

TAMWORTH REGIONAL COUNCIL

Notice is hereby given, in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1993 that a **Meeting of Tamworth Regional Council** will be held in the **Council Chambers, Lands Building, 25-27 Fitzroy Street, Tamworth**, commencing at **6.30pm**.

ORDINARY COUNCIL AGENDA

28 OCTOBER 2025

PAUL BENNETT
GENERAL MANAGER

Order of Business

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Council

Meeting Date: 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month commencing at 6:30pm.

Matters determined by Ordinary meetings will include all those non-delegable functions identified in Section 377 of the Local Government Act as follows:

- *“the appointment of a general manager*
- *the making of a rate*
- *a determination under section 549 as to the levying of a rate*
- *the making of a charge*
- *the fixing of a fee*
- *the borrowing of money*
- *the voting of money for expenditure on its works, services or operations*
- *the compulsory acquisition, purchase, sale, exchange or surrender of any land or other property (but not including the sale of items of plant or equipment)*
- *the acceptance of tenders which are required under this Act to be invited by the council*
- *the adoption of an operational plan under section 405*
- *the adoption of a financial statement included in an annual financial report*
- *a decision to classify or reclassify public land under Division 1 of Part 2 of Chapter 6*
- *the fixing of an amount or rate for the carrying out by the council of work on private land*
- *the decision to carry out work on private land for an amount that is less than the amount or rate fixed by the council for the carrying out of any such work*
- *the review of a determination made by the council, and not by a delegate of the council, of an application for approval or an application that may be reviewed under section 82A of the [Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979](#)*
- *the power of the council to authorise the use of reasonable force for the purpose of gaining entry to premises under section 194*
- *a decision under section 356 to contribute money or otherwise grant financial assistance to persons*
- *the making of an application, or the giving of a notice, to the Governor or Minister*
- *this power of delegation*
- *any function under this or any other Act that is expressly required to be exercised by resolution of the council.”*

Other matters and functions determined by Ordinary Council Meetings will include:

- *Notices of Motion*
- *Notices of Motion of Rescission*
- *Council Elections, Polls, Constitutional Referendums and Public Hearings/Inquiries*
- *Ministerial Committees and Inquiries*
- *Mayor and Councillors Annual Fees*
- *Payment of Expenses and Provision of Facilities to Mayor and Councillors*
- *Local Government Remuneration Tribunal*
- *Local Government Boundaries*
- *NSW Ombudsman*
- *Administrative Decisions Tribunal*
- *Delegation of Functions by the Minister*
- *Delegation of Functions to General Manager and Principal Committees*
- *Organisation Structure*
- *Code of Conduct*
- *Code of Meeting Practice*
- *Honesty and Disclosure of Interests*
- *Access to Information*
- *Protection of Privacy*
- *Enforcement Functions (statutory breaches/prosecutions/recovery of rates)*
- *Dispute Resolution*
- *Council Land and Property Development*
- *Annual Financial Reports, Auditors Reports, Annual Reports and Statement of the Environment Reports*
- *Performance of the General Manager*
- *Equal Employment Opportunity*
- *Powers of Entry*
- *Liability and Insurance*
- *Membership of Organisations*

Membership:	All Councillors
Quorum:	Five members
Chairperson:	The Mayor
Deputy Chairperson:	The Deputy Mayor

Community Consultation Policy

The first 30 minutes of Open Council Meetings is available for members of the Public to address the Council Meeting or submit questions either verbally or in writing, on matters INCLUDED in the Business Paper for the Meeting.

Members of the public will be permitted a maximum of three minutes to address the Council Meeting. An extension of time may be granted if deemed necessary.

Members of the public seeking to represent or speak on behalf of a third party must satisfy the Council or Committee Meeting that he or she has the authority to represent or speak on behalf of the third party.

Members of the public wishing to address Council Meetings are requested to contact Council either by telephone, in person or online prior to 4:30pm the day prior to the Meeting to address the Council Meeting. Persons not registered to speak will not be able to address Council at the Meeting.

Council will only permit three speakers in support and three speakers in opposition to a recommendation contained in the Business Paper. If there are more than three speakers, Council's Governance division will contact all registered speakers to determine who will address Council. In relation to a Development Application, the applicant will be reserved a position to speak.

Members of the public will not be permitted to raise matters or provide information which involves:

- personnel matters concerning particular individuals (other than Councillors);
- personal hardship of any resident or ratepayer;
- information that would, if disclosed confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom Council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business;
- Commercial information of a confidential nature that would, if disclosed:
 - prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied it, or
 - confer a commercial advantage on a competitor of the Council; or
 - reveal a trade secret;
- information that would, if disclosed prejudice the maintenance of law;
- matters affecting the security of the Council, Councillors, Council staff or Council property;
- advice concerning litigation or advice that would otherwise be privileged from production in legal proceedings on the ground of legal professional privilege;
- information concerning the nature and location of a place or an item of Aboriginal significance on community land;
- alleged contraventions of any Code of Conduct requirements applicable under Section 440; or
- on balance, be contrary to the public interest.

Members of the public will not be permitted to use Community Consultation to abuse, vilify, insult, threaten, intimidate or harass Councillors, Council staff or other members of the public. Conduct of this nature will be deemed to be an act of disorder and the person engaging in such behaviour will be ruled out of the order and may be expelled.

Disclosure of Political Donations or Gifts

If you have made a relevant planning application to Council which is listed for determination on the Council Business Paper you must disclose any political donation or gift made to any councillor or employee of the Council within the period commencing two years before the application is made and ending when the application is determined (Section 147(4) Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979).

If you have made a relevant public submission to Council in relation to a relevant planning application which is listed for determination on the Council Business Paper you must disclose any political donation or gifts made to any councillor or employee of the Council by you as the person making the submission or any associate within the period commencing two years before the submission is made and ending when the application is determined (Section 147(5) Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979).

