
**NARROMINE SHIRE COUNCIL
ORDINARY MEETING BUSINESS PAPER – 9 APRIL 2025
REPORTS TO COUNCIL – INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENGINEERING SERVICES**

1. WORKS REPORT

Author	Director Infrastructure and Engineering Services
Responsible Officer	Director Infrastructure and Engineering Services
Link to Strategic Plans	CSP – 4.3.4 Ensure Council's property assets are monitored and well managed

Executive Summary

This report provides information regarding works undertaken during the given period for operational and capital works.

Report

The Works Report (**Attachment No. 1**) for the period 28 February to 31 March 2025 is presented to Council for information.

Financial Implications

Council has provision for these services in its Operational Budget.

Legal and Regulatory Compliance

Local Government Act 1993
Roads Act 1993

Risk Management Issues

Nil

Internal/External Consultation

Nil

Attachments

1. Works Report (**Attachment No. 1**).

RECOMMENDATION

That the information be noted.

2. FUTURE DIRECTION - BROWN'S LANE, NARROMINE

Author	Director Infrastructure and Engineering Services
Responsible Officer	Director Infrastructure and Engineering Services
Link to Strategic Plans	CSP – 2.2.1 – To foster our agriculture sector through the identification and support of value adding opportunities. CSP – 2.3.1 – Support the growth and development of new and existing businesses and industry. CSP – 3.6.1 – Ensure local and regional roads network best meets the needs of road users and industry.

Executive Summary

This report is presented to Council to consider the future of Brown's Lane, Narromine.

Report

In June 2024 Council was approached by Tim and Amanda Shepherd (the Shepherds) to purchase Brown's Lane, a Hierarchy 6 road that receives frequent complaints but is not maintained to the preferred standards due to Council budget constraints. The Shepherds have multiple holdings along Brown's Lane and the current poor condition of the road is impacting their ability to access and freight commodities from their farm. After multiple discussions with Council staff, the landowner requested to purchase Brown's Lane to provide them with full maintenance rights to the road.

At the July 2024 Council meeting it was resolved:

2. PERMANENT ROAD CLOSURE AND SALE – BROWN'S LANE, NARROMINE

RESOLVED Crs Hoey/Jones that Council;

1. Seeks to close Brown's Lane, in its entirety with the intention to sell to Tim and Amanda Shepherd.
2. Continue the Permanent Road Closure Process under the Roads Act 1993, including community consultation.

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As per the Roads Act (1993) a notification with the intention to close a public road was sent to all relevant stakeholders, including neighbouring property owners. Council did not receive any objections from regulatory agencies, however, two objections were received from local landowners. The objections stated that they wished the road to remain open to the public.

Council followed up with both objecting parties to further understand the reasons behind the objection, one party did not provide further information and was not interested in further discussion with Council but requested that his objection be noted and recorded.

2. FUTURE DIRECTION - BROWN'S LANE, NARROMINE (Cont'd)

The second party identified the following reasons for wishing the road to remain open:

- The road is used frequently in dry weather (acknowledging that it was not used at all during 2022 due to the wet weather)
- The road is the most direct and safest route for transporting oversized machinery between their farm and friends' farms on Frecklington's Crossing and Wyanga Road.
- The road has been used for 49 years, and the objection is to keep it open, despite its poor state.

The below should be considered in regard to the above concerns:

- Browns Lane is not formed (no pavement / gravel) and therefore is very slippery and boggy during wet weather. This is a significant liability for Council. The road does not dry quickly resulting in boggy conditions sometimes weeks after rain events.
- Brown's Lane runs parallel to Tullamore Road, a detour using Tullamore Road adds five kilometres to a trip from Frecklington's Crossing to Wyanga Road.
- The Tullamore Road (hierarchy 1) is designed and maintained for high-traffic volume and large machinery and is accessible in all weather conditions.
- Heavy and oversized machinery can travel safely (and without slipping or bogging risk) on Tullamore Road.
- Increasing liability pressures and continued service for all residents must be considered for future decisions.
- The road has been closed for long periods previously, including currently where it has been closed since July 2024 and Council has not received any complaints.

