is being measured	Target	Who
1.4.1	Our resources are planned, prioritised and implemented to ensure Rous's sustainability <i>continued</i> .				
		Define optimum delivery model for strategic procurement (including regional leverage through the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation).	Model developed and trial implemented.	By 30 June 2025.	GM
		Stores, inventory and fleet business operation review and process re-engineering.	Delivery of process efficiency improvements and improved risk management.	Reduction in time, cost, and/or risk.	HSELM
		Create and embed organisation KPIs / targets and incorporate into performance processes.	Key KPI metrics defined and baseline obtained.	By June 2025.	GMTS / FM
		Better education and consistency instilled into IP&R process, so staff know where their work fits in terms of broader strategic direction of the business.	Review and enhance internal education and awareness.	By November 2024.	GMOS
		Progress steps to finalise Perradenya development as per Council resolution [42/23].	Application lodged.	By December 2024.	PMRP
			Action plan informed by application outcome.	By June 2025.	PMRP
		Secure long-term debt financing.	Debt financing facility in place.	By December 2024.	GMTS / FM
		Review effectiveness and clarity of Rous's constituting proclamation and identify opportunities for improvement.	Review completed and position paper prepared.	By December 2024.	GMOS
		Review Fleet operation and update governance documents incl. development of a Fleet Asset Management Plan.	Review completed, revised business processes implemented and Fleet Asset Management Plan approved.	By 30 September 2024.	HSELM
1.4.3	A positive risk management culture is embedded and sustained.				
	Implement Enterprise Risk Management Framework.	Enterprise Risk Management Framework in place.	% of the activity plan completed.	100% of phase one.	RAS
				50% of phase two.	RAS

Ref	Activities to get there	2024-25 actions	What is being measured	Target	Who
1.4.4	Ongoing service reviews, audits and business improvements achieve enhanced organisational outcomes.				
	Implement internal and external audit.	Complete prioritised service reviews based on recommended focus areas identified by Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee.	# of service reviews completed.	At least 1.	GRM
			% of review recommendations implemented.	At least 80% within 12 months of date of recommendation.	GRM
			% of scheduled audits completed as per Internal Audit program.	100%.	GRM
		Revise and update internal audit arrangements.	New internal audit program developed and internal auditor consultant engaged.	By June 2025.	RAS
		Review and update of Dam Safety Management System documents and plans.	Annual completion of surveillance inspections, undertake studies and updating of dam safety documents and plans as required in the Dam Safety Management System document.	By December 2024.	GMO / SPE / DTEM

## 2. External relationships



**Business priorities** include:

- Building community understanding of the breadth of functions and results that Council delivers across the region.
- Being well positioned to respond to the diversity of our communities' needs and aspirations.
- Ensuring we proactively and positively engage with our constituent councils so that they understand and support our future direction.
- Maintaining strong relationships with others to promote positive business, environment and community outcomes.
- Being well positioned to win State Government funding opportunities.
- Sound business planning and ongoing improvement.

Ref	Activities to get there	2024-25 actions	What is being measured	Target	Who
<b>2.1</b>	<b>Strong and mutually respectful relationships with our constituent councils</b>				
2.1.1	Effective collaboration and communication with our constituent councils.				
	Review and refresh Service Level Agreements (or similar) with constituent councils.	Partner with constituent councils in a service review to determine the value and effectiveness of the Service Level Agreement incl. alternative options.	Number of arrangements reviewed and refreshed.	100% by June 2025.	GMO / GRM
		Perform a parallel run of alternative pricing methodology.	Completed and a report to Council on results.	By March 2025.	FM
		Governing body induction program revised and effective for onboarding purposes incl. business processes and systems.	Induction program updated.	By August 2024.	GMOS
<b>2.2</b>	<b>People across our region understand the work that we do</b>				
2.2.1	Communities across our region are kept informed of Rous's work and have opportunities to engage with us.				
2.3.4	Local community groups are positively engaged to support the achievement of shared objectives.				
	Deliver the Communications and Engagement Strategy.	Provide opportunities for engagement through face-to-face activities, social media, website and customer service offerings.	Increase in social media followers.	At least 3000 in total across all social media platforms.	CCM
			# of telephone call-backs received. Website visitation. Use of available online tools, i.e., e-forms, SMS alert registrations, 'report a weed' form, views of Issuu documents.	At least 25% upward trend on previous year.	CCM