AGENDA

- 1 APOLOGIES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE**
- 2 COMMUNITY CONSULTATION**
- 3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL**

RECOMMENDATION

That the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on Tuesday, 14 October 2025, copies of which were circulated, be taken as read and confirmed as a correct record of the proceedings of the Meeting.

4 DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

Pecuniary Interest

Non Pecuniary Conflict of Interest

Political Donations

5 MAYORAL MINUTE

Nil

6 NOTICE OF MOTION

- 6.1 NOTICE OF MOTION – CR RYAN BROOKE - WORKING TOWARDS GENDER PARITY AND OTHER DIVERSE REPRESENTATION ON COUNCIL**

1 ANNEXURES ATTACHED

MOTION

That Council:

- (i) Notes that Tamworth Regional Council is currently the only Council in NSW with no elected female representation, and that this is a situation that requires sustained action to address;**
- (ii) Recognises that an environment conducive to women's representation is also more likely to be favourable for diversity in other representational respects such as class, race, age, disability, and occupation;**
- (iii) Recognises the findings of recent research by Professor Tanya Jakimow from the Australian National University's Global Institute for Women's Leadership into democratic representation in rural and regional councils in NSW (research that multiple Tamworth Regional councillors and community members from our LGA contributed to), which demonstrates that increased female and diverse representation in local government significantly improve council performance, community responsiveness, and democratic legitimacy;**

(iv) Commits to:

- *Engaging with diverse community groups and organisations (such as women's groups and multicultural associations) to encourage these groups to establish proactive recruitment and mentoring programs to identify, encourage, and support women and underrepresented community members to consider civic leadership roles;*
- *Similarly, focusing on building long-term collaborative relationships between Council and these diverse community groups, recognising that lasting change requires collaborative effort and local knowledge; and*
- *Reviewing Council and committee meeting practices and procedures to identify potential opportunities to increase accessibility, including meeting times, childcare provisions, remote participation options, and opportunities to promote accessibility measures that currently exist.*

Notice is given that I intend to move the above Motion at the Meeting of the Council to be held on 28 October 2025.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The Evidence for Change

Tamworth Regional Council currently holds the unwelcome distinction of being the only council in NSW with no female representation among its elected members. After the 2024 NSW Local Government election, out of 97 rural and regional councils, over half (54) have fewer than 40% women, more than a quarter (26) fewer than 30%, and 5 have fewer than 20%. TRC sits at the extreme end of this spectrum, and has consistently elected male majority councils since amalgamation in 2004. This isn't just a statistical anomaly; it represents a fundamental failure in our democratic representation that demands attention and remedy.

The basis of this motion comes from the proposed actions arising from Professor Tanya Jakimow's recent research paper from the Australian National University Global Institute for Women's Leadership: *Fixing the Environment: Achieving gender parity & diversity in local government in regional and rural NSW*. I was one of 87 people interviewed across the state (including other Tamworth Regional councillors who may or may not want to identify themselves and community members from our region) and have been following the progress of this research, in large part because of how central our Council is to the subject matter.

Her research shows that councils that achieve gender parity (or greater) women's representation are positively correlated with council performance, ensuring more women feel represented on council, and increasing responsiveness to more people within the community. It also beneficially shows that councils with increased women's representation also tend to have greater representation of other underrepresented sections of a council's local community.

When we have a council of only men, we're missing half the population's perspectives, experiences, and networks. We're failing women who might need to approach council about sensitive issues, and we're sending a troubling message to young women about their place in civic leadership. A diversity of lived experiences are crucial to inform decision-making across every function of council, to ensure services and infrastructure meet the needs and aspirations of all residents.

This isn't about tokenism or political correctness. This is about recognising that a diverse council with a diversity of life experiences, skills, knowledge, and relational webs is best able to serve its community. And taking proactive steps as an organisation to contribute towards an environment that addresses systematic issues leading to non-candidacy of women and other underrepresented groups.

As councillors, we have a unique responsibility and opportunity. We could rest on the democratic process and claim that "this is just how people voted." But the research shows that supportive environments make a significant difference in both whether women choose to stand for election and succeed. I believe we should have the courage to act to remove barriers and

structural disadvantages that make electoral contests less than a level playing field, even if that puts ourselves at greater risk of not being re-elected.

The Path Forward: Fixing Our Environment

Rather than simply encouraging women to "just stand," we need to take proactive steps to fix our local environment. The research emphasises that achieving gender parity and diverse representation in LGAs in regional and rural NSW requires a 'localised approach' that respects local knowledge of the specificities of each community so that solutions can be tailored to what will actually work on the ground.

To that end, it's also important to acknowledge that this change isn't going to come from Council and councillors alone. Community groups, community leaders, local media, and the Office of Local Government themselves have roles to play to change the environment. But Council and councillors (especially through our own actions outside of the Council Chamber) disproportionately have opportunities to influence a changing environment in our local government chambers, on the ground in our community, and during election campaigns. This motion takes a significant step towards kicking off that change in three separate areas in which councils can affect the environment, and all of which support each other:

Proactive Recruitment and Mentoring: Proactive and targeted recruitment is one of the most effective ways to increase councillor diversity; the community identifying and tapping women on the shoulder to encourage candidacy is particularly effective to achieve gender parity and diversity. As a council, we can work with diverse community organisations to build a culture and programs where communities actively identify and mentor potential female leaders. Building long-term relationships with these community groups also opens up opportunities for greater engagement and collaboration.

Enhanced Community Engagement: Councils that practise progressive representation where they reach out to different groups, rather than waiting for people to come to us, are more effective at representing the community as a 'whole', and foster an environment where individuals are more likely to engage Council and individual councillors. These actions in turn also allow councils to 'cover their blind spots' somewhat by getting input from underrepresented groups within their community.

