



## MAYORAL MESSAGE

*Mayor Bronwyn Petrie*

### MINISTERIAL VISIT

Local Member Minister Janelle Saffin and I were able to secure a meeting with the Minister for Police Yasmin Catley and NSW Police Assistant Commissioner Brett Greentree to discuss police numbers in Tenterfield after missing out on a Probationary Constable from the latest Goulburn Police Academy graduates.

Assistant Commissioner Greentree explained they usually allocate Probationary Constables to 24 hour stations and advised that their priority for Tenterfield was to secure the filling of current vacancies, potentially bolster numbers with secondments, and they would investigate allocating a Probationary Officer from the next class in August.

Minister Catley was very interested in hearing first-hand about the crime related activity following the decrease in police numbers two years ago, however we were able to report successes by local police in solving a good number of the thefts.



The Tenterfield Autumn Festival Committee has reported that the 2025 Tenterfield Autumn Festival held recently over the Easter Long Weekend, 18-21 April 2025, was an outstanding success with thousands of locals and visitors enjoying activities and highlights.

A range of events in the parks precinct and around town with the combination of fabulous markets and kids entertainment, vintage and veteran car display, Easter Egg hunt, street food, concert and live music, skatepark action, nostalgic rides on the Cobb & Co coach, kite flying, open gardens, barefoot bowls, a round of golf, fashion parade, bike ride, author talk, museums, hay bale competition and historic Stannum House and Quoll Headquarters tours.

Many businesses said it was their best trading ever.

Visitors were constantly seen over the weekend enjoying the many beautiful parks with their autumn leaves on display.

Planning is now underway for the 2026 Festival with new events already being locked in and favourites to continue and expand.

The committee thanks all their sponsors without whom the Festival would not be a success.



Jubilee Park image credit to Tyrone Ryan





## From the General Managers Desk:

### 2025/26-OPERATIONAL PLAN AND BUDGET

The Tenterfield Shire Council (TSC), like many other local authorities in NSW and indeed nationwide, finds itself in an unfortunate financial position.

The NSW State Government's policy of rate pegging over a sustained period of 48 years (since 1977), the Commonwealth Government's refusal to increase Financial Assistance Grants (FAGs) to its initial 1% of all federal revenues (currently sitting at 0.51%), continued cost shifting from the other spheres of Government onto the Local Government Sector (calculated to be \$1.9million for the 2024/25 Financial Year alone for TSC), constant rises in the cost of commodities like materials, plant, equipment, and labour – with increases above the consumer price index (CPI) especially within the construction industry (roads, bridges, culverts, causeways) – make it impossible for the local government sector to sustainably survive. Focusing only on the aspect of rate pegging, the compounding effect of property rate rises at percentages markedly lower than the CPI for a period of 45 years, has had a devastating effect on this sector.



Therefore, TSC is not alone in this financial dilemma.

The following is a short extract of the NSW Auditor General's most recent report regarding the financial sustainability of councils:

*At 30 June 2024, 35 councils (10 metropolitan, 10 regional and 15 rural) met just one or none of the three key financial sustainability benchmarks. Fifty-two councils (40%) did not meet the operating performance benchmark, and 59 councils (46%) did not meet the infrastructure renewal benchmark. Two councils – Bathurst Regional and Shoalhaven City – have not met any of the benchmarks for at least three years. In addition, the cash and investments of these two councils (not subject to external restrictions) were insufficient to meet three months of their expenses [within their General Funds only] (excluding depreciation and borrowing costs). This indicates more serious risks to their continued financial sustainability. A further 14 councils did not have cash and investments (not subject to external restrictions) to meet three months of their expenses (excluding depreciation and borrowing costs).*

The above extract paints a stark picture of the industry, especially if one considers that 85% of the FAGs has been received in the previous financial year; skewing the financial year-end results of Councils significantly and making Councils appear more financially sustainable than what they really are.