Ref	Activities to get there	2024-25 actions	What is being measured	Target	Who
2.2.1	Communities across our region are kept informed of Rous's work and have opportunities to engage with us <i>continued</i> .				
2.3.4	Local community groups are positively engaged to support the achievement of shared objectives <i>continued</i> .				
		Monitor Rous website to ensure content complies with WCAG level AA standards.	Compliance.	100%.	CCM
		Provide timely and accurate information using appropriate media.	Number of media releases.	≥ 8 per year.	CCM
			Number of social media posts.	≥ 100 per year.	CCM
			Number of website news articles.	≥ 20 per year.	CCM
		Support Rous projects and activities through the development and implementation of communication and marketing campaigns.	Number of projects and activities supported.	≥ 8 per year.	CCM
		Implement a new Rous website.	Website delivered according to scope, on time and on budget.	By June 2025.	CCM
		Implement the Branding and Marketing Strategy.	Increase in brand awareness.	Upward trend on baseline survey results.	CCM
		Scope the purpose and design of an engagement space at Ballina Campus site (Gallans Road).	Purpose and design approved, subject to Building B progressing at the same time as Building A.	By September 2024.	CCM
<b>2.3</b>	<b>Our working relationships with political, regulatory and industry stakeholders are effective and achieve results</b>				
2.3.1	Our positive working relationships support the achievement of regional outcomes.				
	Actively participate in the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation.	Provide end to end support for the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation.	Statutory compliance.	100%.	GM
2.3.2	See 1.3.3.				
2.3.3	Local Aboriginal history and culture is respected, and we positively engage with our First Nations communities.				
4.1.1	Embed reconciliation in Rous's culture through its people and partners.				
	Deliver the Reconciliation Action Plan.	Implement Rous's 2024/25 Reconciliation Action Plan.	Complete scheduled actions.	By assigned due date.	CCAM
		Prepare the Rous 'Innovate' Reconciliation Action Plan 2025/29.	Draft submitted to Council and Reconciliation Australia.	By 30 June 2025.	CCAM

Ref	Activities to get there	2024-25 actions	What is being measured	Target	Who
2.3.4	See 2.2.1.				
2.3.5	Regional collaboration informs policy and innovative approaches to priority issues.				
	Participate in regional forums with key stakeholders to inform local policy.	Actively contribute to the Weeds and Pest Advisory Committees as part of our flood and water policy contribution.	# of meetings participated in.	At least 90%.	GM
			Nature of outcomes achieved.	Report by occurrence.	GM
		Collaborate with State and other agencies including NSW Health, NSW Local Land Services, NSW Department of Primary Industries, NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water and Water Services Association of Australia.	Nature of collaboration outcomes.	Report by occurrence.	WBBRM / DTEM / DEM

# 3. Our people



**Business priorities** include:

- Forecasting future workforce skill needs.
- Being an employer our employees are proud to work for.
- Creating opportunities for our staff to learn and develop skills that are needed for achieving our organisational objectives.

Ref	Activities to get there	2024-25 actions	What is being measured	Target	Who
<b>3.1</b>	<b>Our future workforce requirements are confirmed</b>				
3.1.1	We know our workforce and skills requirements to achieve our Delivery Program commitments.				
	Refresh and implement the Workforce Management Strategy and action plan taking into account:	Conduct organisational benchmarking review and provide recommendations to ensure right-sizing of Future Rous (e.g., people   structure).	Benchmarking recommendations endorsed.	By December 2024.	PCTL
	(a) the human resources required by the Delivery Program	Conduct salary system review, develop framework, KPIs and implement recommendations, including the adjustment of salaries and benefits where required.	Achieved.	By June 2025.	PCTL
	(b) specialist and hard-to-recruit skills.	Design the 'future-state' Rous organisational structure based on the right roles skills, capabilities and needs for the future (including rollout and implementation plan).	Structure designed and endorsed by the Leadership Team.	By June 2025.	PCTL
		Review, update and expand the visibility of the Employee Value Proposition.	Employee Value Proposition endorsed and visible (internal and external stakeholders).	By October 2024.	PCM
<b>3.2</b>	<b>Innovative solutions are applied to addressing skills gaps</b>				
3.2.1	Specialist and hard-to-recruit skills are available to Rous when needed.				
	See 3.1.1	Identify and create an organisation-wide succession plan for business-critical roles.	Succession plan identified and inflight for all business-critical roles.	By August 2024.	PCM
		Design, develop and implement alternative employment strategies and pathways (e.g., First Nations employment, scholarships, cadetships, graduate or trainee programs.)	Individual measures per alternative employment strategy.	By December 2024.	PCM
		Conduct capability and competency review, develop framework to support future-state Rous roles, skills and capabilities.	New framework endorsed.	By June 2025.	PCTL