We already have some great examples of how TRC engages in this form of community engagement such as the Tamworth Regional Inclusive Culture Advisory Committee, the Disability Access Working Group, the Tamworth Regional Youth Council, Fiesta La Peel, and the forthcoming Tamworth Regional Precinct Committees. These are all fantastic structural elements of Council. I would argue, in line with the research, that we should be putting emphasis on utilising these groups and committees, while also proactively building long-term relations with diverse community groups, to create deeper engagement between Council and

wider sections of our community and, by extension, create stepping stones for civic leadership and candidacy.

Cultural Change: A key theme of the research is "Rather than 'fix women' we need to change the conditions". To build truly inclusive councils, we need to change how different kinds of work and leadership are valued. Lasting change takes more than just getting women elected in a single election; it requires shifting cultural attitudes. Cultural patterns of recognition shape the perceived value of people's contributions to society.

The research reveals that leadership is perceived to be coded as 'masculine' in LGAs with consistently low rates of female representation, privileging certain types of men as councillors. Women's contributions are often rendered invisible or diminished relative to those of men, resulting in lower social status. Elections are moments in which communities recognise people's contributions, and through which recognition is translated into political power. As a Council we can work to recognise and celebrate women's leadership in community organisations, businesses, and volunteer work. And in doing so help expand our definition of what makes a good leader.

Sources:

- Jakimow, T. (2025). *Fixing the Environment: Achieving gender parity & diversity in local government in regional and rural NSW*. ANU Global Institute for Women's Leadership.
- Jakimow, T. (2025). *Fixing the Environment: Achieving gender parity & diversity in regional and rural NSW local government - Research Brief*. ANU Global Institute for Women's Leadership.

(a) Policy Implications

This motion calls on a strategy to be developed. But such a policy would align with the following already adopted policy, plans and strategies:

Communications Strategy - in particular Community Lens Objective 3 and Council Lens Objective 2

Community Strategic Plan - in particular Focus Areas 3, 4, 7, 8, and 9

Blueprint 100 - in particular Priority Themes 4 and 7

(b) Financial Implications

Nil other than staff resourcing costs to develop this strategy. Action undertaken as part of the strategy may require future financial investment.

(c) Legal Implications

Nil

(d) Sustainability Implications

Nil

(e) Community Consultation

While conducting research for her paper, Professor Jakimow interviewed multiple current Tamworth Regional Councillors and various community members from our LGA.

This motion has also been circulated amongst and amended online with feedback from various community members within our LGA including members of the Inclusive

Leadership Network (letter of support attached), and various former women Tamworth Regional Councillors and Tamworth Regional Council candidates.

Further to this I have tabled Professor Jakimow’s paper at a meeting of the Tamworth Regional Inclusive Culture Advisory Committee.”

(f) Delivery Program Objective/Strategy

Focus Area 3 - Prosperity and Innovation

Focus Area 4 - Resilient and Diverse Communities

Focus Area 7 - Celebrate our Cultures and Heritage

Focus Area 8 - A Strong and Vibrant Identity

Focus Area 9 - Open and Collaborative Leadership

Cr Ryan Brooke

22 October 2025

OPEN COUNCIL REPORTS

7 ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING

7.1 RELEASE OF PUBLIC POSITIVE COVENANTS AND RELEASE/CREATION OF EASEMENTS OVER PRIVATE LAND - LOT 900 IN DP 1297546

DIRECTORATE: LIVEABLE COMMUNITIES

AUTHOR: Steve Brake, Senior Development Engineer

1 ANNEXURES ATTACHED

RECOMMENDATION

That in relation to the report “Release of Public Positive Covenants and Release/Creation of Easements Over Private Land - Lot 900 in DP 1297546”, Council:

- (i) agrees to release the public positive covenants on the terms and conditions as set out in the body of this report;*
- (ii) agrees to the release and creation of easements as set out in the body of this report;*
- (iii) authorises the Mayor and General Manager to execute all documents required for the release of the public positive covenants; and*
- (iv) authorises the affixing of the Seal of Council to all documents required for the release of the public positive covenants.*

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to seek a Council resolution to release positive covenants over lot 900, DP 1297546, 36 Johnston Street, North Tamworth, on the basis that the

requirements in the positive covenants have been completed. The positive covenants were originally created to ensure the proprietor of the land constructed a water main extension from Bellas Way across the subject land to the boundary of the neighbouring lot at 11-17 Curlew Crescent, Oxley Vale.

Following the release of the positive covenants, easement benefitting Council are required to be released and created to ensure Council assets are wholly located within easements.

COMMENTARY

At the time of completion of the subdivision of Mulconda Estate Stage 5 (Bellas Way) in 2019, there was uncertainty around the future development of a 1.5-hectare (approximate) lot at the end of the cul-de-sac. It was agreed between Council and the developer that the servicing of this land with Council infrastructure could be deferred until development on the land could be assessed.

The deferral of works included:

1. Sewer, stormwater and water supply works. These were required to service future development on the subject property and therefore had a clear nexus in any future development consents; and
2. Water reticulation works. This was required as part of Council's overall servicing strategy for the area, however the exact location of the water main would be subject to the future development footprint on the land.

A positive covenant was therefore placed on the lot to address Item 2 above. This required the proprietor of the land to design and construct a 150mm diameter water main from Bellas Way to Lot 15 DP 22919, also known as 11-17 Curlew Crescent, Oxley Vale.

Subsequently the land was consolidated with a neighbouring lot, being the Tamworth Gardens Retirement Estate at 36 Johnston Street North Tamworth, see document **ATTACHED**, refer **ANNEXURE 1**, and the development of retirement villas on the land was approved.