To move forward and have a clear strategy on the future of Brown's Lane, Council have three options to consider:

1. Permanent closure of the road and sale
2. Closure of the road, retain as Council land
3. Upgrade of the road and maintain as a public road

Leaving the road open in its current condition is not considered feasible due to liability and safety concerns.

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2. FUTURE DIRECTION - BROWN'S LANE, NARROMINE (Cont'd)

The road is suitable for permanent closure as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Browns Lane - Road Closure Requirements

Council can only close a road under section 38A of the Roads Act 1993 if	Current Status
The road is not reasonably required as a road for public use (whether for present or future needs)	The road connects Wyanga Road and Frecklington's Crossing, access to these roads can be achieved via the Tullamore Road (sealed road, hierarchy 1). No property accesses are impacted as a result of the proposed closure.
The road is not required to provide continuity for an existing road network	Continuity to the existing road network will not be impacted.
If the road provides vehicular access to particular land, another public road provides lawful and reasonably practicable vehicular access to that land	Access to all adjoining properties, in a lawful and reasonable manner will be maintained after the closure and sale of Brown's Lane. Further to this all existing right of carriageways are maintained with the closure.

Option 1: Permanent closure of the road

This option continues with the process identified in the Roads Act and will eventuate in Council permanently closing the road. Assuming all stages are completed, the road will be sold to the Shepherds. There will be no cost incurred by Council for this process as the costs will be borne by the Shepherds. Council will receive a small payment (at land valuation rate) for the purchase of the land. Council will no longer be responsible for this road or land, and it will be removed from our asset register and land holdings.

There are some administrative requirements within this process, but nothing that cannot be managed by existing resources.

The financial burden of upgrade and continued maintenance cost is low. Additionally, the liability risk associated with the poor road condition would not be the responsibility of Council.

This option would impact the two objectors and require slightly longer travel distances when travelling to visit friends or conduct contract work. Noting that this practice has been in place since the road was closed in July and in 2022 during the wet weather.

This option is considered to have the best return for the wider community.

2. FUTURE DIRECTION - BROWN'S LANE, NARROMINE (Cont'd)

Option 2: Partial closure of the road, retain as Council land

This option involves closing the road to the public, while the land remains under the ownership and management of Council. As a result, the road would no longer be accessible for public use, and Council's maintenance responsibilities would be limited. Initial costs would be required for the installation of barriers or fencing to prevent physical access to the road.

While Council has the financial resources to install the necessary barriers, the liability for the road would still rest with Council. Ongoing inspections and maintenance of the barriers would also be required.

It is important to note that a section of the road, from Frecklington's Crossing to the property access, must remain open and maintained to provide access to the dwelling. This section of road was upgraded within the last three years and is in good condition.

This option is considered to offer the second-best return for the wider community.

Option 3: Upgrade of the road and maintain as a public road

This option upgrades Browns Lane to enable all weather access by the addition of gravel and drainage. There are several concerns with this option:

1. The cost is likely to be in excess of \$300,000
2. As a hierarchy 6 road, upgrading the road would be against the Roads Management Strategy (2024) and taking funding from other more highly used roads
3. The Tullamore Road is very close to Browns Lane and can cater for all traffic in a safe manner without upgrading requirements.

This option would be a significant capital investment and then ongoing investment.

This option is considered to have the worst return for the wider community.

2. FUTURE DIRECTION - BROWN'S LANE, NARROMINE (Cont'd)



Figure 1: Brown's Lane

Financial Implications

The financial implications for each option are discussed above. The most financially beneficial option to Council is Option 1.

Legal and Regulatory Compliance

Council is required to consider all submissions and make a decision on the proposal to close the road (section 38D Road Act 1993).

Risk Management Issues

Two nearby landowners objected to the road closure, there is a potential risk that one or both objectors may appeal to the Land and Environment Court under Section 38F of the Roads Act. This could delay timelines and result in additional legal costs for Council, depending on the outcome of the appeal. This is considered an unlikely but possible outcome.

2. FUTURE DIRECTION - BROWN'S LANE, NARROMINE (Cont'd)

Internal/External Consultation

All relevant stakeholders have been informed and given the opportunity to provide feedback.

Attachments

Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That following consideration of written submissions, Council proceeds with the closure of Brown's Lane in accordance with Section 38D of the Roads Act 1993, with the intent to sell the land to the Shepherds once Council receives title for the former Council public road.

