



Annual Report 2024 – 2025

ROUS Taking care
of what
matters.

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land upon which we work and live. We pay our respects to the Elders of the past, present and emerging and acknowledge their continuing connection to Country who will guide us on our shared journey to the future.

Please note that this report may contain culturally sensitive content, including images and names of deceased persons of Aboriginal or Torres Strait ancestry.

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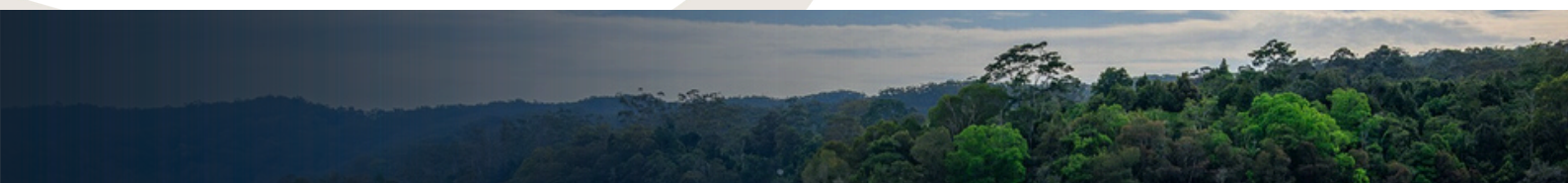
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Welcome to Rous' Annual Report 2024 – 2025

A year in review

Our Annual Report offers a summary of our activities and performance against the Delivery Program and Operational Plan and Business Activity Strategic Plan for the 2024 – 2025 financial year.

Alongside reporting on our work throughout the year, the report also contains a range of statutory reporting information. This and earlier annual reports are available on our website.

A message from our Chair

Funding secured, projects delivered

It has once again been my privilege to serve as Chair of Rous throughout the 2024 – 2025 financial year, representing the interests of Rous. This year has been another strong chapter in Rous' ongoing commitment to delivering projects, building partnerships, and caring for the people and places that matter most.

Working with our community, we have advanced important projects delivering real results across water, weed biosecurity, and rural flood mitigation. These include restoring and preserving our water catchment health with the Northern Rivers Watershed Initiative. The acquisition of critical water infrastructure from Ballina Shire Council including the Marom Creek Water Treatment Plant at Alstonville, and two groundwater bores along with all their respective license allocations as part of our Future Water 2060 project. Empowering people to save water with the Ripple Effect program and the Sustainable Water Partner Program, and the roll-out of Smart Meters and the MyRous app. These projects reflect our shared goal of protecting water resources and supporting a sustainable future for the Northern Rivers.

We have also welcomed significant funding from our valued partners, enabling vital work to be completed in weed biosecurity, including \$85,000 for Bitou bush control, \$160,000 for the Good Neighbours weed program. And important works in rural flood mitigation continue along the Richmond River with \$6.9 million in funding awarded for the Bungawalbin Levee remediation.



Councillor Robert Mustow, Rous Chair

Other funding received has been in support of the Fresh Start Program and targeted action against *Miconia calvescens*.

These achievements are only possible because of the dedication of our staff, the support of our councils, and the trust of our community. I look forward to seeing these efforts continue to strengthen the Northern Rivers in the years ahead.

A message from our General Manager

Proudly delivering for our community



Phillip Rudd, Rous General Manager

In October 2024, we welcomed our new governing body for the next four-year term – a fresh chapter in our commitment to serving the Northern Rivers.

This year, we celebrated the dedication and talent of our people, with three staff members named as award finalists in the NSW Local Government Excellence Awards and the Floodplain Management Australia Awards and our Every Drop Counts campaign took home top honours in the RH Dougherty Events and Communications Awards. These achievements are a testament to the professionalism and passion that drive our organisation.

On the ground, we continued to deliver vital services. Smart meters and backflow prevention devices were successfully installed, enhancing water efficiency and protecting our future water supply. Internally, we introduced a suite of new systems through our Novus initiative including Business Central, SkyBill, and BeSafe. Novus is crucial in ensuring our operations are streamlined, responsive, and ready for the future.

Ahead of our move to Ballina, we successfully launched a refreshed Rous brand and a new website, both of which help us better connect with our community, clearly show who we are, and articulate what we do.

We remain focused on delivering for our region and taking care of what matters across water, weed biosecurity, and rural flood mitigation. I am proud of our staff and all that we do to support a strong, sustainable Northern Rivers.

Our organisation

Our councillors and leaders

Organisational structure

Our principles

Rous' responsibilities

Rous Councillors

Two representatives from each of our constituent councils

Rous' council is made up of eight councillors. Each of our constituent councils, Ballina, Byron, Lismore and Richmond Valley, nominate two councillors for a four year term. Councillors then elect a chairperson and deputy chairperson who serve for two years.



Cr Andrew Gordon

Lismore City Councillor



Cr Steve Krieg

Lismore City Councillor



Cr Sarah Ndiaye

Byron Shire Councillor



Cr Elia Hauge

Byron Shire Councillor



Cr Eva Ramsey

Ballina Shire Councillor



Cr Sharon Cadwallader

Rous Deputy Chair
Ballina Shire Councillor



Cr Sandra Humphrys

Richmond Valley Councillor



Cr Robert Mustow

Rous Chair
Richmond Valley Councillor

Our leaders

The specialists, advisors, and experts driving Rous' success.



Phillip Rudd
General Manager

Phillip Rudd leads our specialists and advisors in the services of water, weed biosecurity and rural flood mitigation.



Andrew Logan
Planning and Delivery
Group Manager

Andrew guides the teams responsible for water sustainability and future resilience, river catchment and cultural partnerships, strategic and infrastructure planning, and major projects.



Helen McNeil
Organisational Services
Group Manager

Helen is committed to ensuring the delivery of internal shared services to meet Rous' business needs.



Geoff Ward
Transformation and
Strategy Group Manager

Geoff is leading the team undertaking our digital transformation journey – simplifying our operations and ensuring that Rous is future ready, now.



Adam Nesbitt
Operations Group
Manager

Adam oversees the operational teams providing immediate services and long-term strategic planning encompassing water, weed biosecurity and rural flood mitigation.



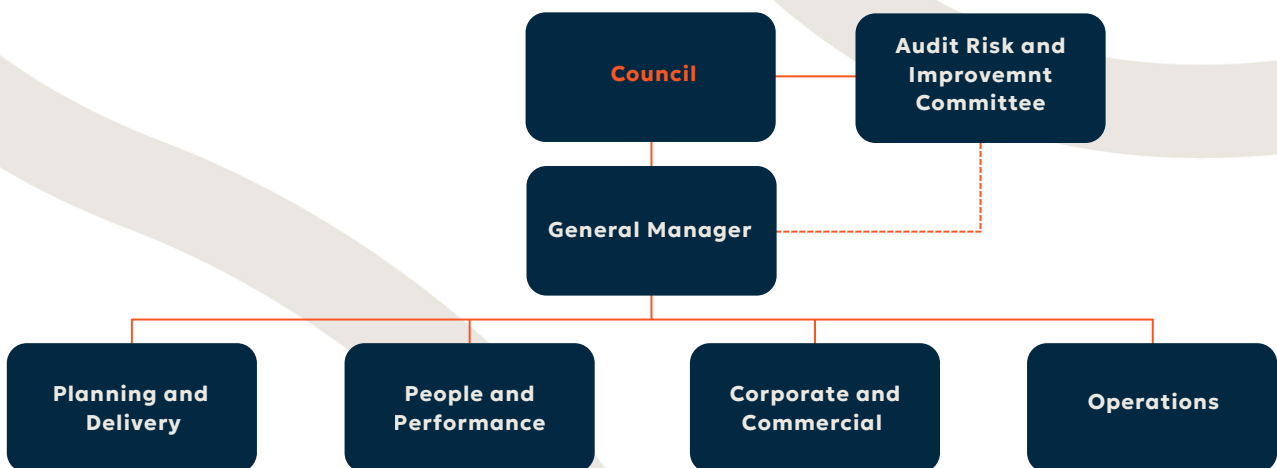
Guy Bezrouchko
Relocation and
Properties Group
Manager

Guy is leading the Gallans Road Project, including building and relocating Rous to our new headquarters. He has spent more than 20 years in management roles across finance, property, and corporate services.