TSC has over the last number of years pro-actively tried to address its financial decline – which has unfortunately resulted in significant ramifications and collateral damage for this Council. The policy of a blank moratorium on the filling of positions that have gone vacant, reducing staffing numbers from 112 full-time equivalent positions to 82 over a period of approximately three years, has decimated the organisation's access to corporate knowledge and capacity to deliver services in an effective and efficient manner. At the time of writing this commentary, TSC also had 14 vacant positions – compounded by difficulties in the sector to attract and retain competent staff, Tenterfield's perceived remote location, comparatively high real estate prices and lack of rental properties.

Employees are, generally speaking, over-burdened and overwhelmed with trying to meet compliance requirements, expending large amounts of grant funding (including disaster relief funding) carried forward from previous financial years, and trying to deal with what is perceived to be relentless, unrealistic service expectations – resulting in a demoralised workforce with low morale.

As a result, I do have considerable concerns about the organisation's ability and capacity to adhere to Work Health and Safety requirements and considerations, and the psychosocial risk our Council is now exposed to.

This Delivery Program (DP) for the next four years, including the Operation Plan (OP) and Budget for the 2025/26-financial year, is an honest attempt to start addressing these above-mentioned issues, whilst also consolidating these efforts with valid community expectations and aspirations contained in the Community Strategic Plan.

The DP and OP (and Budget), amongst many other things, address the following:

- Identification of nine key positions that are necessary to start building the capacity of the organisation again;
- Identification of 12 trainee positions, making use of the State Government's initiative to fund these trainee positions;
- Questioning the existing fees and charges associated with the water, sewer and waste funds – with either no increases or decreases recommended for these service areas for the next financial year;
- Bringing into the equation robust asset management data pertaining to Council's sealed and unsealed road network, 52 bridges and properties – which information is crucial in determining TSC's true infrastructure backlog and financial position;
- Adjusting Council's rating model to achieve a higher level of equity across the different rating categories, e.g. better aligning the Residential Rural rating category (formerly called Residential Other) with the other Residential and Farmland categories – planned to be phased in over a two-year period;
- Flagging the need for Council to pursue a Special Rate Variation to ideally increase funding availability for its local roads network and remove its ongoing operational budget deficits as shown in the Long-Term Financial Plan in future years, however, for the timing of this exercise to be properly thought-through.

I extend my thanks and appreciation to the other members of the Leadership Executive Team, all other staff who are working hard and doing their best under taxing circumstances, and to the Mayor and Councillors for working together to produce this fresh start.

Hein Basson – General Manager

## ADVOCACY FOR A BETTER FINANCIAL REGIME FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

It is noteworthy that **Local Government NSW**, the peak body for local government in the State – of which Tenterfield Shire Council is an active member – has been advocating for many years for the **Financial Assistance Grants** to be restored to **1% of Commonwealth taxation revenue**. In addition, in late November 2024, the NSW Financial Sustainability Inquiry recommended to the NSW Government to support calls for increasing the Financial Assistance Grants and amend the Rural Fires Act so that RFS assets are vested in the RFS, and not reflected on Councils' books. Local Government NSW also asked for the Emergency Services Levy (ESL) to be removed from Councils and replaced with a transparent, equitable and sustainable funding model.

### NO SPECIAL RATE VARIATION FOR 2025/26:

Council has recently adopted the following resolution:

*That Council, during the 2025/26-Financial Year, continues to evaluate its financial position, capital spending of prior Special Rate Variation determinations and spending against budgetary allocations, Asset Management Plan updates, staffing resources (including human capital within the organisation), and social capital within the community – for a Special Rate Variation to be pursued in the 2026/27- Financial Year for implementation on 1 July 2027.*

The following comments are provided to explain the thinking behind this above-mentioned resolution:

#### *Financial Position (General Fund):*

- Council is predicted to be going backwards by approximately \$2.1 million (cash) in 2025/26, with this amount increasing in subsequent years.
- Council currently has around \$9 million available as unrestricted cash. Therefore, it will take around four years for Council to deplete its cash reserves.