Ref	Activities to get there	2024-25 actions	What is being measured	Target	Who
<b>3.3</b>	<b>Leaders at all levels</b>				
3.3.1	Our leaders and emerging leaders are provided with development opportunities.				
	(c) leadership development.	Design and implement Leadership Program (Leadership Team and Leadership Group) to bridge gaps and create cohesion (incl. KPIs).	Program in place.	By December 2024.	PCTL
			Positive shift in employee satisfaction of leadership.	Upward trend.	PCM
		Review and design a 'fit for purpose' learning and development offering to support the future-state Rous culture, skills and capability requirements.	System improvements made, processes mapped and implemented.	By June 2025.	PCTL / PCM
<b>3.4</b>	<b>We are recognised as an employer of choice</b>				
3.4.1	Our staff are proud to work for Rous.				
	(d) workplace culture and employee satisfaction.	Design and implement a program to drive desired values, behaviours and increase employee engagement.	Sentiment rating assessed via pulse surveys.	Upward trend.	PCM
		Identify and implement a suite of People and Culture KPIs to measure, drive desired behaviours and organisational effectiveness.	KPIs endorsed and implemented.	By June 2025.	PCM
		Design and implement an employee engagement strategy to provide a holistic view and purpose of engagement activities and initiatives across Rous.	Sentiment rating assessed via pulse surveys.	Upward trend.	PCM
		Design and rollout a Rous Change Management Framework (incl. tools and templates) to support change initiatives.	75% of employees are aware of the Change Management Framework and where to access relevant resources.	By 30 June 2025.	PCTL
3.4.2	Our workplace is accessible, inclusive and safe.				
	Refresh and implement relevant plans incl. > Disability Inclusion Action Plan > Work Health Safety and Environment protocols.	Design and implement a Diversity Equity and Inclusion Strategy.	75% of employees are aware of the Strategy.	By December 2024.	PCM
		Investigate and implement a sustainable waste management solution for handling contaminated waste that arises from Rous operations.	100% compliance with applicable waste management regional and national environmental regulations.	By 30 June 2025.	HSELM

Ref	Activities to get there	2024-25 actions	What is being measured	Target	Who
3.4.2	Our workplace is accessible, inclusive and safe <i>continued.</i>				
		Implement Council's Health Safety and Environment policy and systems.	Integrate LTI tracking into BAU procedures.	0 lost time injuries.	HSELM
			Annual targets set for increased event reporting.	Upward reporting trend year on year.	HSELM
		Review and update internal business processes and procedure to promote awareness and consideration of environmental and cultural heritage factors.	Review existing business processes to identify potential environmental impacts (e.g., resource consumption, waste generation, pollution).  Assess potential interactions with cultural heritage (e.g., historical sites, indigenous practices, traditional knowledge).	By 30 June 2025.	HSELM
		Implement Health and Wellbeing program.	Employee engagement in program activities.	Upward trend year on year.	PCM
			Absence / sick days data.	Downward trend by comparison to previous year.	PCM
		Identify and implement technology solutions or business process improvement to enhance worker safety.	Instances of technology solutions or business process improvement reducing or eliminating risk to worker health and safety.	By occurrence.	HSELM

# 4. Leadership and innovation



**Business priorities** include:

- Confirming our role as a regional leader.
- Expanding Rous's role in the region to provide a more consistent and cohesive service delivery model on behalf of our constituent councils.
- Exploring new technologies and approaches to addressing regional issues where Council may contribute to the solution.
- Responding proactively to a changing regulatory environment.

