

OPERATIONS MANAGER

OPERATIONS REPORT

June 2025 Council Meeting

Dated 16th June 2025



Item 1: Essential Services

Item 1.1 - Water Treatment Plant

Daily testing for pH, free chlorine and turbidity at all test points are compliant with Australian Drinking Water Guidelines.

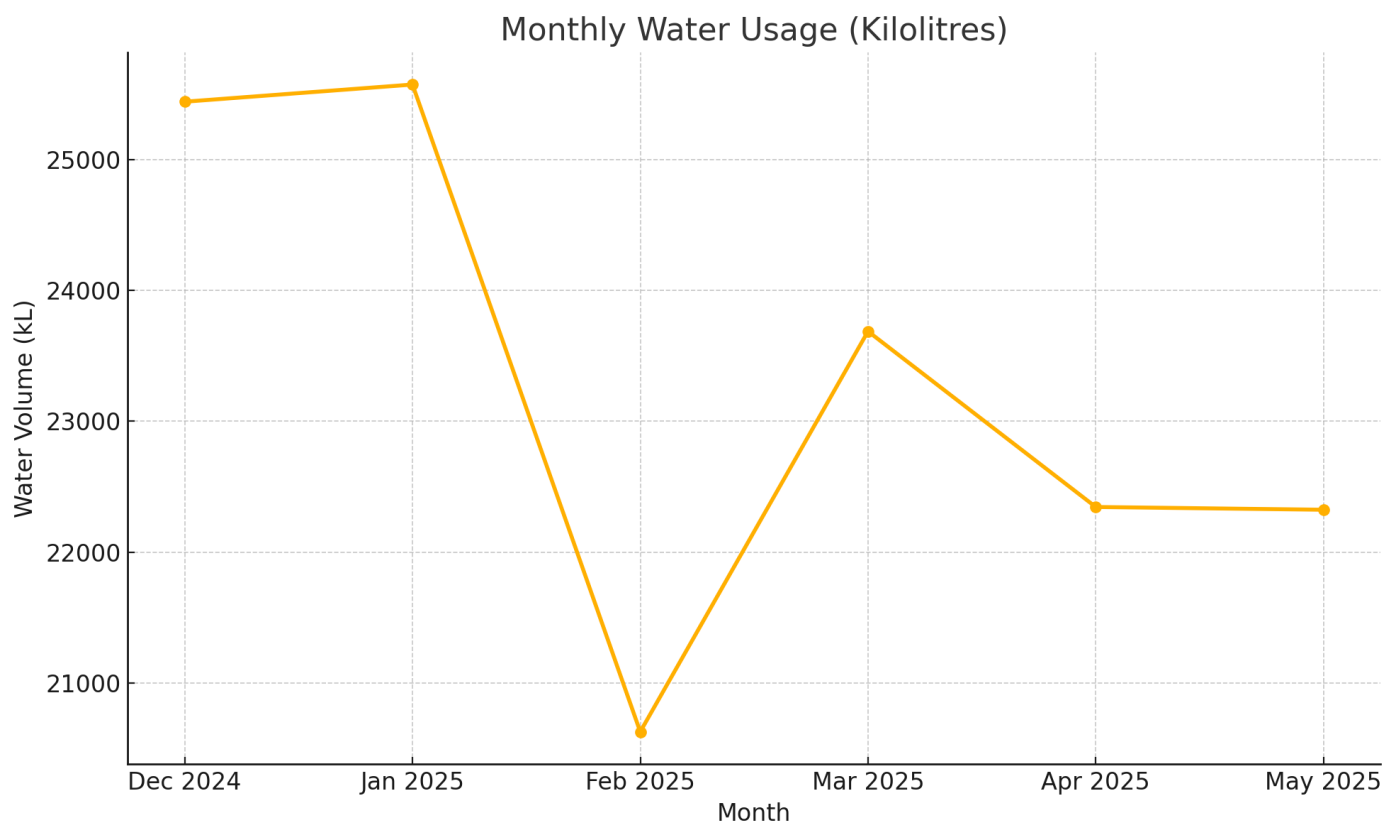
1.1 Water Treatment Plant – Daily Testing

- Daily testing of pH, free chlorine, and turbidity at all points in May 2025 met Australian Drinking Water Guidelines.