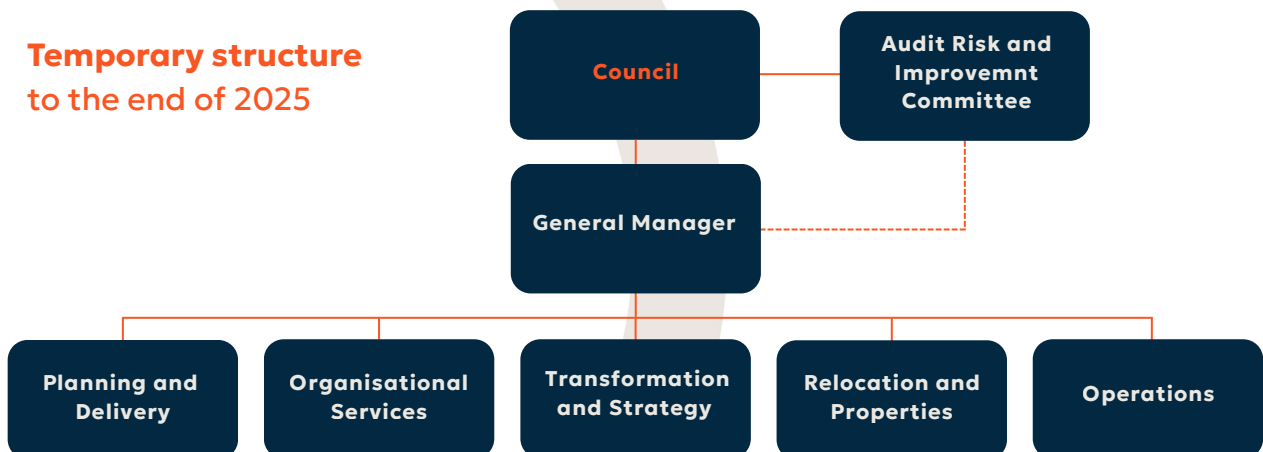
Organisational structure

Rous is organised into five groups led by a manager who works collaboratively with the General Manager – Planning and Delivery, Organisational Services, Transformation and Strategy, Operations, and Relocation and Properties.

This is a temporary structure implemented until the end of the 2025 calendar year to support and ensure the delivery of various key projects including relocation to new premises in Ballina and the implementation of new enterprise wide software.



Temporary structure to the end of 2025



Our principles

We use our Values to guide the way we work to achieve our strategic Vision and Mission. We pride ourselves on working respectfully, together as one, safely and taking accountability for our responsibilities.



Vision

To be the best guide and partner to our region for its water, biosecurity and rural flood mitigation needs.

Mission

By leveraging our assets, specialist experience and collaborative approach, we aim to take care of what matters in everything that we do.

Values

Our Values inform the way we operate, collaborate and make decisions. We use four values as a guide to ensure our team excels with integrity:

- Respect always
- Safety first
- Together as one
- Accountability

Rous' responsibilities

Water

We source, store, treat and supply water to the Ballina, Byron, Lismore and Richmond Valley councils. These councils then on-sell this water to their communities. We are proud to provide high-quality drinking water to approximately 110,000 people in the region. The water we supply comes from three catchments: Rocky Creek, Emigrant Creek, and Wilsons River.



Weed biosecurity

We are working to protect the Northern Rivers' biodiversity by running weed biosecurity programs across Tweed, Byron, Ballina, Lismore, Richmond Valley and Kyogle.

Our work covers more than 10,000km² from the Queensland border in the north to the Clarence Valley in the south and west to Tenterfield Shire.

We continue to undertake strategic control projects for new and emerging weeds across the county. This includes inspection of high risk areas to ensure new weed incursions are detected and controlled early, before they are allowed to establish.



Rural flood mitigation

For 65 years, we have worked with landowners, the sugar cane industry, our constituent councils and the NSW State Government to actively manage rural flood mitigation infrastructure along the Richmond River. This includes monitoring and managing a 70km network of earth levees, 700 floodgates, and 190km of drains to reduce inundation and divert flood waters.

Our experts operate across Ballina, Lismore and Richmond Valley local government areas. Their activities include managing rural flood infrastructure in Buckendoon, Bungawalbin, Dungarubba, East Wardell, Newrybar, Ruthven, Pimlico, South Ballina, Swan Bay, Teven, Tuckean, and Tuckurimba districts.



Progress report

01 Sustainable delivery

02 External relationships

03 Our people

04 Leadership and innovation

Reporting structure

As a county council, our main business priorities for the next ten years are defined by the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework. It outlines the strategic objectives, methods for achieving them, and how we will measure and report on our progress as an organisation.

01 Sustainable delivery

Contributing to the protection and enhancement of our region's environment and natural resources.



02 External relationships

Strong and mutually respectful relationships with our constituent councils.



03 Our people

Forecasting future workforce skill needs and finding solutions to fill skills gaps.



04 Leadership and innovation

Confirming our leadership role in the region for water supply, weed biosecurity and rural flood mitigation.



01 Sustainable delivery

A healthy environment

**Water security, quality and
sustainable consumption**

A sustainable council

Highlights

Planted 3,600 native trees and groundcovers in water catchments within our footprint as part of our bush regeneration program.

Received an \$85,000 grant from the NSW State Government to tackle Bitou bush and other invasive weeds at three significant sites in the Ballina Shire Council area.

Secured over \$160,000 in funding through the Local Land Services' Good Neighbours Program to tackle three invasive weed species in high-priority areas.

Adopted the interim Drought Management Plan in December 2024.

Completed the Desalination Options, and Recycled Water Options reports.

NSW Government granted us a new Town Water Access License for the deep Clarence Moreton Basin sub-aquifer, located beneath the more widely used Alstonville Basalt Plateau aquifer.

Independent testing reaffirmed that our water remains safe to drink with PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) undetectable at new levels set by the Australian Health and Medical Research Council.

Report finished and work commenced on identifying optimisation opportunities for Knockrow Reservoir photovoltaic system, as part of our Net Zero 2050 goals.

Enhanced our warehouse operations through a new enterprise resource planning system, Business Central, resulting in improved inventory data, updated standard operating procedures, and procurement processes.

Progressed implementation of recommendations from the Information Management Audit.

The NRWI

The Northern Rivers Watershed Initiative (NRWI) launched in 2025 funded by a \$5M grant from the NSW Government Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development.

The NRWI aims to restore the health and resilience of waterways, soils, and landscapes across the region by working collaboratively with landholders and communities. Its on-ground works program focuses on practical, place-based actions to reduce runoff, improve water quality, support biodiversity, and build climate resilience. It does this with riparian planting, erosion control, soil health monitoring, rehydration earthworks, and floodplain drainage redesign.



