

**REPORT TITLE: 7.20 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2020/2021**

**ECM INDEXES:**

**Subject Index: CORPORATE MANAGEMENT: Reporting  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: Planning**

**Customer Index: NIL**

**Property Index: NIL**

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Regulatory Services**

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**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to provide an **End of Financial Year (EOFY)** summary to Council on the key actions, activities, projects and programs undertaken in Council's Economic Development department for the 2020/2021 Financial Year.

**RECOMMENDATION**

*That Council notes the information contained in this report.*

Moved Cr A Parsons                      Seconded Cr S Toms

**22.07/21 RESOLUTION**

*That Council notes the information contained in this report.*

A division was called for, voting on which was as follows:

For	Against
Cr C Sparks	Nil
Cr D Newman	
Cr G Frendon	
Cr A Parsons	
Cr C Price	

Cr J Smith  
Cr S Toms

The division was declared CARRIED by 7 votes to 0.

**CARRIED**

## **REPORT**

### **(a) Background**

Economic Development is one (1) of the five (5) strategic directions of the Glen Innes Severn Community Strategic Plan. This department is part of the Development Planning and Regulatory Services Directorate of Council and is responsible for the delivery of the economic development strategy, programs and initiatives incorporating:

1. Developing business, industry, and investment;
2. Tourism and Events and the Visitor Information Centre;
3. Grants Funding; and
4. The marketing and promotion of Glen Innes Highlands.

### **(b) Discussion**

This report includes information for the 2020/2021 Financial Year relating to the strategic priority objective of:

*“Facilitate a growing local economy by continuing to support an attractive business climate.”*

This report also includes actions from the Economic Development Strategy 2020-2040 and Action Plan 2020-2021

*Vision: “Our place grows from the people that live within it. We celebrate and honour our shared Indigenous and European history and traditions. We connect, engage, nurture and motivate each other for mutual prosperity to create a vibrant and close-knit community that welcomes new people.”*

*Strategy: “The Glen Innes Highlands Economic Development Strategy provides a clear pathway for Council and Community to foster local socio-economic prosperity and growth through the four key pillars of Partnerships, People, Place, and Prosperity. These four pillars provide a whole-of-place mechanism to deliver a place-based approach to local economic development.”*

**EOFY Progress Report – Operational Plan and Economic Development Action Plan**

The following report summarises results for the 2020/2021 Financial Year within the Economic Development Team utilising the 2020/2021 Operational Budget as well as successful grant funding applications.

March 2021 also saw the Economic Development Strategy 2020-2040 being adopted by Council. Four (4) initiatives were achieved in 2020-2021 being:

1. **GROW Glen Innes THINK TANK (GGITT)** was launched on 31 March 2020 with 46 registrations by end June 2021 with two workshops conducted for: Healthcare Workforce Attraction and Jobs and Skills Gaps.
2. Jobs and Skills Gaps and Workforce Attraction and Retention Strategy - this has been completed with a GGITT conducted to commence on the Local Jobs and Skills Program.
3. Attracting Aged Care Facilities for a Future Ageing Population - A Housing Assessment and Future Strategy has been commissioned to inform the needs to this action and will be delivered in the next Financial Year.
4. The following projects were funded in 2020/2021: Escape Rooms, Regional Powerhouse Museum Proposal and Business Case, Gravel Grinding routes (6) and event incubation (cycling) and the New England Rail Trail.

Other key initiatives delivered in 2020/2021 include:

1. Communicating with visitors and locals is ongoing via our social media and newsletters. Table 1.1 – Newsletter activity shows the number of newsletters delivered over the year.

Newsletter	Target Audience	Number delivered
Glen Innes Highlands	Subscribers to GIH website (visitors)	8
Tourism and Events	Local visitor economy businesses	2
Grants ('Bid Blast')	Local business and community	10
Local Economic Development	Local business and community	5
General news articles on GIH news page	Website users and social media driven to website via social posts	5

*Table 1.1 – Newsletter activity*

2. Marketing **Glen Innes Highlands (GIH)** as a place to Visit, Live and Invest included paid digital and social media, television, and print advertisements across a range of publications, to reach multiple target audience demographics and geographics.