A second positive covenant was placed over the lot to further defer the timing of water reticulation works, so that the wording and timing aligned with proposed civil works on the land, and did not impact the commencement of unrelated construction works. It should be noted that the original positive covenant was not formally released, and therefore there are two positive covenants on the lot with the same works obligation, but different timing triggers.

Council Officers are now satisfied that the works have been completed in accordance with the positive covenant designated P8 in DP1252884, positive covenant designated D9 on DP1297546 and Council's Engineering Design Minimum Standards, Construction Specifications and Standard Drawings.

The release of the positive covenants will occur prior to the release and creation of easements benefitting Council. This will ensure a single 'clean' registered plan with Council assets fully located within easements benefitting Council, and in accordance with Council's Engineering Design Minimum Standards.

(a) Policy Implications

Nil

(b) Financial Implications

Nil

(c) Legal Implications

The Seal of Council must be affixed to all documents required in order to release the public positive covenants.

The *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021* Clause 400(4) requires that the Seal of Council must not be affixed to a document unless the document relates to the business of Council and the Council has resolved (by resolution specifically referring to the document) that the Seal be so affixed.

(d) Community Consultation

Nil

(e) Delivery Program Objective/Strategy

Focus Area 1 – Our Water Security

Focus Area 2 – A Liveable Built Environment

8 INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

Nil

9 GOVERNANCE, STRATEGY AND FINANCE

9.1 COUNCIL INVESTMENTS SEPTEMBER 2025

DIRECTORATE: OFFICE OF THE GENERAL MANAGER
AUTHOR: Sherrill Young, Manager - Financial Services
Hannah Allwood, Accountant

1 ANNEXURES ATTACHED

RECOMMENDATION

That in relation to the report “Council Investments September 2025”, Council receive and note the report.

SUMMARY

In accordance with *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021*, Clause 212, the purpose of this report is to:

- provide Council with a register of investments held as at 30 September 2025; and
- provide Responsible Accounting Officer certification that investments comply with: the *Local Government Act 1993*, *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021* and Council's Investment Policy.

The register and accompanying certification can be found **ATTACHED**, refer **ANNEXURE 1**.

COMMENTARY

The register **ATTACHED**, refer **ANNEXURE 1** shows Council's cash and investment holdings as at 30 September 2025.

At its meeting on 30 September 2025, the Reserve Bank indicated that private demand is currently driving growth. The increase in private demand is being attributed to increases in

household income. The Reserve Bank felt it is appropriate to maintain the cash rate at its current level again due to concerns regarding inflation. Another item of interest in the Reserve Bank's media release was their belief that "... the housing market is strengthening, a sign that recent interest rate decreases are having an effect."

During the month, Council's portfolio performed above the industry average, returning 4.40% against the three-month Bank Bill Swap rate (3mBBSW) of 3.58%.

(a) Policy Implications

All of Council's investments are held in accordance with the Tamworth Regional Council Investment Policy.

(b) Financial Implications

Although it is early in the new financial year, if interest rates on investments remain low it is likely that Council's interest income for the year will not achieve the budget forecast of \$9.2 million consolidated. Council's investment earnings are also impacted by the timing of forecast cash flows which will govern cash holdings. The 2025/26 budget for investment earnings was based on returns of 4.75% which is above the current average return of 4.40%.

(c) Legal Implications

All of Council's investments are held in accordance with the Tamworth Regional Council Investment Policy, which accords with the requirements of:

- *Local Government Act 1993* – Section 625;
- *Local Government Act 1993* – Order (of Minister) dated 16 November 2000; The Trustee Amendment (Discretionary Investments) Act 1997 – Sections 14A (2), 14C (1) and 2;
- *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021* – Clauses 212; and
- *Local Government Code of Accounting Practice & Financial Reporting* – Update No 15 dated June 2007.

(d) Community Consultation

Nil

(e) Delivery Program Objective/Strategy

Focus Area 9 – Open and Collaborative Leadership

9.2 ANNUAL OPERATIONAL PLAN 2025/2026 BUDGET VARIATION REPORT - SEPTEMBER 2025

DIRECTORATE: OFFICE OF THE GENERAL MANAGER
AUTHOR: Sherrill Young, Manager - Financial Services

Reference: Item to Ordinary Council 30 June 2025 - Minute No 147/25

1 ANNEXURES ATTACHED

RECOMMENDATION

That in relation to the report "Annual Operational Plan 2025/2026 Budget Variation Report - September 2025", Council:

- (i) note and approve the variations to the existing budget as listed in the*
-

ANNEXURE attached to the report.

- (ii) authorise the additional principal loan repayment of the internal loan between General Fund and Sewer Fund for the amount of \$581,198 in accordance with the Ministerial Order authorising the internal loan.***

SUMMARY

This report seeks Council approval for budget variations identified during September 2025, for which there has been no previous specific report or approval.

COMMENTARY

Council adopted the original budget included in the Annual Operational Plan for 2025/2026 at the Ordinary Meeting of Council held 30 June 2025. Any changes to the budget must be approved by Council at a later Ordinary Meeting. The budget forms the basis for future forecasts and the legal authority for staff to commit expenditures. Constant monitoring and updating of the budget is important for sound financial management.

Readers of this report are reminded that its contents should not be viewed in isolation. Quarterly Budget Review Statements provide additional revised information for budget forecasts and actual year-to-date results. The first Quarterly Budget Review for the current financial year will be presented to Council at the November meeting.

There were quite a few budget variations processed in the month of September. First item of note is an increase of \$423,816 in Federal Assistance Grant fundings. Of this money \$309,473 is discretionary and it will help offset some of the \$372,601 increase in workers compensation premium for which a budget amendment was put through in September. The remaining \$114,343 must be spent on roads and for this reason it has been placed in a specific reserve to ensure compliance with the funding requirements.