In partnership with six local councils, North Coast Local Land Services, the Casino Food Co-op, Landcare groups, and other community partners, this program has been championed by Lismore MP Janelle Saffin and showcases complex collaboration

across councils, community groups and government agencies.



Protecting biodiversity

This year, Weed Biosecurity Officers completed 6,720 inspections for priority weeds across the Northern Rivers.

The team covered 4,896 hectares of land and provided 12,491 landowners with best practice advice on weed management.

A crew of four dedicated Weed Biosecurity Officers made significant progress in preventing the priority weed *Miconia calvescens* from establishing in the region.

Officers identified and removed 11 seedlings from a known historical site in Burringbar, five seedlings from a new site in Burringbar, and two mature plants at new sites in Mullumbimby.

Future Water Project progress

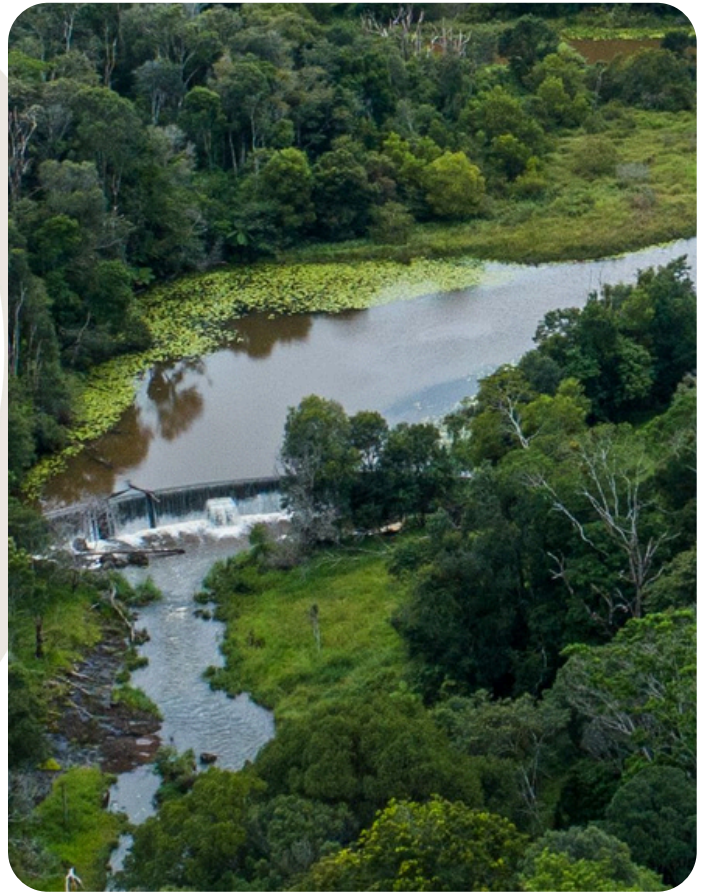
The Future Water Project 2060 identifies new water supply sources to ensure long-term water security for the Northern Rivers.

Work on the Alstonville Plateau Water Supply Scheme continued as we acquired key water licenses, allocations, and related water infrastructure for the Marom Creek source and two groundwater bores.

We completed a sustained pumping test and secured a Town Water Access License and allocation for the Clarence Moreton Basin sub-aquifer. We also completed an options report and early designs for a proposed new water treatment plant.

In partnership with NSW Public Works through flood recovery funding, we delivered a flood-resilient treatment storage building at the Woodburn Groundwater Drought Supply Scheme, the replacement of pipeline, valves and valve pits.

Investigations into long-term water sources are ongoing including a new surface water option west of Dunoon, and a proposed scheme near Tyagarah.

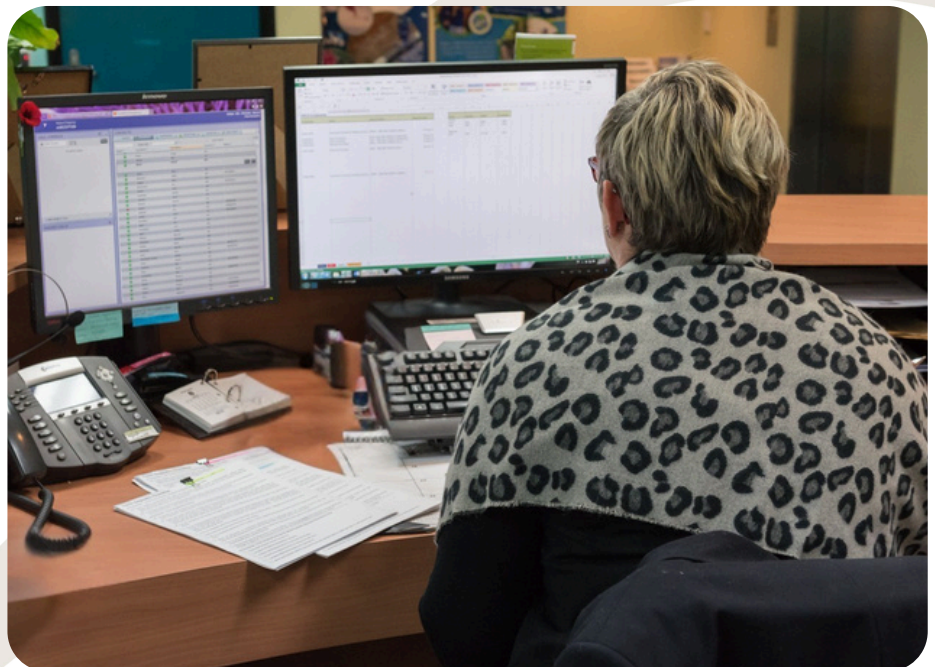


Financial sustainability

Finance staff have been working to analyse projects, grant funds and the capital works programs to better align forecasts with actuals.

We hold regular meetings with budget managers plus a monthly finance update with the Leadership Team. This update forms the basis of internal leadership reporting on business performance and covers a wide range of activities and performance metrics.

The annual budget process continues to be refined through the use of data including operating expenditure, one-off and recurring



budgets being scrutinised and challenged. We continue using a capital works envelope to ensure we maintain a strong financial position.

02 External relationships

Effective collaboration and communication with our constituent councils

People across our region understand the work that we do

Our working relationships with political, regulatory and industry stakeholders are effective and achieve results

Highlights

Reviewed service level agreements with constituent councils.

Rural Flood Mitigation team responded to ex-TC Alfred flooding, including identifying and responding to infrastructure damage, and leading the local response to the subsequent major blackwater event and fish kill in the Richmond River estuary.

Weed Biosecurity Officers attended 15 events in the region to educate and empower the community with information about the weeds we are targeting.

Redesigned, rewrote, and launched a new and more accessible website.

Updated the induction program for our governing body.

Future Water Planning Manager, Michael McKenzie, was appointed to the NSW Water Directorate Executive Committee to represent the North Coast alongside a representative from Tweed Shire Council.

Worked closely with constituent councils including strong collaboration during ex-TC Alfred, and participation on the regional inter-council Communications Network Group and the Water Liaison Committee.

Rous delivered support arrangements to the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation on a fee-for-service arrangement.

Represented the North Coast on the Water Directives Executive Committee.

Water Sustainability Officer presented our Mindful Water Campaign at the Local Government Professionals Communications 2025 Summit in Sydney.

Responded to 839 customer requests and tested 1229 backflow prevention devices.

Targeted weeds campaign

This year we ran a successful multi-channel marketing campaign aiming to raise awareness about our biosecurity work and the invasive weeds we are targeting in the Northern Rivers region.