3. WATER QUALITY - TRANGIE

Author	Director Infrastructure and Engineering Services
Responsible Officer	Director Infrastructure and Engineering Services
Link to Strategic Plans	CSP – 4.3.4 Ensure Council's property assets are monitored and well managed

Executive Summary

Concerns have been raised regarding elevated sodium levels in Trangie's water supply. This report reviews recent water quality results, discusses potential impacts, and presents options for addressing the issue, which primarily affects water taste and, over time, soil quality.

Report

Water Quality Review

Water quality in Trangie is monitored quarterly by an accredited laboratory, under the direction of NSW Health. In the 2023/2024 financial year, all water quality parameters tested met the health targets outlined in the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines (ADWG). However, sodium levels exceeded the recommended aesthetic limit of 180 mg/L in three of the four quarterly tests, with a median of 213.5 mg/L and a maximum result of 270 mg/L. Despite this, high sodium levels are not considered a health risk within the ADWG and to NSW Health.

Total Dissolved Solids (TDS), which are approximately 500 - 550 mg/L in Trangie's water, also do not exceed health or aesthetic guidelines. All other monitored parameters consistently met ADWG standards, and no health concerns were identified within the last reporting period or any previous reporting period.

3. WATER QUALITY – TRANGIE (Cont'd)

Trangie's water is sourced from the artesian basin, where naturally high sodium concentrations exist. While the water is chlorinated, it is not treated to reduce sodium. Sodium levels above 200 mg/L can affect water taste, making it less palatable for both people and animals. Additionally, prolonged use of high-sodium water for irrigation, particularly in dry conditions with limited rainfall, can lead to sodium build-up in the soil, negatively impacting soil quality and the health of gardens and lawn.

Regulatory Position – Funding opportunities

High sodium concentrations is classified as an aesthetic concern rather than a health risk by NSW Health and the water regulatory authority and consequently is not prioritized for state or federal funding. Regulatory bodies have indicated that funding for improving water quality related to salinity is unlikely to be provided in the foreseeable future. There are 20 towns in regional NSW, including Trangie, that source water from the artesian basin and experience high sodium levels, yet only two towns have attempted water treatment for this issue, with unsuccessful outcomes. No other water supply systems are being funded or investigated for reducing salinity.

As a result, any improvement works conducted on the Trangie water system would need to be fully funded through Council's water fund and paid for through water bills.

Potential Treatment Options

At a high level there are two potential options for reducing sodium concentrations within Trangie's water supply: desalination and water softening.

1. **Desalination:** a process that removes salts and other impurities from seawater or brackish water to produce fresh, potable water. The treatment could involve techniques such as reverse osmosis or distillation to separate water from dissolved salts. While desalination can provide a reliable and high-quality water, it is energy-intensive and requires substantial infrastructure investment. The high operational costs and potential environmental impacts, such as brine disposal, result in significant challenges.
2. **Water softening:** a process that reduces water hardness by removing calcium and magnesium ions, typically through ion exchange or chemical treatments. This process helps prevent scale build-up in pipes and appliances, improving water quality and extending the lifespan of plumbing systems. While water softening can reduce sodium levels to some extent, it will not be fully effective. This option would require lower capital and operational costs compared to desalination.

Another option is to find a water supply with lower salinity. However, previous investigations into potential water sources for Trangie have not identified any suitable alternatives.

3. WATER QUALITY – TRANGIE (Cont'd)

Financial Implications

The capital investment required to install the necessary infrastructure, including pipe networks and a treatment plant for managing sodium levels, is estimated at approximately \$2 million. Ongoing operational costs are projected to increase by around \$300,000 annually. These substantial costs are expected to impact all water users across the three towns, resulting in an estimated annual bill increase of approximately \$200 per household, based on a customer base of 2,040 households.