A regional Council has cancelled its Information Technology Contract with Tamworth, the cancellation of this private works arrangement has resulted in an income decrease of \$308,982. Whilst the loss of income is regretful it will allow for increased focus on Tamworth's information technology requirements. Within the Digitech division contract increases for software have increased by \$111,779 this when combined with the private works income reduction has in total had a negative impact on the budget for that area of \$420,761.

An amount of \$200,000 was requested from Council's Property Acquisition and Development Reserve to undertake a review of Council's property assets to identify opportunities to activate and maximise the use of these assets.

The Airport and International Flight Training Tamworth Facility (IFTT) have both had expenditure increases. New positions at Council's aviation facilities are accounting for \$132,885 of increased expenditure with the remaining increase of \$50,000 is for the upgrading of fibre optic cabling at the IFTT.

The budget adjustment for the month of September includes additional loan repayments of \$581,198 being paid off the internal Tamworth Global Gateway Park loan with Sewer Fund. The increased loan repayment is being funded from higher than anticipated land sales in the 2024/25 financial year resulting in additional principal repayments of the loan to acquire the TGGP site. The balance of this loan as at 1 July 2025 is now sitting at \$4,218,802 and is scheduled to be repaid in full by 31 December 2027. The additional loan repayment ensures compliance with the ministerial order that approved the loan.

September 2025 Budget Variations

Description	Budget Variation	Operating Income	Operating Expenses	Capital Income	Capital Expenses
General Purpose Income	-423,816	-423,816	0	0	0
Strategy & Performance	-8,848	0	-8,848	0	0
DigiTech	420,761	308,982	111,779	0	0
Economic Activation & Analysis	200,000	0	200,000	0	0
Creative Communities	1,256	-26,395	24,696	0	2,955
Communication	-10,941	-42,858	31,917	0	0
Community Safety & Wellbeing	0	-5,000	5,000	0	0
Learning Communities	0	-4,528	4,528	0	0
Aviation	53,022	0	53,022	0	0
International Flight Training	129,852	0	79,852	0	50,000
Plant Fleet & Building Services	-24,602	0	-24,602	0	0
Project Costing	800,564	0	73,830	0	726,734
Sport & Recreation	50,000	0	50,000	0	0
Water & Wastewater	-510,241	-73,830	6,152	0	-442,563
Waste & Resource Recovery	0	0	0	-397,888	397,888
Workers Compensation	372,601	0	372,601	0	0
TOTAL	1,049,608	-267,445	979,927	-397,888	735,014

Black budget variation will *reduce* Council's forecast operating result and/or bank account

Green budget variation will **increase** Councils forecast operating result and/or bank account

(a) Policy Implications

Nil

(b) Financial Implications

The variations included in the report have the following impact on forecast results for 2025/2026 by fund of:

Fund	Operating Income	Operating Expenses	Capital Income	Capital Expenses
General	-193,615	973,775	-397,888	1,177,577
Water	0	6,152	0	138,635
Sewer	-73,830	0	0	-581,198
Total	-267,445	979,927	-397,888	735,014

(c) Legal Implications

This report is in compliance with the following sections of the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021*:

- 211 authorisation of expenditure; and
- 202 Responsible Accounting Officer to maintain system for budgetary control.

(d) Community Consultation

Nil

(e) Delivery Program Objective/Strategy

Focus Area 9 – Open and Collaborative Leadership

9.3 UPGRADE TECHNOLOGY HARDWARE AS PART OF TECHNOLOGY BLUEPRINT - INITIATIVE 4 (APPLICATIONS PORTFOLIO - M365)

DIRECTORATE: OFFICE OF THE GENERAL MANAGER
AUTHOR: Rami Abu-Shaqra, Chief Financial Officer

RECOMMENDATION

That in relation to the report “Upgrade Technology Hardware as Part of Technology Blueprint - Initiative 4 (Applications Portfolio - M365)”, Council:

- (i) endorses the roll out of Microsoft 365 for all Council operations; and*
- (ii) approves a budget increase of \$633,900 to fund the needed hardware.*

SUMMARY

Tamworth Regional Council is in preparations for the rollout of Microsoft 365(M365) platform across the whole organisation. Microsoft 365 deployment is a core strategic element within Initiative 4 – Application Portfolio, of the Technology Blueprint program. This is a key contributor to the benefits expected to be realised from the implementation of the Technology Blueprint program in the coming 10 years.

With the phasing out of Windows 10 the vast majority of existing devices, mainly laptops and desktops, have reached the end of their 3 to 5 year useful life. The effective roll out of M365 requires a complete refresh of laptops and desktops. The project team has planned for this roll out and explored all options to minimise the cost impact, benefit from bulk purchase savings and after sale extended services and most importantly maximise the foreseen long term benefits. It is recommended that Council proceed with Option 3 – Bulk Purchase all the needed hardware with a required funding of \$1.7 million.

COMMENTARY

Strategic Intent

Council is in preparations for the rollout of Microsoft 365 platform across the whole organisation. Microsoft 365 deployment is a core strategic element within Initiative 4 – Application Portfolio, of the Technology Blueprint program. This is part of Our Delivery Plan 2025 – 2029 under Focus area 5 (Connect our Region and its Citizens) and 9 (Open and Collaborative Leadership).

Implementation of this part of the Technology Blueprint program provides a foundation from which to build future capacity within the organisation and achieve the program goal of delivering a cloud first environment that will support growth in the Region. The program is designed to provide staff with the tools that will allow them to focus more of their efforts to enhancing services to council's customers.

According to the Benefits Realisation analysis conducted in 2023, Council will see some efficiency gains across the organisation as it has been noted that around 34% of a staff working day is attributed to time wasted in accessing slow systems and locating and validating information from various sources, time that will be saved through the implementation of Tech Blueprint, including M365.

The Problem

Council's current technology environment utilises a Remote Desktop Solution (RDS). This environment operates within an on-premises server environment where users log into a remote server to access applications and store data and files. The RDS environment is not fit for purpose and is a growing cost for Council to operate and maintain.