Marketing activity was reviewed monthly and optimised across Council channels, social media, GIH website and GIH newsletter. Increased website traffic for the period compared with the previous period (FY 2019/2020) and highlights the positive impact of the marketing activity on increasing brand awareness, see Chart 1.1 - GIH website unique users **Financial Year on Year (FYOY)**.

The disparity in the month of April is caused by the campaign pause in April and May 2020 around COVID-19 lockdowns, compared with April 2021 when the GIH 'Where you'd rather be' campaign.

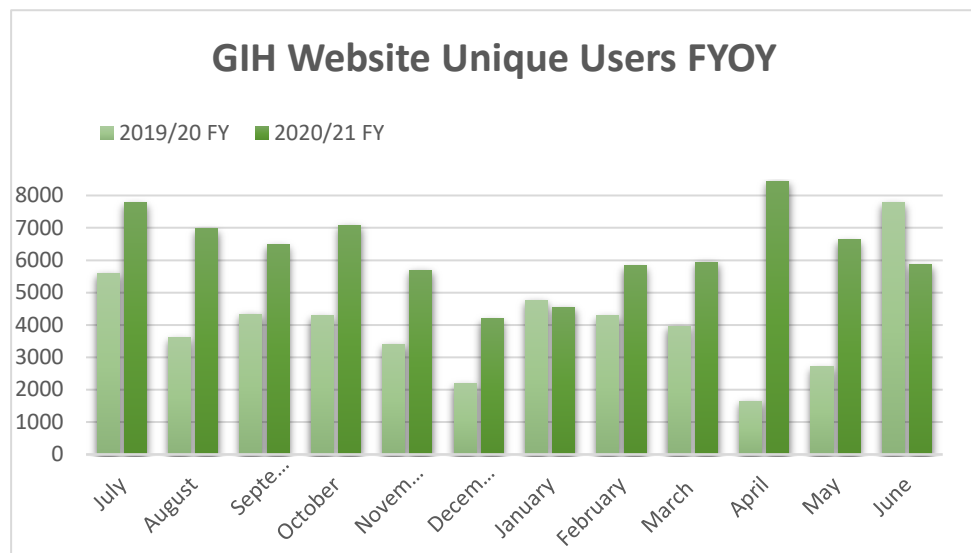


Chart 1.1 - GIH website unique users Financial Year on year (FYOY)

As of 30 June 2021, GIH had a combined social media following of 7,847, growth of 1,564 followers from the previous period. Social media engagement increased by 339% and impressions by 176% compared to the previous period, further supporting the positive impact of the marketing activity.

Optimisation of the GIH website included integration of accommodation listings from the **Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW)** enabling local businesses and event organisers to control their own content and leverage exposure through the ATDW's wide distribution network.

The new GIH Visitor Guide advertising prospectus secured eight (8) local advertisers with more expected following an extension to the booking deadline. In addition, there is more branded video content than ever before. To view these, visit:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCeM9LwfraJFwDP1hbLBFXFg/videos>

3. **Glen Innes Visitor Information Centre (VIC)** visitors during COVID-19 restrictions, border closures and uncertainty for regional travellers during was challenging for visitors and local businesses. Glen Innes experienced many visitors from South Queensland, looking for regional holidays, day trippers from Tenterfield, Inverell, Armidale and also saw the return of interstate visitors in March, except from Victoria which had recurring lockdown restrictions.

The total number of visitors to the VIC for 2020/2021 was 14,212 due to people stopping on their way north to warmer weather, those visiting friends and relatives, fossicking enquiries and visitors exploring the World Heritage Way.