#### *Capital & Operational Spending:*

- Prior SRV-monies: Council currently still have previous SRV monies unexpended.
- Budgeted amounts: Historically, Council typically does not spend what it has allocated in the annual budgets. In recent years this tendency has been made worse by the amounts of disaster relief funding that has to be expended. The upside of this is that Council potentially won't be depleting its reserves within the mentioned four-year timeframe. However, it is clear that an SRV is inevitable in the not-too-distant future.

#### *Asset Management Plans (AMPs): Lack of Development / Refinement / Update:*

- Council's AMPs are not updated yet – although robust data regarding the sealed roads network and 52 bridges is now available.
- The Integrated Water Cycle Management Plan that is in the process of being developed, will incorporate useful data for water and sewer assets.
- Council has now advertised three times unsuccessfully for an Asset Manager.
- Council has significant staff shortages in the infrastructure Department.

#### *Staffing Resources and Human Capital:*

Definition: The Human Capital within an organisation pertains to the health and skills available within the organisation.

- We currently have 13 vacancies.
- We've incorporated 9 additional positions in the 2025/26-Budget, plus
- 12 Trainee positions (funded by the State Government's initiative to rebuild the human resourcing capacity of the local government sector), but
- We currently don't have the resources to do the recruitment and selection processes to fill these positions even if suitable candidates could be found, and
- We currently don't have the expertise within the organisation to take on the trainees and train them (in accordance with the expectations of the OLG and the State Government).

#### *Social Capital:*

Definitions: "Social Capital is the 'glue' that holds societies together; ...the extent and nature of our connections with others and the collective attitudes and behaviours between people that support a well-functioning, close-knit society." (<https://whatworkswellbeing.org/resources/what-is-social-capital/>)

- The current financial year is the first year that our community pays the most recent SRV of 43%.
- There is an argument that the previous round of community consultation regarding an SRV eroded much of the social capital.
- Council is providing some relief to ratepayers by either decreasing or not increasing water, sewer, and waste charges for the 2025/26 financial year (and possibly for a number of ensuing years).
- Council is providing some relief to ratepayers within particular rating categories (e.g. Residential Tenterfield) by amending the rating model to be more equitable and fairer.

In a nutshell, Council is concerned that it is not currently in a good position to pursue an SRV, and is not confident that it will succeed - which will leave Council in a place where Councillors, staff, and the community will be exhausted and without the necessary reserves and social and human capital to go again.

Therefore, Council has decided to put this action on the backburner for another year, whilst it tries to get the organisation in better shape, allow the community some time to recover from the previous SRV-round, and allow some time to build social capital and a better understanding within our community about the financial and other challenges Council is facing.





## WELCOME TO OUR NEW AUSTRALIAN CITIZENS

On Wednesday, 30th April 2025, five new Australian Citizens were welcomed to the Tenterfield Shire. Mayor Brownyn Petrie presided over the Citizenship Ceremony for Gina Duggan, Thomas Moore and three other new citizens who all reside in the Tenterfield Shire.

The Ceremony included a message from the Minister for Citizenship Regulation 2016 under the authority of the Minister Home Affairs, Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, Minister for Cyber Security, Minister for the Arts, Leader of the House., the Hon Tony Burke MP, read by Deputy Mayor, Cr Greg Sauer, and was witnessed by the Councillors of the Tenterfield Shire. Family and friends of the new citizens were also in attendance of support at the ceremony.



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### VILLAGE BORE COMMENCEMENT AT DRAKE



Council received the Bushfire Local Economic Recovery (BLER) Fund grant. The BLER grant is being used to provide livestock and enhance firefighting capabilities in the villages of Legume, Liston, Torrington, and Drake.

The first and second bores have been completed at Legume and Liston with drilling completed in May 2025, with water initially found at

6.5Litres/second at the village of Drake, located, near the RFS station in Drake.

Once completed, the bore will be a firefighting, and livestock bore available for the community to use.

This project is jointly funded by Tenterfield Shire Council together with the Australian and NSW Government's Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund.

### ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETINGS - JUNE AND JULY

Upcoming Ordinary Meetings of Council will be held on **Monday, 23 June and Wednesday, 23 July 2025 at 9.30am** in the Koreelah Room, Tenterfield Shire Council Chambers, 247 Rouse Street, Tenterfield.