The current windows versions across Council devices, is Windows 10, which will have reached end of support on October 14th. After this date, Microsoft will no longer provide technical support, feature updates, or security updates. Moving to M365 will coincide with upgrading all Council users to the latest version of Windows 11.

Council has an ageing fleet of hardware, with the most recent refresh program occurring in 2020. Over 95% (386) of Council desktops are 5 years old or greater. For laptops and tablets 67% of total devices are 3 years old; of which 87% are 5 years old or greater.

The specifications of these older devices render them not fit for purpose for the increased resources required for Windows 11 and M365 which are required by today's workforce and not replacing them will limit Council's capabilities as technology evolves.

Why M365 and Associated Device Impacts

Microsoft 365 is a suite of cloud connected applications which removes the reliance of on-premises server and storage. The Microsoft 365 environment will introduce a range of collaboration and connectivity tools that will aim to improve productivity across all council users.

Microsoft 365, and Windows 11, requires devices with a minimum specification for an acceptable level of performance. This specification is greater than that required by Windows 10 and following a review by the project team of the current fleet of laptops and desktops across Council, the minimum specifications required are greater than the hardware currently in use across the organisation.

To effectively maximise the benefits provided with the new platform, the team assessed different approaches for hardware utilisation and established a preferred position. It was important that the outcome supports Council's needs now and into the future to align with the benefits expected from the Technology Blueprint program.

Options Explored

Option 1 – Do Nothing

Doing nothing involves keeping the current fleet of devices and rebuilding these as M365 machines. This was not considered viable for the following reasons:

- to re-build a machine would involve each person having to hand their device over to a team to re-build. This would require the IT team to work overnight to re-build, or the user would be without their device for approximately 4-5 hours during the day. The impact to the business under this method would have been too great and the resource levels required to conduct this activity significant and costly;
- there was a very high risk that the majority of machines will not have been compatible, or the performance capability significantly impacted from the new platform; and
- with the bulk of the fleet being greater than 3 years old, this would have lengthened the tenure of most of the devices, increasing the risk of failure. Council will have needed to continue to replace many of these machines under normal operational conditions regardless, and at a higher value than what can be achieved through the bulk purchase.

This is not the preferred option.

Option 2 – Stagger Hardware Purchase

Splitting the hardware purchases over three years and staggering the costs was considered which would have reduced the costs per year of hardware. The benefit of this option is that Council will be able to develop a solid asset management process and establish an effective ongoing refresh program that would improve budgeting in future years.

On the other hand, the unit rate for each device will be higher versus that of a single bulk purchase, and Council would likely have been exposed to annual price increases for the remaining device purchases. More importantly, there is still the issue to manage the ageing and incompatible machines across the fleet for those that will have been waiting until the second, third or subsequent years which is expected to severely hinder the benefits expected from this program and add a high level of frustration and unproductive workload on Council staff, IT and end users alike.

This is not the preferred option.

Option 3 – Bulk Purchase

The option of the bulk purchase means that Council will be sourcing all the required devices at once. This option allows Council to instantly adopt a consistent operating environment and enhance the mobility of Council staff to work in different locations and connect seamlessly.

Council has negotiated reduced unit rates for devices because of a bulk purchase and extended warranties. This will now enable Council to implement an effective asset management and refresh program spread across multiple years to avoid future one off cost impacts.

All devices will be compatible with the new platform and ensure greater levels of success for the overall delivery of the M365 project and the continued delivery of the Technology Blueprint program.

This is the preferred option

The Implementation of Option 3

The project team is planning to purchase the following equipment

Item	Qty
Laptop	550
Desktop	100
USB-C Hub Monitor	650
Standard Monitor	650
Wireless Keyboard & Mouse set	550
Protective Laptop Sleeves	550

The total cost of the purchase will not exceed **\$1,700,000**.

Approval of the proposed device bulk purchase will directly contribute to the success of Technology Blueprint Initiative 4 – Applications Portfolio. Some of the key successes as highlighted in the business case that will be fulfilled are:

- position Tamworth Regional Council as a leading council in the region in servicing and engaging its community via modern channels;
- reduce effort of managing increased number of applications and platforms;
- optimise return on investment made in strategic applications and platforms; and
- rationalise versions of applications to simplify and streamline ongoing upgrade and maintenance capabilities.

The plan to realise the above success factors are summarised below:

- many users across Council within office based roles are currently utilising desktop devices. These will be replaced by laptops. Desktops inhibit mobility and flexibility across the workforce and conflicts with a successful activation of the business continuity plan;
- all workstations will have identical monitors and keyboard/mouse options which will remain in situ. When staff relocate workstations, or office locations either temporarily or permanently, they need not move anything except their laptop. This minimises disruption to workdays, reduces the workload on IT resources, and reduces the risk of

injury through needing to move heavy objects. The onboarding and offboarding process for staff will be improved and refined;

- the purpose of purchasing the monitors with USB-C integrated hub minimises cluttering of desktop surfaces, removes the need for replacement and purchase of costly external hubs, particularly if council chooses to replace laptop supplier. USB-C is universal and will allow any computer with similar connection to use the desktop space;
- desktop PC will be installed in depots, workshops and other shared use spaces, due to the need for a robust, always on solution;
- with staff being distributed across different locations, they will be able to communicate quickly when seeking assistance or guidance on topics, and gain instant responses without interruptions to their current activities;
- staff will no longer need to email documents and risk poor version control or data security. Collaboration on a document can be as simple as sharing a link and having the recipient work on the document live and share updates and feedback instantly;
- staff who service our customers will have quicker access to information, and to people who can assist while the customer is on the line. Using direct messaging through teams or seeing when someone is available if a call transfer is required, will be more visible within the M365 platform, contributing to a greater level of satisfaction and first time resolve issues; and
- for staff working remote, flexibly WFH or when travelling, accessing Council online environment will be much simpler or more streamlined. M365 provides the necessary security and simplicity to connect users as soon as they login into their PC, so long as they are connected to a secure Wi-Fi, internet or hot-spot connection.