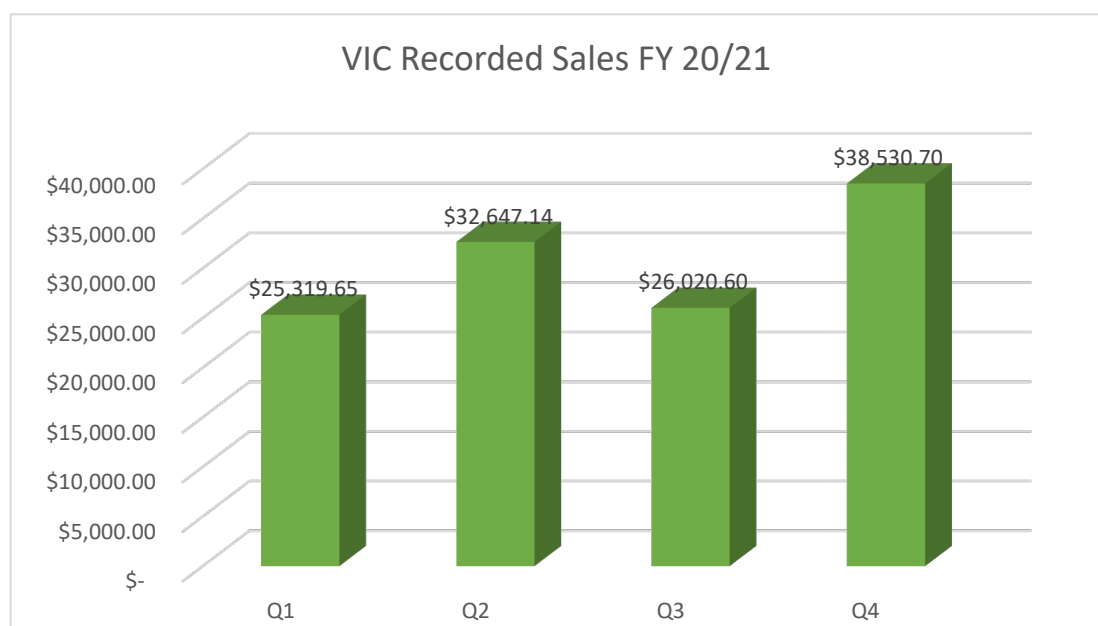
Glen Innes became a convenient stop-over town for those travelling west from the coast during the easing of restrictions as well as a place to 'rest up' while waiting for closed borders to reopen.

During this time, Glen Innes had consistent accommodation bookings and visitors to our high street businesses.

The March floods also brought many tourists to Glen Innes due to closures on the Pacific Highway and flooding inland. Our seasonal attractions also saw increases in visitors looking for Autumn colour and the recent snow exhausted all accommodation.

The VIC played an integral role during the pandemic for those visitors who needed to access up to date information regarding border closures, requiring border passes or up to date information from NSW Health.

4. The **Glen Innes Highlands Shop (GIH Shop)** sales reached 118% of the yearly target with Quarter Four (4) being the highest quarter in sales. Refer Chart 1.2 for a comparison of quarterly sales:



*Chart 1.2 – VIC Shop Sales FY 2020/2021.*

The GIH Shop continued to support and highlight local produce, local artisans and GIH branded merchandise. Fossicking gem wash, local honey and Glen Innes branded pens were our highest selling products. The Heather gems and St Justin’s jewellery range, which is part of our Celtic pillar also had consistent sales.

5. Council-run events included **Christmas in the Highlands (CIH)** was the first COVID-19 Safe event facilitated by Council for the year. This events’ success proved we could hold compliant events during the pandemic.

This event had a capped attendance and was attended primarily by residents. The additional street lighting decorations attracted day tripping tourism which gave a boost to the local businesses during the holiday season. There was overall positive feedback from community groups, stallholders, and residents.

**Minerama Fossicking, Gem and Jewellery Show** was held from 12 until 14 March 2021 at the Glen Innes Showgrounds. Council provided the debrief to the incoming Minerama Committee on 15 June 2021. (**Annexure B**).

The support of the Regional Bushfire Grant Funding for marketing assisted with the advertising campaign that secured an attendance of over 3,000 people over the three (3) days.