The campaign focused on priority weeds Frogbit, Limnocharis, Tropical soda apple and Parthenium with social media, television, print, digital and outdoor advertisements run across the Northern Rivers.

The campaign effectively raised public awareness, delivering strong reach, engagement, and cost-efficiency.

WE NEED YOUR HELP

HAVE YOU SEEN THESE WEEDS?

Frogbit *Parthenium* *Tropical soda apple* *Limnocharis*

We're working to prevent, eradicate and control targeted weeds across the Northern Rivers. Help keep our land and waterways healthy and report any sightings.

REPORT IT.

rous.nsw.gov.au/targeted-weeds

ROUS Taking care of what matters.

This graphic features a dark blue background with orange wavy borders. It displays four images of weeds: Frogbit, Parthenium, Tropical soda apple, and Limnocharis. Below the images is a call to action to report sightings, a QR code, and the Rous logo with the tagline 'Taking care of what matters.'

Notably the 7plus ads were shown more than 50,000 times, the Youtube video was shown 503,308 times and the Google Ads campaign achieved 1,985,463 impressions and 18,181 clicks, driving significant traffic to the website and encouraging community interaction.

WE'RE WORKING BEHIND THE SCENES

We're taking care of our drinking water catchments, managing targeted weed programs, and maintaining rural flood infrastructure now and into the future.

rous.nsw.gov.au

ROUS Taking care of what matters.

This advertisement shows a lush green forest with a river in the foreground. The text is overlaid on the image, promoting the organization's work in water catchments, weed management, and flood infrastructure. It includes the Rous logo and tagline.

Refreshed branding

We launched a refreshed, modern and unified rebrand to better communicate our purpose and value to the community we serve.

The rebrand included a new visual identity (logo, brand colors, and design elements), clarified vision and mission statements, and a tagline: Taking care of what matters. A clear statement that reinforces our commitment to service and accountability.

The brand refresh helps communicate who we are, what we do, and our commitment to taking care of what matters for the Northern Rivers region. We launched the new branding with a marketing campaign with ads coordinated across social media, print media, and television. We will continue monitoring its effectiveness over time.



Reconciliation Action Plan progress

More progress on our Reconciliation Action Plan, Innovate 2021 – 2023.

We enjoyed some exciting progress this year as we welcomed On Country Trainees thanks to funding from the Fresh Start for Local Government Apprentices, Trainees and Cadets Grant Program, NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure.

We held an All Staff Cultural Event to improve awareness and support our staff, reviewed and renewed cultural awareness staff training, and continued outreach to Reconciliation Action Plan Advisory Group (RAPAG) members and associates. We also continued internal and external 'Yarning Circles'.

RAPAG and other Rous staff attended the Myall Creek Commemoration event for the third year in a row. Our Reconciliation Officer hosted planting days with local school students at Rocky Creek Dam. We continued to invest in and build upon our relationships with our Aboriginal networks.

Water saving innovation

Our Demand Management team have been working closely with our community to promote the importance of conserving precious drinking water with two major projects and 18 school visits.

We launched The Ripple Effect, a community codesigned pilot program that seeks to support our residential community to conserve water, be mindful of its use and minimise wastage. The program aims to inspire each participant to build a conscious connection with their water use – so they understand why change is needed and feel empowered to reduce their usage in ways that work for them.



Our Regional Water Education Officer also visited 18 schools, and led three excursions to our water treatment plant, to help our youngest community members learn more about water conservation. We partnered with eight Reflections

Holiday parks helping them save 8.9 million litres of water annually.

03 Our people

Our future workforce requirements are confirmed

Innovative solutions are applied to address skills gaps

Leadership is facilitated across the organisation

We are recognised as an employer of choice

Highlights

Reviewed and updated our Employee Handbook for new staff.

Upgraded our internal People and Culture information system, ELMO, to support more efficient people processes and outcomes.

Introduced scheduled 'Pulse Surveys,' identifying culture scores, wellbeing and general employee satisfaction.

Refreshed and adopted the Workforce Management Strategy and Action Plan taking into account specialist and hard-to-recruit skills, and leadership development.

Led a range of initiatives as part of the Resourcing Strategy, including succession planning, preparing internal talent for future leadership roles and critical roles.

Continued to support hybrid, remote working, and flexible working arrangements.

Implemented a new Work Health and Safety system.

Implemented a new Enterprise Risk Management System.

Celebrating success

Our staff had their work recognised as finalists and recipients of industry awards.

The Sustainable Water Partner Program, led by Karin Van der Heijde, was chosen as a finalist in the Environmental Leadership category, 2025 NSW Local Government Excellence Awards.

Our Mindful Water campaign took home top honours in the RH Dougherty Events and Communications Awards.

Chrisy Clay was selected as a finalist for the 2025 Floodplain Management Australia Allan Ezzy Flood Risk Manager of the Year Awards.



Lauren Edwards was selected as a finalist in the Emerging Leader of the Year Award category, 2025 NSW Local Government Excellence Awards.



Wellbeing program expanded

We continued to refine and expand our health and wellbeing program to support our staff. The program is built around six pillars.

1. **Financial** – our default super scheme supplied information for a better journey to retirement.
2. **Physical** – Run, Walk or Ride the Rail Trail group exercise and breakfast every second Tuesday.
3. **Growth** – professional development and training initiatives promoted and leadership training provided.
4. **Social** – lunchtime Unwind for social connection offered staff a reset through stretching and breathwork.
5. **Purpose** – Rous purpose statement and values imbedded in everything we do here at Rous
6. **Mental** – strategies for mental resilience promoted, webinar on mental fitness and stress reduction held, RU Okay Day initiatives.

Additionally, the People and Culture team completed a health profile in collaboration with our insurer, implemented wellbeing activities and ‘check in’ conversations for staff, and introduced learning and development initiatives that align with physical, emotional and mental wellbeing.



The Fresh Start program

We welcomed four new recruits through the Fresh Start Program providing new opportunities for essential skilled roles across the Northern Rivers.

We were awarded \$637,000 by the Office of Local Government NSW to fund four new roles. Local councils across the state are being supported to recruit apprentices, trainees, and cadets. This initiative is helping to cultivate the next generation of local government professionals while contributing to the development of a skilled and sustainable workforce for the future.

Four additional positions were established under Round 1 of the program, including an Apprentice Mechanical Fitter, Apprentice Electrician, and two On Country Trainee roles.

Our new recruits will benefit from the guidance of experienced mentors at Rous and gain skills and qualifications that are highly valued in the job market.

Digital transformation

We delivered modern systems to enhance our services and operations, supporting our long-term strategy and goals.

This year we introduced new payroll (HR21), finance (Business Central), billing (Skybill), safety (Besafe), Enterprise Risk Management (Pulse) and reporting (Power BI) platforms that replace manual processes with streamlined, digital solutions. We also developed new tools for asset and work management (Asset Vision) and customer relationship management (Dynamics CRM), which are planned for future activation.



These platforms aim to improve accuracy, provide clearer visibility of information, and create simpler, faster ways of working across the organisation.

This is not just a tech upgrade, it is a transformation that reduces risk, strengthens compliance, and builds the foundation for smarter services that better serve our community.

04 Leadership and innovation

Be recognised for leadership in what we do

Effective use of technology supports the achievement of organisational objectives

Embrace innovation and continually improve the way we do business

Highlights

Four initiatives under our Water Loss Management Program, partly funded through the NSW Government's Regional Leakage Reduction Program, were completed. These initiatives help reduce incidental water loss and improve the efficiency of our water distribution network.

Virtual walkthrough video of Gallans Road site created to showcase what the inside of each of the buildings is expected to look like upon completion.