Next Steps

Upon approval, the project team will mobilise by placing the order for the equipment and finalise plans and schedules to commence the rollout. It is expected that the delivery lead time will be approximately four weeks which will allow deployment to be well progressed leading up to the Christmas and festival periods.

(a) Policy Implications

Nil

(b) Financial Implications

The \$1.7 million capital budget is proposed to be funded from two sources. Firstly, an existing capital budget line item of \$1,066,100. This budget allocation was approved as part of the original 2025/26 budget adopted in June 2025. This budget line item is being funded from an internal general fund loan that will be paid off over the next 4 years.

The remaining \$633,900 is recommended to be funded from the IT Development Reserve. As at 1 July 2025 this reserve holds \$1,283,103. If this expenditure is approved, the forecast balance of this reserve (after allowing for revotes) as at 30 June 2026 is scheduled to be \$374,646.

It should be noted that the IT Development Reserve is increased by approximately \$400,000 per annum as part of the annual budget process.

(c) Legal Implications

Nil

(d) Community Consultation

Nil

(e) Delivery Program Objective/Strategy

Focus Area 5 – Connect Our Region and its Citizens

Focus Area 9 – Open and Collaborative Leadership

10 COMMUNITY SERVICES

10.1 TAMWORTH REGIONAL FILM AND SOUND ARCHIVE S355 COMMITTEE TRANSFER TO COUNCIL MUSEUMS OPERATIONS

DIRECTORATE: CREATIVE COMMUNITIES AND EXPERIENCES

AUTHOR: Bridget Guthrie, Director Art Gallery and Museums

Kay Burnes, Team Leader - Place Management

2 ANNEXURES ATTACHED

RECOMMENDATION

That in relation to the report “Tamworth Regional Film and Sound Archive S355 Committee Transfer to Council Museums Operations”, Council:

- (i) support the process for the Tamworth Regional Film and Sound Archive to transfer from a Section 355 Committee to under Council museums operations;*
- (ii) disband the Tamworth Regional Film and Sound Archive Section 355 Committee and withdraw the delegation of the function of management and operation of the Tamworth Regional Film and Sound Archive including the collection of income; and*
- (iii) determine that the assets held, and liabilities accrued by the Tamworth Regional Film and Sound Archive Committee be managed by Council in accordance with the Tamworth Region Museum Strategy and Asset Management plans.*

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to seek support from Council to assist the Tamworth Regional Film and Sound Archive to transition from a Section 355 Committee to operate under Council’s museums operations. The Tamworth Regional Film and Sound Archive committee have decided to transition to better support the long-term asset management of the collection/archive and simplify legal requirements and documentation required under the Section 355 committee.

COMMENTARY

The Tamworth Regional Film and Sound Archive is dedicated to preserving the region’s film and sound heritage. It houses about 8,000 cans and cassettes of locally and regionally produced visual material and over 20,000 items on the database, plus historical audio material. Tamworth and regional material dates back to 1916 and includes many local collections.

This collection has been identified as nationally significant and was previously awarded a grant through the National Library of Australia to complete a significant assessment of the Tamworth Regional Film and Sound Archive, see **ATTACHED**, refer **ANNEXURE 1**. A sub-

collection of the archive is also listed under the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) memory of the world register.

Recently, Council has invested in the long-term permanent home for the archive and completed maintenance and building works to ensure the new site is fit for purpose. The doors for the new premises will be open to the public from Tuesday, 21 October 2025.

During this transition it became evident that the existing Section 355 committee structure, added unnecessary legal and documentation requirements and was no longer relevant or indeed the best practice for the archive's operations. The committee members confirmed their intention in writing to proceed with the transition from a Section 355 Committee to operate under Council's museums operations within the Creative Communities and Experiences directorate.

Currently, a Section 355 Committee the Tamworth Regional Film and Sound Archive is an anomaly within our Local Government Area (LGA). Through the transition to operating under Council's Museum team the Committee will now align with other Council museums within our region such as the Australian Country Music Hall of Fame, National Guitar Museum, Gil Bennet Rocks, Gems and Mineral Collection and the Tamworth PowerStation Museum.

This transition supports specialised knowledge and best practice of museum standards, including the requirements of asset management for this nationally significant collection. This process is undertaken in partnership with Council and the transition is supported by the Tamworth Regional Film and Sound Archive Committee, Council staff and the Museum Advisor.

(a) Policy Implications

This proposal assists to address several of the actions in the adopted Tamworth Region Museum Strategy, in particular the proposal aligns with the five key focus areas:

1. Sustainability of Collections – Documentation and Storage
2. Succession Planning and Sustainability for Volunteers
3. Quality Exhibition Development and Cultural Tourism
4. Strategic Partners and Developing a Coordinated Museums Approach
5. Creating a Level Playing Field – Structural Adjustment and Risk Minimisation

The Tamworth Region Museum and Archive Strategy (Strategy), see **ATTACHED**, refer **ANNEXURE 2**, outlines a framework for the support of ten public museum, archives and social history collections located in the Council catchment area and associated with Tamworth Regional Council.

(b) Financial Implications

The asset management of the Tamworth Regional Film and Sound Archive is important to address in an ongoing capacity. The collection is nationally significant, listed on the UNESCO memory of the world register and also links back to the Tamworth Country Music Festival records and archives.

Within Council's existing budget allocations, an ongoing annual operating budget will need to be implemented for the Tamworth Regional Film and Sound Archive to address the asset management and digital storage of this nationally significant collection.