The local economic benefit was estimated to be \$653,909 to the community. Refer to Table 1.2 – Minerama Tourism Impact 2021:

<b>Direct Impact</b>	<b>Domestic Day</b>	<b>Domestic Overnight</b>	<b>International</b>	<b>Total</b>
Number of Visitors	973	2,140	0	3,113
Number of Nights	n/a	2.00	0.00	
Estimated Expenditure per Visitor per Day (\$)	\$153	\$118	\$45	
Total Estimated Expenditure (\$)	\$148,869	\$505,040	\$0	\$653,909

Estimated Expenditure per Visitor per Day data sourced from:  
TRA 2019 Glen Innes Severn (A) Local Government Area Tourism Profile - Domestic Overnight & International Visitors. Destination NSW March 2020 New England North West Regional Tourism Profile - Domestic Day Visitors.

*Table 1.2 – Minerama Tourism Impact 2021*

**The Australian Celtic Fringe Festival** was held Saturday, 1 May 2021 and Sunday, 2 May 2021. This event was a scaled down to remain compliant to NSW Health legislation.

Over 2500 tickets were sold and many new visitors and locals visited the 'Free' market area. Feedback from Stallholders, performers, visitors were positive. Hotel accommodation was fully booked and some caravan parks. The local economic benefit was \$971,466 to the community. Refer Table 1.2 – Australian Celtic Fringe Festival Tourism Impact 2021:

<b>Direct Impact</b>	<b>Domestic Day</b>	<b>Domestic Overnight</b>	<b>International</b>	<b>Total</b>
Number of Visitors	1,722	2,000	0	3,722
Number of Nights	n/a	3.00	0.00	
Estimated Expenditure per Visitor per Day (\$)	\$153	\$118	\$45	
Total Estimated Expenditure (\$)	\$263,466	\$708,000	\$0	\$971,466

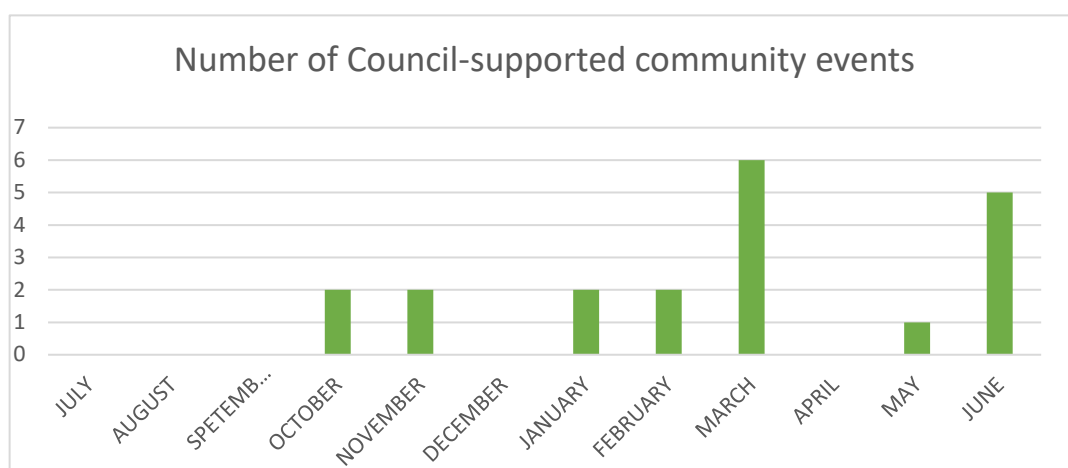
Estimated Expenditure per Visitor per Day data sourced from:  
TRA 2019 Glen Innes Severn (A) Local Government Area Tourism Profile - Domestic Overnight & International Visitors. Destination NSW March 2020 New England North West Regional Tourism Profile - Domestic Day Visitors.

*Table 1.3 – Australian Celtic Fringe Festival Tourism Impact 2021*

6. All scheduled Council supported events form the **Event Prioritisation Policy** were held except for the First Nations Festival. This event was challenging for the First Nations Committee and became too difficult to facilitate, faced with the cultural expectations of the Indigenous community and being in a vulnerable category as per NSW’s Health COVID-19 guidelines.

A total of 20 local events were supported by Council which included event support, marketing and promotion and general advice on holding a Covid-19 safe event. Refer to Chart 1.3 for the number of Council supported local events.