Options for Council Consideration

Council has two primary options for consideration:

1. **Community Education:** This option focuses on educating the community about sodium levels in water, how to manage gardens and lawns with salty water, and addressing concerns about the water's safety for consumption. Council would provide information through various channels, including Facebook, newspapers, and letterbox flyers, sharing details about water quality, testing results, and tips for managing water usage. Additionally, Council could include a review of Trangie's water service levels in the Integrated Water Cycle Management (IWCM) strategy, following the completion of the new Narromine Water Treatment Plant. This option would incur no direct financial cost.
2. **Consultant for Treatment Options:** This option involves engaging a consultant to explore water treatment options, further assess the most effective solution, and determine associated costs for Trangie. The consultant would also provide financial modelling to evaluate the impact on typical residential bills, and the findings would be incorporated into the Integrated Water Cycle Management (IWCM) strategy. The estimated cost of this consultancy service is approximately \$20,000. This option would then be included within the IWCM and could form part of Council's long-term strategy for water supply.

Given the upcoming investment into Narromine's Water Treatment Plant and the small reserves within the water fund option 1 is recommended. Upon the next review of the IWCM (in 2030) it is recommended that the Trangie water quality be thoroughly reviewed and realistic service levels set in consultation with the Trangie Community.

Summary

The elevated sodium levels in Trangie's water supply are an aesthetic issue, affecting water taste and potentially impacting soil quality. As there is no health risk and the regulatory classification of the issue, it is currently not prioritised in long-term strategies or for funding.

3. WATER QUALITY – TRANGIE (Cont'd)

Financial Implications

Council has no provision for additional spend within the Operational Budget, Option 2 would require the removal of maintenance activities to proceed.

Legal and Regulatory Compliance

Local Government Act 1993

Australian Drinking Water Guidelines (ADWG) 2020

Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC Act) 1999

Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (WHS Act)

Risk Management Issues

Operational and Financial Risk of Treatment Implementation

The capital and operational costs associated with implementing water treatment options such as desalination or water softening may exceed projections, leading to budget overruns and strain on Council finances. There is a risk that the chosen treatment option may not deliver the expected results or that maintenance costs could be higher than anticipated.

Community Acceptance and Engagement Risk

Public resistance to changes in water treatment or price increases could result in community dissatisfaction. Failure to properly educate and engage the community on the importance of the water treatment process, sodium levels, and the financial impact could impact the community's trust in Council.

Sustainability Risk

The long-term sustainability of water treatment solutions, such as reliance on expensive and energy-intensive desalination or water softening, may be questioned. Ongoing costs and the availability of alternative water sources could create future financial burdens if the chosen solution is not sustainable.

Internal/External Consultation

Minor consultation has been conducted with water regulators to confirm that funding for water treatment improvements is unlikely to be available. Additionally, NSW Health and the Department have expressed no concerns regarding the current water quality.

3. WATER QUALITY – TRANGIE (Cont'd)

Attachments

Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That Council proceed with Option 1, which includes enhanced community engagement and education regarding sodium levels and water usage. Additionally, that the issue be incorporated into the Integrated Water Cycle Management (IWCM) strategy, to be reviewed in detail during the 2030 strategy review.

Melanie Slimming
Director Infrastructure and Engineering Services

WORKS REPORT

Water and Sewer

As the weather cooled towards the end of March, water demand across the three towns decreased. By the end of the month, the water reservoirs were fully replenished, allowing the supply pumps to operate intermittently to recharge the system, rather than continuously as during the peak summer months. The Water Team continues to actively manage the reservoirs in all three towns to ensure consistent service delivery.

Council's 30-year water and sewer planning strategy, known as the Integrated Water Cycle Management Plan (IWCM), was presented to Councillors and senior staff in mid-March. The presentation reviewed the major projects identified over the next 30 years, the service levels to the community, and a comprehensive assessment of growth and service requirements to ensure community needs are being met. Feedback from this session will inform the finalisation of the strategy, which will be presented to Council in the coming months. A key project outlined in the plan is the construction of the new Narromine Water Treatment Plant, with Council currently finalising the design scope with the regulatory body in order to secure funding before proceeding with the design phase.

The water team has completed a number of projects during the review period including replacement of electrical switchboards at the four Trangie sewer pump stations, installation of a new fire hydrant in front of the Narromine Fire and Rescue and installation of a new water main along Temoin Street, Narromine.



Figure 1: New electrical switchboards installed at Trangie's four sewer pump stations, with SPS 3 pictured. Left: External view; Right: Internal view.