Water Sustainability Team won the Local Government Week's 'Excellence in Communication' Award for their 'Mindful Water Habits Start Now' campaign. The digital campaign helps raise awareness around how we use water, where we waste it and how we can conserve it.

Granted \$158,000 from the NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development Flagship Fish Habitat Rehabilitation Grants Program to address bank erosion along a 200-metre section of Bungawalbin Creek.

Completed eDNA testing in river systems and aerial flights to detect weeds in hard-to-find terrain.

Eighty sensors were installed on our water network to alert staff of water pressure reductions and spikes associated with leaks or pipe breaks.

The Emigrant Creek Dam Safety and Risk report involved a range of investigations to assess the dam's condition, performance, and safety risks against current safety standards. While the overall risk was within acceptable limits, further monitoring has been recommended to guide future planning.

A strategic review of the Emigrant Creek Water Treatment Plant assessed capacity, water quality compliance, operational issues, and infrastructure condition. The review resulted in improved operational efficiencies and identified upgrade requirements.



Gallans Road progress

In 2021, we resolved to centralise our working locations and officially secured the Gallans Road site. In February 2025, we were issued our Construction Certificate 1 Early Works.

The forecast date for practical completion is early 2026. The move to Gallans Road addresses the operational challenges of having 120+ staff working across several separate premises, has long term cost-saving benefits by discontinuing an expensive lease in Lismore, and shifts us to a more accessible site at a strategically central location.

The site facilities and large landholding will accommodate our growing workforce and activities and we believe bringing all functions and teams together will strengthen Rous' effectiveness and unity as an organisation. We have met the reporting requirements of Section 23A by providing our Rous Council, and community, with updates every two months, in accordance with Section 12 of the Office of Local Government's Capital Expenditure Guidelines.

Flood mit wins

We delivered two projects funded by the National Emergency Management Agency, and administered by the NSW Reconstruction Authority through the Northern Rivers Recovery and Resilience Program.

We completed a \$150,000 project to improve the Coraki and Woodburn Town Drains, and a \$210,000 project to revitalise the South and East Lismore Town Drains, to improve the function of these systems and expedite drainage after flood events.

We also secured a \$6.9 million grant under the Natural Disaster Relief Assistance Program and State and Commonwealth Government's Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements, for major restoration of the Bungawalbin levee.



The 8km earth levee protects properties along the eastern side of Bungawalbin Creek, around to Swan Bay and towards Rocky Mouth Creek.

The Rural Flood Mitigation team also completed capital renewal works on

important assets including: the manufacture and replacement of 16 floodgates, heavy maintenance of West Duck Creek Canal, and repairs to Saltwater Creek Levee and Bungawalbin Levee.

Agents of change

We are proactively making representations and advocating for change internally and externally.

We made submissions to various external agencies throughout the year to provide feedback and advocate for change including:

- Putting forward motions to the Annual Local Government Conference.
- Code of Accounting Practice and Financial Reporting Submission to the Office of Local Government.
- Submission on Councillor Conduct and Meeting Practice Review.
- Annual Conference motion.
- Cane Toad Management Plan.

The Rural Flood Mitigation team championed change by submitting a letter to Minister Recovery, Janelle Saffin, from the GMs of Rous and Ballina Shire Council proposing a \$70M initiative to reduce frequency and severity of blackwater events. The team made presentations to the Ballina Shire Council Healthy Waterways Committee.



In addition to ongoing advocacy regarding the lack of funding for maintenance, restrictive environmental regulations and unclear asset responsibility, which jeopardise the maintenance of work completed under the Northern Rivers Drainage Reset Program.



Smart meter roll out

In 2024, we successfully completed the \$3.5 million rollout of digital smart meters, backflow prevention devices, and introduced the MyRous app across more than 2,100 properties.

The smart meters coupled with the MyRous app, provide customers with timely information on their water use, customisable updates and alerts regarding water usage and leak detection.

The smart meter data enables us to resolve customer enquiries faster and helps us undertake water balances across our network, potentially allowing Operations staff to identify leaks in our bulk water mains.

This project was a significant step in helping improve water sustainability and security across the Northern Rivers and empower our customers to better understand their water usage and how to save more water.

Financial performance

Overview

Commercial properties

Summary

Overview

Rous' financial performance is aligned with its continued focus on long-term financial sustainability. We use quarterly budget review statements to monitor financial performance and make adjustments to account for the changing conditions and requirements identified each quarter.

The Long-Term Financial Plan is reviewed annually to ensure short-term needs are considered against long-term sustainability. As a result, Rous remains in a strong financial position with cash and investments at satisfactory levels to ensure all current liabilities can be met when due.

The financial position for the 2024/25 financial year remains strong despite a net deficit result of -\$2 million (2023/24: -\$0.15 million), including depreciation expense of \$9.4 million (2023/24: \$8.5 million).

Overall income has increased by \$2.7 million to \$41.1 million compared (2023/24: \$38.4 million). Most of the increase can be attributed to additional bulk water charges and increased capital grants and contributions when compared to the previous year.

Over the past 12 months, Rous' return on investments was 4.42% and our investment performance exceeded the benchmark (the bank bill swap rate), which was 3.69%.

Council's overall financial position improved during the past 12 months with total equity increasing by \$13.3 million.

Commercial properties

Rous owns a commercial property in the Lismore CBD, which prior to the 2022 floods was leased to a business for a commercial return. We used the property as an office space for part of the 2024/25 year but have since vacated.

Our property portfolio is regularly reviewed to ensure returns are optimised to make a positive contribution to revenue. We leased 218-232 Molesworth Street as our Administration Centre, and ended the lease in February 2025.

Summary of financial report for the year ended 30 June 2025

	2024/25	2023/24
Income statement		
Total income from continuing operations	41,128	38,425
Total expenses from continuing operations	33,754	30,100
Operating result from continuing operations	(7,374)	(8,325)
Depreciation, amortisation and impairment of non-financial assets	9,373	8,473
Net operating result for the year	(1,999)	(148)
Net operating result before grants and contributions provided for capital purpose	(8,646)	(5,250)

	2024/25	2023/24
Balance sheet		
Total current assets	34,264	40,015
Total current liabilities	12,035	11,566
Total non-current assets	626,398	600,447
Total non-current liabilities	24,353	17,857
Total equity	624,274	611,039
Other financial information		
Unrestricted current ratio	3.07:1	3.62 : 1
Operating performanc ratio	(17.2%)	(14.7%)
Building and infrastructure renewals ratio	0.63 : 1	0.69 : 1
Debt service ratio	0.85 : 1	0.95 : 1



Statutory reporting requirements

Statutory reporting

Audited financial reports – Section 428(4)(a)

Any reference to a ‘section’ refers to that section of the Local Government Act 1993 (NSW). Any reference to a ‘clause’ or ‘reg.’ refers to that clause in the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 (NSW).

[Rous audited financial reports](#)

Asset reporting – section 406(2) (Planning and Reporting manual requirement)

In accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act 1993 and the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021, the NSW Local Government Code of Accounting Practice and Financial Reporting and the Australian Accounting Standards:

- Assets to the value of \$10,834 million were acquired by Rous during the reporting period, bringing total Infrastructure, Property, Plant and Equipment assets held as at 30 June 2025 to the value of \$598,128 million (refer to page 33 of the audited financial reports 2024/25 (refer to link above)). Rous’ report on the condition of public works is available on page 3 - Special Schedules 2025 of the audited financial reports 2024/25 (see link above).