March Test Results (Averages):

Parameter	April Average	Acceptable Range
pH (Post Reservoir)	7.35	6.5 to 8.5
Turbidity (NTU)	1.3 NTU	0 to 5 NTU
Free Chlorine	1.1 mg/L	0.2 to 5.0 mg/L

- **Water Connections:** 356 total (1 tap per main connection for new Plug in Properties). Hence total number remains unchanged.
- **Water Volume May 2025: 22,325 kilolitres**
- Water Volume April 2025: 22,346 kilolitres
- Water Volume March 2025: 23,687 kilolitres
- Water Volume February 2025: 20,630 kilolitres
- Water Volume January 2025: 25,571 kilolitres
- Water Volume December 2024: 25,440 Kilolitres
- **Daily Water Usage May 2025: 720 kilolitres**
- Daily Water Usage April 2025: 744 kilolitres
- Daily Water Usage March 2025: 764 kilolitres
- Daily Water Usage February 2025: 736 kilolitres per
- Daily Water Usage January 2024: 824 kilolitres per month
- Daily Water Usage December 2024: 820 kilolitres per month



Comment: Water usage during **May 2025** decreased slightly to **22,325 kilolitres**, down from 23,346 kilolitres in March. This equates to an average daily consumption of **720 kilolitres**, continuing relatively constant trend in usage following the high-demand summer period.

Council continues to observe **seasonal fluctuations** in consumption, though the overall volume remains consistent with prior years for this time of year. Notably, the number of disruptions related to **non-main water connections** has increased during this period. In response, Council water crews have intensified efforts around **proactive monitoring, and minor leak repairs**, particularly in Council Services connection points and aged infrastructure zones.

Water quality testing for May 2025 remains fully compliant with the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines. All in-house microbiological test results for Coliforms and E. coli were within acceptable thresholds.

Rainfall totals for March = 131mm at the Water Treatment plant

1.2 Incident Reporting / Water Leaks / Sewer Blocks

- **Water Main Leaks / 1 in Total:**
- **Minor Water Leaks (Main to Metre): 6 (25mm-32mm lines)**
- **Leaks to Council Services: 2 (Childcare, Aged Care)**
- **Sewer Blockages / 0 in Total:**

During the May 2025 reporting period, Council recorded one water main leak and no sewer blockages. Routine flushing of the township's water mains was conducted throughout the month, with no reported complaints relating to water quality. As a reminder, residents may notice minor discolouration during flushing periods—this is temporary and can typically be resolved by running tap water briefly.

Ongoing Issue – Minor Water Connection Failures

Council has noted a continued increase in disruptions to minor water connections—the service lines located between the water main and individual properties or assets. These failures fall outside of Council's direct reticulation responsibilities but are impacting overall water efficiency and service reliability.

Key Observations:

- The frequency of leaks and faults between household meters and internal plumbing is continuing.
- These issues are contributing to a continued volume of water loss, now accounting for a continued unknown volume of non-main losses across the network.
- While Council is not funded or resourced to repair infrastructure beyond the meter, it continues to face operational pressures associated with these disruptions.

Implications:

- The continued water loss from minor connection failures is directly increasing operational costs and placing unnecessary strain on Council's water supply network, particularly as we approach the dry season.
- Without targeted intervention or collaboration with the Department of Housing, the frequency and impact of these issues are expected to escalate, especially during periods of high demand.

Item 1.2 – Water and Waste Infrastructure – Condition Assessments

Council has had no formal correspondence in May regarding condition assessments. Council operations has submitted a number of requests for an update, seeking clarification on the status of the condition assessments and any proposed next steps, with no response.

Council has been advised that the department may now require turbidity levels at the Water Treatment Plant entry point to be reduced below 1.0 NTU. Based on discussions with local operators, one immediate remedial strategy proposed involves dragging the lines and running a pig to clear out any sediment or organic buildup. This may also be an opportune time to undertake internal camera inspections of the lines to support future asset condition reporting.

Council has formally written to the department seeking guidance or support in progressing this work and awaits further advice. The matter remains a priority for operational planning and compliance tracking.