Business Papers will be available on the Council's website [www.tenterfield.nsw.gov.au](http://www.tenterfield.nsw.gov.au) by around noon on the Friday before each Ordinary Council Meeting.

Community members wishing to speak on any of the agenda items should contact Council at [council@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au) before 5.00pm on the Monday of the week of the meeting. Requests to speak at the meeting must be in writing using the "Application to Speak at Ordinary Council Meeting" form available on Council's website [www.tenterfield.nsw.gov.au/your-council/forms](http://www.tenterfield.nsw.gov.au/your-council/forms)

Notification of speakers will appear on Council's Facebook page and website the day before the Ordinary Meeting.



Follow our Facebook page for updates on Council activities

**@TenterfieldShireCouncil**

## RATES & CHARGES FOURTH INSTALMENT NOTICE 2024/2025

Council wishes to advise Residents and Business Owners that the Fourth Rates Instalment Notice is now overdue. Reminder Notices have been issued to ratepayers with outstanding balances seeking payment prior to 30 June 2025.

### TIME FOR A CHECK UP

With the 2025/2026 rates and charges to be issued in July 2025 it may be a good time to review your payment arrangement and increase your periodical payments so that you stay on track with your account. Give the Rates Department a call if you require any assistance.

### PENSIONER CONCESSIONS

Have you moved house or become eligible for a pension? You may like to apply for the Pensioner Rebate on your Annual Rates.

Application forms can be downloaded from Council's website:

[www.tenterfield.nsw.gov.au/your-council/forms/application-for-pensioner-concession-rates-rebate](http://www.tenterfield.nsw.gov.au/your-council/forms/application-for-pensioner-concession-rates-rebate)

Please complete the checklist before submitting your completed application to Council with a copy of the front and back of your Pensioner Concession Card.

You may be eligible for the rebate if:

- You have a current Pensioner Concession Card, and
- The property is your primary place of residence, and an Occupation Certificate has been issued.

If you already receive the pension rebate on your rates, you do not need to do anything unless you have moved since receiving your last Rates Notice, or you have had changes to your pension type, then you will need to re-apply.

Unsure if you are receiving a rebate or require assistance completing your application? Council's Customer Service and Rates team members are happy to help.

### WATER & SEWERAGE NOTICES

Water & Sewerage Notices were issued prior to 30 June 2025 and payment of accounts are due on or before 1 August 2025. Water & Sewerage Notices are calculated on a 'User Pays' system therefore any consumption that passes through the meter will be charged as outlined in Council's Operational Plan.

Ratepayers are reminded that interest accrues on all overdue rates, service charges and water & sewerage consumption charges on a daily basis at a rate of 10.5% per annum.

Please contact Council's Rates Department on 02 6736 6000, option 2 if you are experiencing difficulties paying your Rates or Water Account to avoid recovery action and costs.

## GREEN WASTE ON HOLD

Council would like to request the community to omit placing grass clippings and pruning's into the General Waste (red or green lid) collection.

Council's main landfill located at Boonoo Boonoo is over capacity and unfortunately due to consistent wet weather, the construction of our new waste cell has been substantially delayed.

Until further notice, this temporary arrangement will need to be provided for waste and reducing the volume will be critical.

Council appreciates your assistance in reducing green waste.

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## HOT ASHES DISPOSAL

It's that time of year when residents light their fires to stave off the winter chill. Council Staff would like to remind residents that no hot ashes are to be placed in rubbish bins.

Hot Ashes can easily ignite waste when placed in bins, resulting in melted bins and potential damage to Council's Waste side loader truck.



Replacement mobile bin charges are listed in Councils Fees and Charges.

Your assistance with the safety of our Staff is always appreciated.

For further information for managing your waste can be found on Councils Website

[www.tenterfield.nsw.gov.au/services/waste-recycling](http://www.tenterfield.nsw.gov.au/services/waste-recycling)



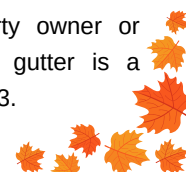
## LEAF PICK UP

Council will continue with the removal of fallen leaves from trees in the streets of Tenterfield on each Wednesday and Thursday until mid-end of June as required.