Rates and charges written off – clause 132

Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 - c132. The annual report must include the amount of rates and charges written off during 2024/25:

- \$16,422.26

Legal proceedings – section 428(4)(b) and clause 217(1)(a3)

An annual report must include a summary of the amounts incurred by the council during the year in relation to legal proceedings taken by or against the council (including amounts, costs and expenses paid or received by way of out of court settlements, other than those the terms of which are not to be disclosed) and a summary of the state of progress of each legal proceeding and (if it has been finalised) the result.

Details	Costs	Status	Results
Summons x 3	\$2,520	Open	1 x Abandoned due to alternative option opted (Rent for rates). 1 x Pending. 1 x Progressed – judgement.
Judgment x 2	\$394.80	Open	1 x Progressed – examination sought. 1 x Pending.
Examination x 1	\$586	Open	1 x Outstanding – debt remains owing.

All costs of legal proceedings incurred during the period related to debt recovery for unpaid water charges. The figures contained in this table are inclusive of solicitor and court fees, and exclusive of service fees/costs and GST.

Councillor induction training and professional development clause 186

In addition to induction training, the following councillors participated in ongoing professional development:

- **Cr Andrew Gordon** – Australian Council of Local Government Conference
- **Cr Robert Mustow** – Local Government NSW Annual Conference
- **Cr Robert Mustow, Cr Eva Ramsey, Cr Sandra Humphrys** – Floodplain Management Australia Conference

Councillors were issued with a 'Councillor Handbook' at the beginning of their term on the governing body of Rous. No other seminars, circulars or other activities were delivered as part of the ongoing professional development program.

Councillors fees and expenses - section 428(4)(b) and clause 217(1)(a1)

The following fees and expenses were incurred by councillors in accordance with the 'Payment of Expenses and Provision of Facilities for Chairperson and Councillors' policy in-force at the time.

Member fees and expenses: expenditure	01/07/24 – 30/06/25
Chair fees	\$28,472.77
Member fees and travel reimbursed	\$80,229.03
Total	\$103,469.62
Budget allocation	\$ 119,400

Details		
Dedicated office equipment allocated to councillors on a personal basis	cl217(1)(a1)(i)	\$0
Telephone calls made by councillors.	cl217(1)(a1)(ii)	\$0
Councillor attendance at conferences and seminars (includes airfares, registrations, meals and accommodation).	cl217(1)(a1)(iii)	\$12
Provision of induction training of councillors and supplementary induction training of skill development for councillors.	cl217(1)(a1)(iiia)	\$10,344.18
Other training of councillors and provision of skill development for councillors.	cl217(1)(a1)(iv)	\$11,027.48
Interstate visits undertaken during the year by councillors while representing the council, including the cost of transport, the cost of accommodation and other out-of-pocket travelling expenses.	cl217(1)(a1)(v)	\$0
Overseas visits undertaken during the year by councillors while representing the council, including the cost of transport, the cost of accommodation and other out-of-pocket travelling expenses.	cl217(1)(a1)(vi)	\$0

Details		
Expenses of any spouse, partner (whether of the same or the opposite sex) or other person who accompanied a councillor in the performance of his or her civic functions, being expenses payable in accordance with the Guidelines for the Payment of Expenses and the Provision of Facilities for Mayors and Councillors for Local Councils in NSW prepared by the Director-General from time to time.	cl217(1)(a1)(vii)	\$0
Expenses involved in the provision of care for a child of, or an immediate family member of, a councillor, to allow the councillor to undertake his other civic functions.	cl217(1)(a1)(viii)	\$446
Total		\$21,371.66
Budget allocation		\$33,500

Additional information for inclusion in annual report - section 428(4) and clause 217(1)(a)

During 2024/25, no overseas visits were made by councillors, Rous staff or other persons while representing Rous.

Senior staff - section 428(4)(b) and clause 217(1)(b) (i-v)

Rous is required to appoint and employ a person under a performance-based contract to be its general manager. The General Manager is the only senior staff person employed by Council. The total amount payable to the General Manager during the reporting period is detailed below.

Total value of the salary component of the package	\$317,318
Total amount of any bonus payments, performance payments, or other payments made to the general manager that do not form part of the salary component of the general manager.	\$0
Total amount payable by council by way of the employer's contribution or salary sacrifice to any superannuation scheme to which the general manager may be a contributor.	\$36,492
Total value of any non-cash benefits for which the general manager may elect under the package.	\$23,799
Total amount payable by Council by way of fringe benefits tax for any such non-cash benefits.	\$8,056
Total	385,655

Modern Slavery actions - section 428(4)(c)

An annual report must contain a statement detailing the action taken by Rous in relation to any issue raised by the Anti-slavery Commissioner during the reporting year concerning the operations of the council and identified by the Commissioner as being a significant issue.

- **There were no issues raised for this reporting period.**

Modern Slavery steps taken - section 428(4)(d)

The following outlines the steps Rous has taken to ensure goods and services procured during the reporting period comply with the Modern Slavery Act 2018.

- **Supplier declaration requirements:** New suppliers and tender submissions are required to provide a formal declaration confirming that their goods and services are free from modern slavery practices. This declaration process reinforces Rous's commitment to ethical procurement and establishes clear expectations from the outset of supplier relationships.
- **Standardised documentation and process:** Rous has established standardised documentation that has been integrated into procurement processes. This documentation outlines business process expectations regarding modern slavery compliance and creates a consistent framework for identifying, assessing, and addressing potential modern slavery risks throughout operations.
- **Staff training and awareness:** A training package focused on the Modern Slavery Act 2018 compliance and Guidance on Reasonable Steps was developed and delivered to staff members. This training enhances organisational awareness of modern slavery risks and ensures personnel are equipped with the knowledge and tools necessary to identify and respond to potential compliance issues effectively.

Contracts awarded - section 428(4)(b) and clause 217(1)(a2)

An annual report must provide details (names, nature, amounts) of contracts awarded for amounts exceeding \$150,000. The details included in this Contracts awarded table excludes Grant Funded Distributions

Contract number	Contract details	Contractor	Tender amount
RCC1123-0052	Nightcap Residual Disposal	Richmond Waste	\$286,232.10
RCC0823-0039	Program Novus (ERP and EAM Implementation)	Exco Partners Ltd	\$1,638,385.10
RCC0723-0036	Rous County Council Ballina Workplace	Alders Construction Pty Limited	\$23,179,761
RCC0524-0072	Bulk Meter Installations	CivilCS	\$266,739
RCC0624-0075	Coastal Management Program – Stage 2 study: Richmond River Ecosystem Health – Catchment-wide Risk-Based Planning	Griffith University	\$385,000
RCC0624-0080	Tyagarah Groundwater Investigation Project - Drilling	Slade Pty Ltd	\$282,836

Contract number	Contract details	Contractor	Tender amount
RCC0724-0084	Broadwater DN250 Watermain Upgrade - Inlet Works	KBS Mackay	\$350,717.40
PO26412	New fleet purchases/ scheduled fleet replacements	Lapo Pty Ltd t/as Victory Organisation Group	\$171,316.79
RCC0225-0105	Building Resilience Bungawalbin Bass Habitat - S1S6	Soil Conservation Service - Department of Regional NSW	\$173,800
RCC0924-0092	Panel - Supply & Delivery Bulk Fuels, Fuel Cards, Lubricants	Dophin, Office Choice and Winc Australia	Schedule of Rates
RCC0125-0098	Panel - Supply and Delivery Stationary and Ancillary Items	Dolphin Office Choice and Winc Australia	Schedule of Rates
RCC0924-0093	Panel - Provision for Traffic Control Services	Altus Traffic, Lack Group, Traffic Control Services and Workforce International	Schedule of Rates
RCC0924-0094	Panel - Supply and Delivery of Ready Mix Concrete	Graham's Concrete, Holcim(Aus) and Boral Resources	Schedule of Rates

Works on private land - section 67 and clause 217(1) (a4)

An annual report must include details or a summary of resolutions made during that year under section 67 of the Local Government Act 1993 concerning private works carried out on private land, and details or a summary of such work if the cost of the work has been fully or partly subsidised by the council, together with a statement of the total amount by which the council has subsidised any such work during that year.