Fluoridation

Council has received preliminary advice from Queensland Health regarding the potential fluoridation of the Hope Vale water supply. The department acknowledged the positive health outcomes associated with water fluoridation, particularly in improving dental health outcomes for remote communities.

Queensland Health emphasised that the safe and continuous supply of disinfected water must remain Council's priority before any fluoridation initiative is pursued. Consideration must also be given to operational control, especially with the recent commissioning of a new bore and associated infrastructure upgrades still underway.

Technical guidance is available through the *Queensland Water Fluoridation Code of Practice* and other resources, and Queensland Health has offered to assist Council with dosing advice and development of culturally appropriate community information if required.

While dedicated fluoridation funding is no longer available, Council may consider incorporating fluoridation infrastructure into existing or future funding applications, such as through the National Water Grid. Queensland Health can support such applications where Council demonstrates capacity for safe implementation.

At this stage, discussions remain exploratory, and Council is reviewing this preliminary advice as part of broader considerations regarding water treatment operations and long-term infrastructure planning.

Item 2.1 – Environmental Management

Environmental Management Plan

Environmental Health Plan 2024–2029 – Summary

The final draft of the *Hope Vale Environmental Health Plan 2024–2029* has been completed, incorporating changes to simplify obligations as per Council feedback and confirmation from Qld Health. The Plan outlines Council's strategic approach across nine key environmental health areas, prioritising:

- Domestic Animals & Visiting Vet Services
- Pest Management
- Waste Management

These were identified during the October 2024 community engagement as the top community concerns.

Final clarification is being sought regarding Council's commitment to deliver annual animal health treatments. Subject to confirmation, the Plan is ready to proceed for Council endorsement during upcoming Council meetings, with Queensland Health staff available upon request to assist.

The revised plan strengthens alignment with the Environmental Health Strategy and ensures practical, scalable, and community-supported actions across all statutory environmental health areas.

Recommendation:

That Council **endorses the updated draft of the Hope Vale Environmental Health Management Plan 2024–2029**, incorporating recent amendments to simplify and clarify requirements, as highlighted in the tracked changes version circulated by Tropical Public Health Services.

Council further **authorises the CEO to conduct a final review** and sign-off prior to formal submission and implementation. The plan outlines key responsibilities and initiatives across pest control, animal management, environmental health risks, and public health service delivery.

Wandering Horse Management – June 2025 Update

Following Council's endorsement of the *Wandering Horse Management Plan*, significant progress has been made to address ongoing safety, welfare, and amenity concerns caused by free-roaming horses in and around the Hope Vale township.

Progress to Date:

- Council has entered into a formal service agreement with a third-party provider to support the containment, relocation, and regulated disposal of unclaimed horses.
- Under the agreement, horses will be relocated from Hope Vale and transported to the Mareeba saleyards for lawful sale.
- Up to 100 horses have been under the agreement for removal, based on roaming activity and assessed public risk.
- Molasses tubs and temporary fencing infrastructure have been deployed to assist in attracting and managing horses within designated containment zones.
- Direct engagement with neighbouring landholders and regional partners has not resulted in any confirmed local rehoming options.

Recent Community Response:

- Only as recently as this week have several residents come forward to express interest in claiming horses. This has prompted Council to reissue the Biosecurity Queensland *Restricted Biosecurity Entity (RBE)* registration forms and again promote them throughout the community.
- Council strongly encourages any person who believes they own or are responsible for a horse to urgently complete and return the RBE form to avoid their animals being removed under the current program.

Next Steps:

- Council will continue to liaise with the contracted service provider to ensure animal welfare is prioritised during relocation and sale activities.

Community Engagement:

- Public notices continue to support transparency around the approach and reinforce Council's commitment to public safety, responsible ownership, and lawful animal management.

Council remains focused on a fair and welfare-led approach to resolving the challenges posed by free-roaming horses. The recent community response is welcome and will be accommodated wherever possible, but unclaimed animals remain subject to relocation and sale under the terms of the endorsed management plan.

Item 2.2: Pound Minor Upgrade – Facilities and Infrastructure Improvements

In response to operational reviews and feedback from the first veterinary visit under Council's new provider, several deficiencies were identified within the current dog pound facility and surrounding enclosures.