No events were held in July – September due to COVID-19 restrictions.



*Chart 1.3 – Number of Council-supported local events 2020/2021*

7. The **Business Incentive Fund** provided financial support to the following businesses with a total of \$61,000 allocated: Weirbuilt, Cool Climate Gardens, Sew Many Fabrics, Ben’s Falls Retreat.

### **EOFY Progress Report – Additional Initiatives, and Projects**

1. Healthcare – Attract, Connect, Stay Community Project **Expression of Interest (EOI)** which aims to address chronic rural health workforce shortages in small rural towns (population approximately 10K or less), through building community support to create, self-fund and manage a **Rural Health Workforce Coordinator (RHWC)** position.
2. Pop-up Artists in Residence – Launched on 3 June 2021 this project was a great success and will continue until the end of August 2021 with a variety of artists.
3. Highlands Hub – the digital business hub continues to attract new businesses steadily. The platform is under development to expand to include profiles for community, community groups and integrate a jobs and career function. The platform can be described as ‘Glen Innes Online’ – a digital place where the whole community can interact on one platform to achieve more connection, communication, employment opportunities, job candidates and support systems for all generations.



The physical version of this – the Highlands Business and Community Hub is co-working space for business and community to utilise. This project has now been fully funded through the **Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund (BLER)** to the value of \$616,000. This will fund the fit-out of a rented premise for two (2) years including courses and programs.

The physical Highlands Hub will support adult education initiatives, start-ups, remote workers, community groups, business with facilities to hold conferences, meetings, programs and office space of different sizes and rental options. A business case is under development to ensure that the project can continue to be viable following the funded period.

4. **New England High Country (NEHC)** - 2020/2021 FY marketing activity promoting the regional destination brand, NEHC included paid digital and social, product development and print.

Activities included the launch of the NEHC nature-based experience website and promotion of the NEHC brand campaign, motorcycle campaign, car and club campaign, Recreational Vehicle and caravan campaign.

Major product development included the and production and print of two (2) new regional maps. A Regional Map Guide of NEHC highlighting experiences in each town including Glen Innes and an Adventure Drive Map, highlighting touring routes aimed at the club and car market.

NEHC website <https://www.newenglandhighcountry.com.au/>

#### **EOFY Progress Report – Shovel-Ready Projects and Project under Business Case Development**

1. Centennial Parklands amenities, kitchen extension and covered event area is now a shovel-ready project with a detailed design and detailed costing being completed.
2. Tourism Packages and Itinerary Planner – This is a new and innovative web-based system that will provide a seamless end-to-end experience for discovery, planning and booking trips for Regional Australia.

The project was unsuccessfully funded under the BLER funding stream. Alternative funding is being investigated.

3. Glen Innes Powerhouse Museum – A concept plan has been developed to share with Sydney Powerhouse Museum to discuss a potential partnership.

The unique assets and their location provide an opportunity to tell the story of power generation from the past and into the future.

The business case will be developed to consider this project as a potential new tourism and education attraction. Essential Energy is placing the heritage building on the open market for sale.

## EOFY Progress Report – Grants and Funding

Overall, across all Council departments the 2020/2021 Financial Year has been a busy period for grants and funding activity.

Twenty grant applications that were submitted by Glen Innes Severn Council were approved for a total of \$25,240,785.

Council is currently awaiting decision on a further seven (7) applications to the value of \$1,137,600.

Council was unsuccessful with 10 grant applications for a total of \$8,389,359 potential funding.