Water and Sewer (Cont'd)



Figure 2: A new fire hydrant was installed in Narromine for Fire and Rescue

Roads

During March Council's roads team completed the flood funding program, aligning with funding requirements. During the review period, Council has undertaken works on the following roads:

- Gundong Road (Narromine)
- Mumble Peg Road (Narromine)
- Belmont Road (Narromine)
- Euromedah Road (Narromine)
- Bulgandramine Road (Narromine)
- Dubbo-Burroway Road (Narromine)
- Tyrie Road (Trangie)
- Noondoo Road (Trangie)
- Wards Road (Narromine)
- Fairview Road (Narromine)
- Raeburn Lane (Narromine)
- Haberworth Road (Narromine)
- Backwater Road (Narromine)
- Enmore Road (Trangie)
- Pineview Road (Narromine)
- Dulla Dulla Road (Narromine)
- Dilladerry Road (Tomingley)

Roads (Cont'd)

Road widening works have been completed on a number of roads including: Widgeree, Bulgandramine, Enmore and Bogan Cathundril. While the seal in most cases remains narrow, the increased shoulder width enhances safety for vehicles. These roads are identified in Council's Roads Strategy as not meeting its designated hierarchy classification. Although classified as a hierarchy 3 road, the current seal width does not meet the requirements for this classification. Council is actively applying for grants to upgrade the road, as it is considered a high priority for improvement.



Figure 3: Shoulder widening works on Widgeree Road, Trangie

The entrance to the truck rest stop area in Trangie was asphalted in early March, marking a significant improvement. The new asphalt surface is expected to outperform the previous spray seal, providing greater durability and resilience.

Council typically uses spray seal (commonly referred to as bitumen) to surface roads. A spray seal involves applying a layer of bitumen, followed by the spreading of aggregate to create a textured surface. While cost-effective and quicker to apply, spray seals generally have a shorter lifespan and are more susceptible to wear, particularly from truck turning movements, compared to asphalt.

Roads (Cont'd)

In contrast, asphalt is a more durable solution, made by mixing bitumen with aggregate to form a dense, smooth surface. This method offers superior longevity and resilience, making it particularly suited for high-traffic areas and heavy vehicle usage. While asphalt is approximately three times the cost of a spray seal, its long-term performance justifies the higher investment in areas highly trafficked by heavy vehicles.



Figure 4: The entrance to Trangie's heavy vehicle rest area was recently asphalted

The new drainage system on Lincoln Lane is now complete, funded through the state government's "Infrastructure Betterment Fund." This unique program enabled Council to enhance and upgrade areas frequently affected by flooding. The installation of the new culvert improves the road's all-weather accessibility and ensures the road remains in good condition even after heavy rains. This upgrade will significantly reduce future maintenance costs and enhance the safety and reliability of the road for local residents and road users.



Figure 5: Recently completed culvert on Lincoln Lane

Roads (Cont'd)

Council has engaged a contractor to carry out line marking across Narromine and Trangie. The line marking of give-way zones and parking areas is a periodic requirement, and it has been approximately five years since the last completion. The car parking line marking will enhance the aesthetics of the main street, while the give-way markings will contribute to improved safety. The works are scheduled to continue until the end of April, with line marking in Narromine nearly complete.



Figure 6: New line marking in front of the Christian School (Narromine)

Upcoming Works – Dandaloo Street Narromine

Two improvement projects are scheduled to take place on Dandaloo Street (Narromine) in early April. The first project involves asphaltting the approaches to the train line, which will enhance the road's surface and provide smoother, safer access for vehicles crossing the train tracks. This work will help improve the overall driving experience and ensure the road can better withstand the wear and tear of regular traffic.

The second project will involve the installation of a new concrete footpath on the approach to the train line. This addition will improve pedestrian access and safety in the area, providing a safer route for residents and visitors who regularly walk along this section of Dandaloo Street. Traffic control and detours may be in place for a few days during the asphaltting works, and the footpath will be closed for up to three weeks while the new path is being constructed. Both projects are essential to enhancing the infrastructure of Narromine and will significantly benefit the community by improving safety and accessibility.