(c) Legal Implications

Section 355 of the Local Government Act 1993 enables the Council to appoint a Committee to exercise a function on its behalf by way of a Committee of the Council. This is used in conjunction with Section 377 of the Act to formally delegate functions to the appointed Committee.

(d) Community Consultation

The Tamworth Regional Film and Sound Archive S355 Committee has documented their intention to transition from a Section 355 Committee to operate as a museum/archive under Council's Museum operations.

The transition addresses several actions in the Tamworth Region Museum and Archive Strategy and assists with risk minimisation. Council is mindful of ensuring consistent and equitable support across the network.

(e) Delivery Program Objective/Strategy

Focus area 3 – Prosperity and Innovation

Focus area 7 – Celebrate Our Cultures and Heritage

Focus area 8 – A Strong and Vibrant Identity

11 REPORTS TO BE CONSIDERED IN CLOSED COUNCIL

RECOMMENDATION

That the confidential reports as listed be considered in a Meeting closed to the public in accordance with Section 10A(2) of the Local Government Act 1993.

11.1 T022-2026 - ELECTRICAL RELOCATION AND SUPPLY FOR THE TAMWORTH REGIONAL SKYWALK

DIRECTORATE: REGIONAL SERVICES

AUTHOR: Lachlan Mackiewicz, Project Engineer

The Council will determine this matter in part of the Meeting closed to the public pursuant to Section 10A(2) (c)&(d)i of the Local Government Act 1993 on the grounds that the matter and information is information that would, if disclosed, confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom Council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business and commercial information of a confidential nature that would, if disclosed prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied it.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's acceptance of Tender T022-2026 to award a lump sum contract for the construction of electrical relocations and power supply as part of the Tamworth Regional Skywalk (Skywalk) project in Victoria Park.

Background

The Skywalk project is located within the Victoria Park Precinct in East Tamworth and is

currently under construction by specialist contractor Forge. Works are progressing well and are anticipated to be completed in about June 2026.

A section of low voltage overhead powerlines along Scenic Road are required to be relocated underground to make way for the proposed bridge crossing of the road. The project also requires an upgraded low voltage supply for the power and lighting along the Skywalk. Following investigation of several options, the preferred solution is for this power supply to be provided from an upgrade to the pad-mounted substation adjacent to the Tamworth Men's Shed within Victoria Park, and new cabling across Long Gully to the bottom of the Skywalk from Endeavour Drive; Forge will then complete all power and lighting along the Skywalk as part of their existing contract.

Construction of the electrical relocation and supply cabling works is expected to be completed by about Christmas 2025, with the substation upgrade expected to be completed in the first quarter of 2026. The approximate location of the electrical work is shown in Figure 1 below.

The design for the works was completed by a local electrical consultant and is currently with Essential Energy for certification. Relocation of the electricity on Scenic Road requires the creation of an easement.



Figure 1 – Blue indicates approximate construction locations

Tender Scope

A tender for the construction of the electrical relocation and supply was advertised for a

period of 21 days and closed on 9 October 2025. A mandatory pre-tender meeting was held on 25 September 2025, with tenderers attending site to ensure they were familiar with the specific site conditions.

11.2 TENDER T138-2023 HARRIER PARADE SEWAGE PUMPING STATION STAGED UPGRADE - POWER SUPPLY

DIRECTORATE: WATER AND WASTE
AUTHOR: Naomi Schipanski, Manager - Projects, Strategy and Infrastructure

1 CONFIDENTIAL ENCLOSURES ENCLOSED

The Council will determine this matter in part of the Meeting closed to the public pursuant to Section 10A(2) (d)i of the Local Government Act 1993 on the grounds that the matter and information is commercial information of a confidential nature that would, if disclosed prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied it.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to recommend acceptance of a Tender for the construction of the Harrier Parade Sewage Pumping Station (SPS3C) Power Supply Upgrade.

The Tamworth Sewer Strategy identified the Harrier Parade Sewage Pump Station (SPS3C) has insufficient pump capacity and is in need of an upgrade to meet current and future requirements. The proposed works include a new, larger pump well to accommodate larger pumps which cannot be accommodated in the existing pump well. The larger pump well will also provide necessary additional storage capacity.

The project was originally Tendered as a full package of works covering a power supply upgrade as well as construction of the new pumping station well, installation of pumps and associated works. Only one Tender was received at the time, and the tender significantly exceeded Council's budget. It was identified that changing the procurement strategy to Tender two packages of work would be beneficial, giving the market time to cool and then releasing the works in a more competitive environment. It was also identified that long lead times for the electrical components, including the transformer kiosk were potentially impacting pricing by introducing escalation risk to the tendered price. Additionally, only receiving one submission meant that no comparison of pricing was able to be made and given how much higher the tendered price was compared to the Council resolved to reject the tender, and stage the upgrades instead.

The first Stage was to construct a new 200mm diameter rising main and connect to the existing pump station. This has been completed. The larger rising main has improved flow rates from the pump station in its existing configuration, which has improved pumping capacity in the short term and will be connected to the upgraded pumping station when the works are complete.

The current stage has been a Tender for the required electrical upgrade works. When the electrical works are near completion, a tender for the pump station upgrade will be released.

During the design phase it was identified that the existing electrical power supply cannot service the upgraded SPS 3C. A new kiosk transformer and substation, high voltage connection, and underground powerlines must be installed to provide electrical supply to the upgraded pump station.

Works Tendered included:

- power supply works specified in Essential Energy certified design ECN-119441;
- new connection pillar for Harrier Parade SPS3C;
- new underground service mains to SPS3C;
- concrete scour protection over the new low voltage service mains; and
- survey and photographs of all new underground assets and works-as-executed drawings of all works.

A request for Tenders was advertised on Tenderlink for a period of five weeks and closed on 11 June 2025. Four Tenders were received.