As a result, Council has commenced minor upgrade works aimed at improving the functionality, safety, and overall suitability of the site for both animal management and future veterinary services. Initial works include fencing repairs, installation of additional containment infrastructure, and improvements to basic amenities such as ventilation and holding areas.

The broader proposed scope of works includes:

- **Installation of additional dog cages** – Material sourced and works ready to commence
- **Fencing upgrades** – To be budgeted and included in 25-26 FY.

These improvements are essential to ensuring the pound is compliant, fit-for-purpose, and capable of supporting a sustainable veterinary service model and animal management program into the future.

Item 4: Open Spaces

Item 4.1 - Open Spaces Operations

The Open Spaces team continues to deliver essential township maintenance and presentation services, including routine waste collection, mowing, vegetation control, and general upkeep of public spaces. The unit also continues to support the Animal Management team in the removal of animals from high-traffic and township areas.

During the May reporting period, concerted efforts have been maintained to ensure a clean, safe, and presentable township environment, despite ongoing weather challenges. Grounds crews have focused on key community areas, including street verges, parks, and facility surrounds, to uphold visual standards and reduce overgrowth-related hazards.

Bin Collection – Weekly Township Service and Ongoing Improvements

Council's once-a-week bin collection service for township residents has now been operational for two weeks. Early indications show the new approach is functioning well, with only minor community pushback reported. Thursday has been established as the regular collection day, providing consistency and operational efficiency for Council's waste services team.

To further support the transition, new household bins are currently on order and will be distributed to properties where additional capacity is required. Council is monitoring bin usage across the township and will continue responding to site-specific needs.

Access challenges in outlying block holder areas persist due to poor driveway conditions and seasonal damage. Council has reiterated the requirement for bins to be placed kerbside for collection, as the garbage truck cannot safely navigate many internal driveways. A follow-up list of impacted properties has been shared with Congress, along with a formal request for access road maintenance.

Council continues to explore longer-term solutions, including:

- Centralised collection points at accessible roadside locations,
- Engaging with Congress regarding works required for Block holder access post wet season

Council remains committed to balancing service reliability, cost-effectiveness, and public safety in the delivery of waste services across the region.

Item 5: Cleaning Services

Cleaning Services Update

Council's Cleaning Services Unit continues to deliver essential cleaning across Council-owned buildings and community facilities. The current team of two active cleaning staff has maintained a consistent and reliable standard of service, with limited negative feedback received during the reporting period.

Staff are performing well under routine operational demands, and Council acknowledges their contribution to the ongoing cleanliness and presentation of key community assets. While some service gaps may still occur during periods of leave or unplanned absence, overall service levels remain strong.

A draft Expression of Interest (EOI) for additional cleaning support remains in development. This EOI will form part of a broader release seeking subcontractor support across several Council service areas, providing flexible options to ensure continuity of service during peak periods or staffing shortages.

Several local residents have informally expressed interest in future cleaning opportunities, and Council looks forward to progressing these once the formal EOI is issued.

Council remains committed to maintaining high standards across all community facilities while supporting local workforce participation through scalable and responsive service delivery models.

Item 6: Workplace Health & Safety (WH&S)

Council's Workplace Health and Safety Advisor formally resigned effective 7 April 2025. Since receiving written notice on 31 March, Council has actively continued its search for a suitable replacement to ensure continuity of WHS oversight, staff safety, and compliance monitoring.

Council is assessing both short- and long-term engagement options to secure a capable provider and maintain high safety standards across all operations.

Item 7: Building & Construction – Refer to Finance Report

Item 8: Civil Construction - Refer to Finance Report

Item 9 - General Matters

Preferred Supplier Arrangements – Tender Update

Council's Preferred Supplier Agreements for Design and Trade Services, Plant Hire, and Road Material Supply have now been formally endorsed by the CEO. The revised terms and conditions are in effect, and the updated Preferred Supplier Register is now active. Relevant departments have been notified, and category-specific supplier rates have been circulated to support operational planning and procurement awareness. The new agreements will operate under a two-year term, with a formal review scheduled at the 12-month mark to ensure continued alignment with Council's operational needs.

Expression of Interest – Mechanical Services

Council's recent Expression of Interest (EOI) process for mechanical services attracted four submissions from licensed providers. The EOI sought qualified parties to deliver maintenance, servicing, and breakdown support for Council's operational fleet of approximately 45 vehicles and plant items.