Road Safety Audits

As part of the grant-funded upgrade of Tullamore Road, Council engaged a consultant specialising in road safety audits. A road safety audit of both Tullamore Road and Tantitha Road was conducted in late March, with the final report expected by mid-May. Engaging external consultants provides Council with a fresh perspective and unbiased advice, ensuring that staff stay informed of current best practices and continue delivering optimal services to the community. This collaborative approach also helps identify potential improvements and mitigate risks, ultimately contributing to the safety and efficiency of the road network.

Bus Stop Improvements

Council received a small grant to upgrade a number of bus stops within Narromine. This work has been progressing over the last month and is nearly complete, the upgrade work includes new seating, tactile marking and concrete access points.



Figure 7: New seat and tactile markers at one of Narromine's bus stops

Newell Highway Upgrade – Tomingley Gold Mine

Tomingley Gold Mine is progressing with the planned realignment of the Newell Highway, with Robson Civil engaged to undertake the construction works. Construction is scheduled to begin in May 2025 with the road opening planned for late 2026. The majority of the work will be conducted away from the existing road, minimising disruption to road users, though some speed restrictions will be implemented. The project is being closely monitored by Transport for NSW, and a Hazard and Operability Study (HAZOP) was held at the end of March with key stakeholders to assess potential risks and mitigation strategies. Robson Civil has established a communication hotline and website to provide updates to the community, with Council acting as a key conduit for information sharing.

Cemetery Upgrade – Baby Graves

The fencing around the baby graves at the Narromine cemetery has been completed. The new white picket fence brings a peaceful and respectful aesthetic to the area, enhancing its overall appearance. With just the addition of some carefully chosen flowers, the project will be fully complete, providing a serene and beautiful space for reflection.

Council intends to use a similar fencing product, with a slightly modified design, for the replacement fencing at Dundas Oval.



Figure 8: Fencing at the Narromine Cemetery baby graves has been completed

Parks and Gardens

The Parks and Gardens team has been diligently maintaining public spaces across the Shire, with ongoing efforts to enhance the community's aesthetics and functionality. In addition to regular maintenance, trees have been planted in the Council subdivision in Trangie, contributing to the greening of the area. New turf has been installed at Burns Oval in Trangie, further improving the local sporting facilities.

Mowing operations continue across the Shire, with priority given to high-traffic areas. The team has also focused on maintaining shrubs along the Main Street, enhancing the visual appeal of key public spaces. Additionally, the pavers in Narromine's main street are scheduled to be pressure cleaned in early April, ensuring the area remains well-maintained and inviting.

Council Chamber Roof Replacement – Project Update

Work on the Council Chambers roof is ongoing, with the replacement of the external eaves now complete and safety barriers installed. The roof replacement is scheduled to begin in early April, with no impacts to Council meetings expected during the process.

Library Works

The works at the Narromine Library are progressing on schedule. The new walls have been erected and tiling is due to start in early April followed by painting and electrical work. The library front door will also be replaced to meet fire safety requirements, and the book chute will be relocated to one of the side windows.

The works at Narromine Library are expected to be completed before Easter, with no further impacts to library users.



Figure 9: Works at the Narromine Library are continuing

Jones Circuit – Property Improvements

The property at Jones Circuit has undergone significant modernisation to enhance its rental appeal and meet the requirements of rental agencies. Upgrades included the installation of a new kitchen and bathroom fixtures, as well as the addition of new flooring and ceiling fans throughout the property. These improvements have significantly increased the property's aesthetic and functional value. The refurbishment was completed successfully, and the keys were handed over to the real estate agent in late March, ready for leasing.



Figure 10: Progress photo of Jones Circuit kitchen cabinetry before completion

Northern Drainage Pipework Installation

Works are progressing well on the northern drainage pipework installation along Meryula Street in Narromine. The contractor has made significant headway, with pipe installation now extending from the outlet in Rotary Park, past the school zone, and crossing Nymagee Street. Pipes have been delivered and are currently stored along Dundas Park.

Council is continuing collaborations with Transport for NSW regarding the underbore works, which are scheduled to take place in April. These works are part of the next stage of the drainage upgrade, which will improve stormwater management and help mitigate future flooding risks. The project remains on schedule, with full completion now expected in June. Council appreciates the continued patience and understanding of the school community and the public as these important works progress.

Northern Drainage Pipework Installation (Cont'd)



Figure 11: New stormwater inlet has been installed in front of the school