Please phone Council on 02 67 36 6000 to lodge your name, phone number and address for Leaf Collection.

Please have leaves raked in piles towards the edge of the road for collection.

The removal of leaves from trees other than street trees remains the responsibility of the property owner or resident. The burning of leaves in the gutter is a prohibited activity under the Roads Act 1993.



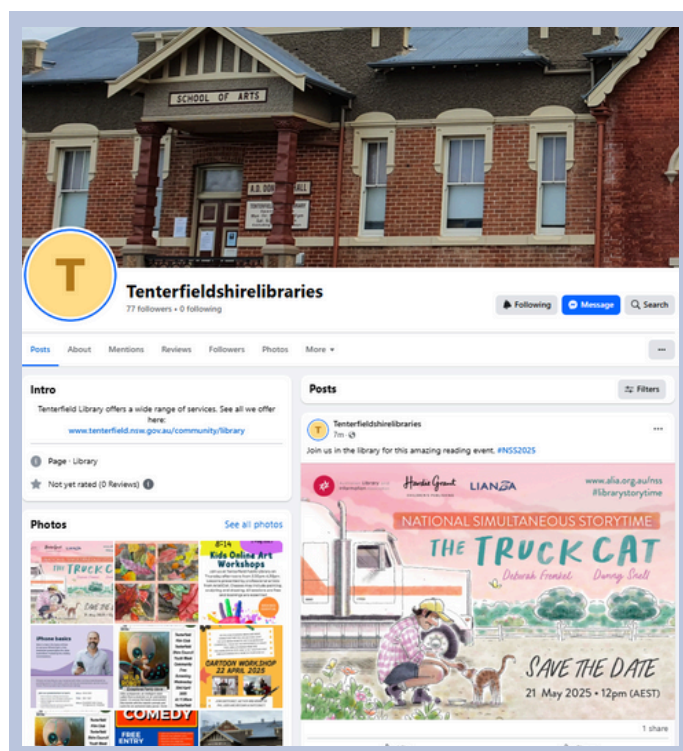


## What's on in the Library:

Tenterfield Public Library, along with the Urbenville library branch, have a new Facebook page.

Follow us to keep up to date with events.

@Tenterfieldshirelibraries



*Tenterfield Public Library*



EST 2025

**BOOKS AND BIKKIES  
BOOK CLUB**

Join our new book club at  
**Tenterfield Public Library**  
The next meeting will be on  
**Friday 20 June 2025**  
**10.30-11.30am**

Please contact the library on 67366060  
for more information.

The new book is available from the library.



## Community Health and Wellbeing Survey Closes 13<sup>th</sup> July 2025

Monash University is conducting research on the long term impacts of the 2019/2020 bushfires on community health, wellbeing and recovery. While the immediate effects of bushfires are well documented, less is understood about how these events continue to impact communities years later.

If you lived and/or worked in the Tenterfield Shire at the time of the 2019/2020 bushfires, you can take the survey in multiple ways including:

- Online:  
[https://monash.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_bOBgfE5Tmq7V206](https://monash.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bOBgfE5Tmq7V206)
- By phone: Call 03 9903 0298 to schedule a time.
- Register by email: [f2fhealth@monash.edu](mailto:f2fhealth@monash.edu)



Help shape recovery and  
wellbeing in *Tenterfield*

**SURVEY  
NOW OPEN**

The Health and Wellbeing Survey seeks to understand the impacts of the 2019-20 bushfires on your health, wellbeing and recovery.

Why take part?

- > Help direct resources to health services you need
- > Help to improve support for your community
- > Receive a \$30 gift voucher for your time

How to take part?

Online: Via the QR Code

Phone: 03 9903 0298

In-Person: Register by email: [f2fhealth@monash.edu](mailto:f2fhealth@monash.edu)

Take the survey  
scan the code