Ref	Activities to get there	2024-25 actions	What is being measured	Target	Who
4.1	Be recognised for leadership in what we do				
4.1.1	See 2.3.3.				
4.1.2	Demonstrate effective leadership through the delivery of our commitments and reporting on our progress and results.				
	Deliver the commitments of the Delivery Program and report annually to our regional community and key stakeholders on our progress and results.	Periodic updates to keep our regional community and stakeholders informed about our ongoing efforts.	Annual report completed.	By 30 November 2024.	CCM
			Periodic updates delivered.	Quarterly.	CCM
		Report on Service Level Agreement implementation and performance.	Reports provided to constituent councils.	6-monthly.	GMO
			% of Service Level Agreement obligations met.	100%.	GMO
4.1.3	Business efficiencies are achieved through service delivery on behalf of and in partnership with our constituent councils.				
	Deliver feasibility study and recommendations related to end-to-end water supply and sewerage authority role for Rous.	Feasibility scope and timing informed by completion of initial work with relevant constituent councils.	Workshop with Rous governing body on work underway or planned.	By 31 July 2024.	GM

Ref	Activities to get there	2024-25 actions	What is being measured	Target	Who
4.2	Effective use of technology supports the achievement of organisational objectives				
4.2.1	Our business systems and data support us to achieve organisational results.				
	Review data and transform business systems.	Implementation of digital transformation - Release 1 and 2.	Release 1 - Payroll implemented.	By September 2024.	GMTS
			Release 2 - Enterprise Resource Planning system design and build complete.	By June 2025.	GMTS
		Accurately map and inspect all water supply network assets.	% of water supply network assets mapped and inspected.	100% by June 2025.	DEM
	Implement QA and QC processes for development servicing plans (Bulk Water and Retail Water).		Liabile developments are accurately assessed and incur applicable fees.	100%.	IPM / FM
			Partner with constituent council in review of development application process.	1 x Constituent council.	IPM / FM
	Refresh and update People and Culture policies and procedures to ensure 'fit for purpose' for Future Rous.		100% current.	By June 2025.	PCTL
	Streamline and update People and Culture processes to ensure 'fit for purpose' for Future Rous.		Core People and Culture processes document and mapped, e.g., recruitment, onboarding, offboarding, etc.	By June 2025.	PCTL
4.3.1	Successful consolidation of Rous administration and depots to achieve business improvements and optimisation.				
	Consolidate premises.	Workplace consolidation.	Complete relocation to Gallans Road project on time and on budget.	Achieved.	PMRP
			Implement workplace consolidation options for impacted properties.	Achieved.	PMRP
			Recurrent probity reporting.	Quarterly.	PMRP

Ref	Activities to get there	2024-25 actions	What is being measured	Target	Who
4.3.2	Continuous improvement in our delivery of a bulk water supply.				
	Review and update operational maintenance plans for bulk water assets.	Maintenance plans current for all water supply network assets.	Plans updated and implemented.	100% by December 2024.	DEM
		Finalise commissioning of smart metering across retail water connections.	% of retail water connections with a smart meter installed.	95%.	GMPD
		Implement ongoing backflow inspection and maintenance program for retail water connections.	% of retail water connections with a backflow device installed receive a site visit and test.	100% by 30 June 2025.	GMO
4.3.3	Proactive contribution as part of a regional response to flood mitigation.				
	Actively participate in ongoing flood response initiatives.	Renewal of Rous flood mitigation urban levee assets under NSW Public Works Levee Assessment and Improvement Program.	Subject to funding, renewal works commenced on levees: Bungwalbin, Tuckombil Canal, South Lismore \ Lismore CBD.	By 30 June 2025.	FMM / IPM

#### Acronyms

CCAM	Catchment and Cultural Awareness Manager	GMTS	Group Manager Transformation and Strategy
CCM	Customer and Communications Manager	GRM	Governance and Risk Manager
DE	Delivery Engineer	HSELM	Health Safety Environment and Logistics Manager
DEM	Distribution Engineering Manager	IPM	Infrastructure Program Manager
DTEM	Dams and Treatment Engineering Manager	PCM	People and Culture Manager
EPE	Electrical Projects Engineer	PCTL	People and Change Transformation Lead
FM	Finance Manager	PE	Process Engineer
FMM	Flood Mitigation Manager	PMRP	Project Manager Relocation and Properties
FWPM	Future Water Program Manager	RAS	Risk and Assurance Specialist
GM	General Manager	SPE	Strategic Planning Engineer
GMO	Group Manager Operations	WBRRM	Weed Biosecurity and Bush Regeneration Manager
GMOS	Group Manager Organisational Services	WSO	Water Sustainability Officer
GMPD	Group Manager Planning and Delivery		