### Grant Applications - Financial Year Summary

#### Grant Applications – Financial Year Summary

Table 1.1 – Financial Summary provides a summary of grant information for the past four (4) years:

Description	2020/2021	2019/2020	2018/2019	2017/2018
Number of Grants Approved	20	11	29	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$25,240,785</b>	<b>\$4,504,252</b>	<b>\$11,005,216</b>	<b>\$1,051,535</b>
Number of Unsuccessful Grants	10	4	6	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$8,389,359</b>	<b>\$1,880,691</b>	<b>\$1,837,753</b>	<b>0</b>

*Table 1.4 – Financial Summary*

2020/2021 Grant Applications – Unsuccessful

Table 1.2 – 2020-21 Grant Applications – Unsuccessful provides a summary of the unsuccessful grant applications and the value of the grant, for the 2020/2021 year:

<b>Grant Description</b>	<b>Value of Grant</b>
NSW Safer Roads/Federal Black Spot Program – two (2) projects within the LGA.	\$4,316,548
Business Events Boost Program.	\$10,000
Bushfire Community Recovery and Resilience Fund (BCRRF) Phase 2 Stream 2. Mental Health Training, Remote Work and Leadership Capacity Building Programs, Mentor Walks and Marketing.	\$300,000
Community Grants Hub – Life Choices Sensory Garden.	\$30,000
Reducing Social Isolation for Seniors Grant Program Life Choices Support Services Sensory Garden.	\$47,900
Restart Investment to Sustain and Expend (RISE) Fund – Glen Innes Arts Council.	\$561,000
Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund (BLER) - Infrastructure Shared Pathways, Carpark and Dumaresq Street Industrial Area.	\$772,720
Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund (BLER) – Glen Innes Sporting Precinct Skate Park and Aquatic Centre Heat Pump.	\$550,001
Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund (BLER) - Warwick Twigg Indoor Sports Stadium Upgrades - Stage 2.	\$1,000,000
Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund (BLER) - Tourism Packages and Itinerary Planner.	\$801,190
<b>Total value of grants unsuccessful</b>	<b>\$8,389,359</b>

*Table 1.5 – 2020-21 Grant Applications – Unsuccessful*

2020-21 Grant Applications – Approved

Table 1.3 – 2020/2021 Grant Applications – Approved, provides a summary of the grant applications approved, and the value of the grant, for the 2020/2021 year:

<b>Grant Description</b>	<b>Value of Grant</b>
Regional Tourism Bushfire Recovery Grant (RTBR) – Stream 2 – Escape Rooms.	\$145,000
Regional Tourism Bushfire Recovery Grant (RTBR) – Stream 2 – National Park Soundtrails – Joint application with New England High Country (NEHC). \$248,680 total application - \$120,000 promotional programme allocation to be led by GISC.	\$120,000
Regional Tourism Bushfire Recovery Grant (RTBR) – Stream 2 – ACF and Minerama Events – Joint application with Destination Network Country and Outback (DNCO).	\$20,000
Regional Tourism Bushfire Recovery Grant (RTBR) – Stream 1- Application 1012 – GlenRock.	\$20,000
Regional Tourism Bushfire Recovery Grant (RTBR) – Stream 1- Application 1012 – GlenFest.	\$10,000
NSW Safer Roads/Federal Black Spot program – 3 Projects within the LGA (Bald Knob Road Approved).	\$398,500
Fixing Local Roads - Round 1 - NSW Government - Furracabad Road Project.	\$900,000
Bridges Renewal Program (BRP) Round 5 and Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program (HVSP) – Yarrow Creek Bridge Renewal.	\$472,500
Essential Public Asset Reconstruction Works. Disaster Recovery. Old Grafton Road Bridge at Wyaliba over Mann River.	\$2,300,000
The Festival of Place – Summer Fund. Walk of Light event.	\$10,000
Bushfire Community Recovery and Resilience Fund (BCRRF) Phase 2 Stream 1. Wyaliba Anniversary Distraction Event, Fire and Seasons Calendar, Recovery and Resilience Plan and Council-led Community Grants Program.	\$250,000
Regional NSW - Summer Break Activities – Glen Innes and Emmaville Swimming Pools.	\$2,826
Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR) - Strengthening Rural Communities – Wyaliba Rises Sustainable Community Music Events Program.	\$9,267
Fixing Country Bridges (FCB) Round One. 5 Bridges in total. Shannon Vale Road bridge over Mann River, Mt Mitchell bridge over Yarrow Creek, Wentworth Street bridge over Rocky Ponds Creek and Furracabad Road over Furracabad Creek.	\$4,430,600
Regional NSW Planning Portal Grant.	\$50,000
Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund (BLER) – Highlands Business and Community Hub and Programs.	\$616,861