- **Rous did not undertake private works within the meaning of section 67 of the Local Government Act 1993 during the reporting period.**

Performing paid work - Reg. 217(1)(d)(i)-(iv)

An annual report must include a summary of the Statement of total number of persons who performed paid work.

Description	Total number
Persons who performed paid work on Wednesday 4 December 2024	126
Permanent, full-time	90
Permanent, part-time	4
Casual	2

Description	Total number
Fixed-term contract	30
Persons employed by the council as senior staff members	1 (Note reform changes)
Persons engaged by the council, under a contract or other arrangement with the person's employer, wholly or principally for the labour of the person.	0
Persons supplied to the council, under a contract or other arrangement with the person's employer, as an apprentice or trainee.	0

Financial Assistance Contributions - section 35 and clause 217(1)(a5)

An annual report must include details of the total amount contributed or otherwise granted under section 356 of the Local Government Act 1993 to financially assist others.

- **Retail Customer Water Account Assistance policy – \$9,829.78**

Equal employment opportunity (EEO) Management Plan - section 428(4)(b) and clause 217(1)(a9)

An annual report must include a statement of activities undertaken by a council during the year to implement its equal opportunity management plan.

Rous' Equal Employment Opportunity policy was reviewed and updated during the reporting period. The policy is Rous' statement of commitment to workforce diversity and ensuring the elimination of discrimination.

Key activities and achievements during the year related to a boost in workforce diversity. Rous was successful in securing funding through the Office of Local Government Fresh Start Program for a number of new apprentice, trainee and cadet positions. This has seen an increase in the employment of youth and First Nations People across a range of roles.

Rous continued to provide staff flexibility through hybrid work arrangements. Workplace flexibility continues to be key in attraction and retention with a broad range of options available to support staff to balance home and work responsibilities incl. work from home and remote work, compressed or variable hours of work and part-time arrangements.

Recruitment compliance was maintained with reference to EEO based selection, training and development. High consideration was given for internal staff growth through merit based recruitment and identified succession planning and resource utilisation.

External bodies (delegated by council) - section 428(4) (b) and clause 217(1)(a6)

An annual report must include a statement of all external bodies that during that year exercised functions delegated by the council.

- **Rous has not delegated any of its functions to external bodies.**

External bodies (controlled by council) - section 428(4) (b) and clause 217(1)(a7)

An annual report must include a statement of all external bodies that during that year exercised functions delegated by the council.

- **Rous does not hold a controlling interest in any companies.**

External bodies (participated in by council) - section 428(4)(b) and clause 217(1)(a8)

An annual report must include a statement of all corporations, partnerships, trusts, joint ventures, syndicates or other bodies (whether or not incorporated) in which the council participated during the year.

- **Statewide Mutual** – A self-insurance pool covering public liability and professional indemnity insurance as well as providing risk management advice.
- **StateCover** – A self insurance pool providing cover for workers' compensation insurance as well as providing advice on work health and safety matters.
- **Northern Rivers Joint Organisation (NRJO)** – Rous is an associate member and provides executive officer and corporate support services under a fee-for-service arrangement to the NRJO.

Disability Inclusion Act 2014 - section 13(1)

Rous' Disability Inclusion Plan is currently under review and a new plan is aimed to be developed in 2025/26.

Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 - section 125 and 7

References in this section to the 'Act' is a reference to the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009.

Following is a copy of Rous's Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 ('GIPA') annual report to the NSW Ombudsman's office.

- **Agency name:** Rous County Council
- **Reporting period:** 1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025

Clause 8a: Details of the review carried out by the agency under section 7 (3) of the Act during the reporting year and the details of any information made publicly available by the agency as a result of the review.

Clause	Reviews carried out by agency	Information made publicly available by the agency
8(a)	Yes	Yes

The open access information and proactively released information made available during the relevant reporting period on Rous’s website was reviewed. The following are examples of new information of public interest that were proactively released.

Rous has a proactive approach to the release of information to the public which centres mainly on its website. It is an important source of information for the community and is constantly updated. Availability of information is also promoted via a number of other avenues:

- Media releases, general advertisements and documents on exhibition are available in the notices section of Council's website.
- Rous’ quarterly electronic newsletter is distributed to online subscribers.
- News and updates via the MyRous app.
- Regular advice to the community via social media posts - Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube.
- Active communications team working to provide as much information as possible to the public.
- An annual review and evaluation of available information is undertaken across the organisation as part of the Agency Information Guide review process.
- The review identifies any new information to be made publicly available and ensures that the existing document and information on council’s website is the most current version.

Clause 8b: The total number of access applications received by the agency during the reporting year (including withdrawn applications but not including invalid applications).

Clause	Total number of applications received
8(b)	2

Clause 8c: The total number of access applications received by the agency during the reporting year that the agency refused either wholly or partly, because the application was for the disclosure of information referred to in Schedule 1 to the Act (information for which there is conclusive presumption of overriding public interest against disclosure).

Clause	Total number of applications received	
	Wholly	Partly
8(a)	0	0

Number of applications by type of applicant and outcome								
	Access granted in full	Access granted in part	Access refused in full	Information not held	Information already available	Refuse to deal with application	Refuse to confirm / deny whether information held	Application withdrawn
Media	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Members of parliament	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Private sector businesses	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Not-for-profits or community groups	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Members of the public (by legal counsel)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Members of the public (other)	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0

Number of applications by type of application and outcome								
	Access granted in full	Access granted in part	Access refused in full	Information not held	Information already available	Refuse to deal with application	Refuse to confirm / deny whether information held	Application withdrawn
Personal information	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Access (other than personal information)	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Access (partly personal information and partly other)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Invalid applications	
Reason for invalidity	Number of applications
Application does not comply with formal requirements (section 41 of the Act).	0
Application is for excluded information of the agency (section 43 of the Act).	0
Application contravenes restraint order (section 110 of the Act).	0
Total number of invalid applications received.	0
Invalid applications that subsequently became valid applications.	0

Conclusive presumption of overriding public interest against disclosure: matters listed in Schedule 1 of the Act.	
	Number of times consideration used
Overriding secrecy laws	0
Cabinet information	0
Executive council information	0
Contempt	0
Legal professional privilege	0
Excluded information	0
Documents affecting law enforcement and public safety	0
Transport safety	0
Adoption	0
Care and protection of children	0
Ministerial code of conduct	0
Aboriginal and environmental heritage	0
Privilege generally - Sch 1(5A)	0
Information provided to High Risk Offenders Assessment Committee	0

Other public interest considerations against disclosure: matters listed in table to section 14 of the Act.	
	Number of times consideration used
Responsible and effective government	0
Law enforcement and security	0
Individual rights, judicial processes and natural justice	1
Business interests of agencies and other persons	0
Environment, culture, economy and general matters	0
Secrecy provisions	0
Exempt documents under interstate Freedom of Information legislation	0

Timeliness	
Time-related considerations against disclosure	Number of applications
Decided within the statutory timeframe (20 days plus extensions)	2
Decided after 35 days (by agreement with applicant)	0
Not decided within time (deemed refusal)	1

Number of applications reviewed under Part 5 of the Act (by type of review and outcome)		
	Decision varied	Decision upheld
Internal review	0	0
Review by Information Commissioner	0	0
Internal review following recommendation under section 93 of the Act.	0	0
Review by NCAT	0	0

Applications for review under Part 5 of the Act (by type of applicant)	
	Number of applications for review
Applications by access applicants	0
Applications by persons to whom information the subject of access relates (see section 54 of the Act)	0

Applications transferred to other agencies	
	Number of applications transferred
Agency-initiated transfers	0
Applicant-initiated transfers	0

Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 - section 7.5

Constituent councils are the relevant planning authority for the local government areas within which Rous operates and as such, Rous has no function in reporting on planning requirements.

Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (PIIP Act) - section 33

During the reporting period, a review of the Privacy Policy commenced. The review included regard for amendments to the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) in November 2024. These amendments were the result of reforms occurring at a Federal level to enhance privacy protection and regulation. Staff have reviewed the legislative changes and confirmed that no adjustments to Council's Privacy Policy are required as a result.

Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994 (PID Act) – section 31

Following is a summary of Rous' Public Interest Disclosures (PID) annual report to the NSW Ombudsman.

Reporting period: 1 July 2024 - 30 June 2025	Made by public officials performing day-to-day function	Under a statutory or other legal obligation	All other PIDs
Number of public officials who made PIDs directly	0	0	0
Number of PIDs received	0	0	0
Corrupt conduct	0	0	0
Maladministration	0	0	0
Serious and substantial waste	0	0	0
Government information convention	0	0	0
Local government pecuniary interest contravention	0	0	0
Number of PIDs finalised	0	0	0

Rous has an internal reporting policy in place: Public Interest Disclosures.

The General Manager has taken action to meet staff awareness obligations by implementing a range of measures such as:

- Incorporating training into Council's Employee Induction Program; mandatory supervisor and disclosure officer training published by the NSW Ombudsman.
- Raising awareness of PIDs, including outcomes of recent investigations by the ICAC.
- Articles on the internal staff intranet.
- Making available public Interest Disclosure (PID) Information within the electronic document management system.
- Ensuring all Council worksites display the NSW Ombudsman-supplied posters with details of who a PID may be made to.

Internal audit and risk management attestation statement for the 2024/25 financial year

As General manager of Rous, I am of the opinion that Rous has an audit, risk and improvement committee, risk management framework and internal audit function that operate in compliance with the following requirements except as may be otherwise provided below.

– **Phillip Rudd, General Manager – Rous County Council**

27 October 2025

Audit, risk and improvement committee		
	Requirement	Status
1.	Rous has appointed an audit, risk and improvement committee that comprises of an independent chairperson and at least two independent members (section 428A of the Local Government Act 1993, section 216C of the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021).	Compliant
2.	The chairperson and all members of Rous’s audit, risk and improvement committee meet the relevant independence and eligibility criteria prescribed under the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 and have not exceeded the membership term limits prescribed under the Regulation (sections 216D, 216E, 216F, 216G of the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021).	Compliant
3.	Rous has adopted terms of reference for its audit, risk and improvement committee that are informed by the model terms of reference approved by the Departmental Chief Executive of the Office of Local Government and the committee operates in accordance with the terms of reference (section 216K of the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021).	Compliant
4.	Rous provides the audit, risk and improvement committee with direct and unrestricted access to the general manager and other senior management and the information and resources necessary to exercise its functions (section 216L of the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021).	Compliant
5.	Rous’s audit, risk and improvement committee exercises its functions in accordance with a four-year strategic work plan that has been endorsed by the governing body and an annual work plan that has been developed in consultation with the governing body and senior management (Core requirement 1 of the Office of Local Government’s Guidelines for Risk Management and Internal Audit for Local Government in NSW).	Compliant
6.	Rous’s audit, risk and improvement committee provides the governing body with an annual assessment each year, and a strategic assessment each council term of the matters listed in section 428A of the Local Government Act 1993 reviewed during that term (Core requirement 1 of the Office of Local Government’s Guidelines for Risk Management and Internal Audit for Local Government in NSW).	Compliant – 21 August 2024 with strategic assessment to be undertaken for the 2024-2028 council term.
7.	The governing body of Rous reviews the effectiveness of the audit, risk and improvement committee at least once each council term (Core requirement 1 of the Office of Local Government’s Guidelines for Risk Management and Internal Audit for Local Government in NSW).	Compliant – review will be undertaken for the 2024-2028 council term.

Membership

Details of the chairperson and membership of the audit, risk and improvement committee.

Chairperson	Peter Lewis	18 June 2025	June 2029
	Laurie Lefcourt ¹	21 June 2023	March 2025
Independent member	Andrew MacLeod ²	16 April 2025	April 2029
Independent member	Raymond Wong	21 June 2023	June 2027
Councillor member	Cr Elia Hague	October 2024	September 2028
	Cr Big Rob ³	February 2022	September 2024

¹ The former Chair, Laurie Lefcourt, tendered their written resignation on 18 February 2025 and chaired their final Committee meeting on 24 March 2025.

² This member is serving their second term in the role on the Committee.

³ This member's term concluded in conjunction with the Local Government elections held in September 2024.

Risk management

	Requirement	Status
8.	Council has adopted a risk management framework that is consistent with current Australian risk management standard and that is appropriate for the council's risks (section 216S of the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021).	Compliant
9.	Council's audit, risk and improvement committee reviews the implementation of its risk management framework and provides a strategic assessment of its effectiveness to the governing body each council term (section 216S of the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021).	Compliant – not applicable. ⁴

⁴ Strategic assessment will be undertaken for the 2024-2028 council term.

Internal audit

	Requirement	Status
10.	Council has an internal audit function that reviews the council's operations and risk management and control activities (section 216O of the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021).	Compliant
11.	Council's internal audit function reports to the audit, risk and improvement committee on internal audit matters (sections 216M, 216P and 216R of the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021).	Compliant
12.	Council's internal audit function is independent and internal audit activities are not subject to direction by the Council (section 216P of the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021).	Compliant
13.	Council has adopted an internal audit charter that is informed by the model internal audit charter approved by the Departmental Chief Executive of the Office of Local Government and the internal audit function operates in accordance with the charter (section 216O of the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021).	Compliant

	Requirement	Status
14.	Council has appointed a member of staff to direct and coordinate internal audit activities or is part of a shared arrangement where a participating council has appointed a staff member to direct and coordinate internal audit activities for all participating councils (section 216P of the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021).	Compliant
15.	Internal audit activities are conducted in accordance with the International Professional Practices Framework (Core requirement 3 of the Office of Local Government's Guidelines for Risk Management and Internal Audit for Local Government in NSW).	Compliant
16.	Council provides the internal audit function with direct and unrestricted access to staff, the audit, risk and improvement committee, and the information and resources necessary to undertake internal audit activities (section 216P of the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021).	Compliant
17.	Council's internal audit function undertakes internal audit activities in accordance with a four-year strategic work plan that has been endorsed by the governing body and an annual work plan that has been developed in consultation with the governing body and senior management (Core requirement 3 of the Office of Local Government's Guidelines for Risk Management and Internal Audit for Local Government in NSW).	Compliant
18.	Council's audit, risk and improvement committee reviews the effectiveness of the internal audit function and reports the outcome of the review to the governing body each council term (section 216R of the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021).	Compliant – not applicable. ⁵
⁵ Commences for Council term 2024-2028.		