<b>Grant Description</b>	<b>Value of Grant</b>
Fixing Local Roads Round 2 - OTTA Seal 8 Unsealed Roads. Strathbogie Road, West Furracabad Road, Pinkett Road, Mt Mitchell Road, Maybole Road, Yarraford Road, Ten Mile Road, Tent Hill Road.	\$3,019,278
Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund (BLER) – New England Rail Trail Stage One (1) – Glen Innes to Ben Lomond.	\$8,721,095
NSW Public Spaces Legacy Fund – Centennial Parklands Skywalk allocation increased to \$2,000,000 by fund from the original requested allocation of 1,550,000. Villages park upgrades for Emmaville, Deepwater and Glencoe were not approved.	\$2,000,000
Local Roads and Community Infrastructure (LRCI) Program – Phase 3. Funding available 1 January 2022 for projects to be completed by 30 June 2023. Projects to be confirmed by Council at a later date.	\$1,744,858
<b>Total value of grants approved</b>	<b>\$25,240,785</b>

*Table 1.6 – 2020-21 Grant Applications – Approved*

2020/2021 Grant Applications Lodged and Pending Decision

Table 1.4 – 2020-21 Grant Applications – Lodged and Pending Decision provides a summary of the grant applications and the value of the grant, currently lodged and pending a decision by the relevant grant funding body:

<b>Grant Description</b>	<b>Value of Grant</b>
Building Better Regions Fund (BBRF) Round 5 Infrastructure – Highlands Business and Community Hub and Programs.	\$871,764
Destination NSW Tourism Product Development Fund – Refresh and Renew Fund - Glen Innes Visitor Information Centre Upgrade.	\$10,000
Destination NSW Tourism Industry Marketing Support – Grants Program (TIMS-GP).	\$50,000
Stronger Country Communities Fund (SCCF) Round Four (4) – Emmaville War Memorial Hall	\$155,836
NSW EPA – Council Landfill Program Phase Two (2) – Construction of Drainage Around Landfill Site – Glen Innes Landfill	\$15,000
NSW EPA – Council Landfill Program Phase Two (2) – Fencing Work Around Landfill Site – Glen Innes Landfill	\$15,000
NSW EPA – Council Landfill Program Phase Two (2) – Staging Plan Updates and Landfill Life Review – Glen Innes Landfill	\$20,000
<b>Total value of grant applications lodged and pending decision</b>	<b>\$1,137,600</b>

*Table 1.7 – 2020-21 Grant Applications – Lodged and Pending Decision*

**(c) Options**

Nil.

**IMPLICATIONS TO BE ADDRESSED**

**(a) Financial**

Nil.

**(b) Governance/Policy**

Nil.

**(c) Legislative/Statutory**

Nil.

**(d) Risk**

Nil.

**(e) Social**

Nil.

**(f) Environmental**

Nil.

**(g) Economic**

Nil.

**(h) Asset Management**

Nil.

**CONSULTATION**

**(a) External**

Nil.

**(b) Internal**

The information contained in this report has been collected in consultation with various staff members of Council who oversee the respective services that are provided by the Economic Development department.

### **LINK/S TO THE DELIVERY PROGRAM/OPERATIONAL PLAN (DPOP)**

This item links to Council's Delivery Program Community Service Action CS 1.2.5: Investigate ways to promote Glen Innes Highlands as a 'tree change' destination.

This item links to Council's Delivery Program Economic Development Action ED 1.1.1: Undertake a review of the current Economic Development Strategy to ensure Council is capitalising on economic development opportunities in the LGA.

This item links to Council's Delivery Program Economic Development Action ED 3.1.2: Provide incentives to encourage new business to the LGA and assist existing business to expand.

### **CONCLUSION**

The information contained in this report delivers an EOFY summary to Council on the key actions, activities, projects and programs undertaken in Council's Economic Development department for the 2020/2021 Financial Year.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

There are no annexures to this report.