Submissions have been finalised and assessed against key criteria, including trade qualifications, experience, insurance, workshop capabilities, and capacity to provide mobile servicing.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that Council shortlist two local providers and offer both the opportunity to inspect the existing mechanical workshop facility. This will assist in determining the operational setup and any resource gaps.

Council should also note that future operation of the facility will require a clear understanding of the ongoing maintenance costs and whether the selected supplier will self-fund or require partial cost contributions from Council.

Additionally, to ensure service continuity and avoid over-reliance on a single provider—as previously experienced—it is recommended that Council also consider engaging an external “mobile” service provider as a backup solution.

A dual-provider model would offer greater operational resilience and flexibility, supporting both on-site and mobile mechanical support as needed. Final recommendations are provided in offline section of this report

Council Resolutions – Mechanical Services EOI

Resolution 1: Shortlisting of Local Mechanical Service Providers

That Council endorse the shortlisting of two (2) local mechanical service providers who responded to EOI Reference: *HVASC Mechanical Services 2025*, and invite each to inspect the Council-owned workshop facility to assess operational requirements and service delivery suitability.

Resolution 2: Budget Consideration for Workshop Maintenance

That Council note the need for future operational budget allocations to ensure the mechanical workshop remains in good working order, and that ongoing maintenance requirements be clarified as part of service negotiations, including whether such costs will be self-funded by the successful provider(s) or partly subsidised by Council.

Resolution 3: Dual Provider Model to Ensure Service Continuity

That Council supports the adoption of a dual-provider model for mechanical servicing, including one or more mobile service providers in addition to local workshop-based suppliers, to mitigate the risk of service disruption and strengthen fleet maintenance capacity.

Asset Vandalism and Community Safety Update

Council continues to experience ongoing impacts from antisocial behaviour and vandalism, which are negatively affecting operations, asset condition, and the consistent delivery of community services. Damage to council infrastructure—including fences, lighting, buildings, and recreational assets—has increased, with many incidents occurring after hours and beyond the coverage of current security services. Recent changes have been made to extend Night Owl security patrols during peak risk periods. Night Patrol has also identified a recurring group of individuals, including minors, involved in these disturbances.

Collaboration with Queensland Police is ongoing to explore enforcement and prevention strategies, including a possible no-cost community policing presence.

Requesting a meeting with the Family Responsibilities Commission to explore options such as restorative justice, youth diversion, or community service programs.

The escalation in negative behaviour is placing strain on council resources, increasing maintenance costs, and impacting public safety and confidence. Council will continue to take a firm and coordinated approach and will provide further updates following stakeholder consultations and implementation of response actions.

Refer to section on new grants under securing communities.

Social Housing Presentation and Safety

Council officers continue to observe poor external yard conditions across many social housing properties, with ongoing risks relating to overgrowth, blocked access, and unsafe outdoor environments. While broader maintenance efforts from the Department of Housing remain limited, Council has now started to receive job cards under Do & Charge arrangements for specific yard works.

These job cards represent a positive step toward addressing safety concerns and improving the presentation of social housing land areas. Key issues being addressed include:

- Clearing of overgrown vegetation and long grass
- Improving yard access and visibility
- Reducing pest and snake risks
- Restoring safer spaces for children and elders

Despite this progress, the response remains reactive and site-specific, with no evidence of a coordinated or consistent yard maintenance program across the housing portfolio.

Council reiterates the importance of proactive engagement with the Department of Housing to implement a sustained yard maintenance approach, particularly in higher-density areas and locations with recurring safety or amenity concerns. Improved outdoor environments contribute directly to resident wellbeing, reduce antisocial behaviour, and promote greater pride in place.

Pest and Insect Control Across Council Assets

Council has commenced a coordinated pest and insect treatment program across its asset portfolio, with priority works already underway in high-risk areas. Treatments at the Aged Care facility have commenced, reflecting the need to mitigate health and safety risks in sensitive service environments.

While minor external works had previously been undertaken by Council operators on low-risk sites, the current program expands this scope through the engagement of a qualified third-party provider to deliver comprehensive internal and external treatments across high-use and high-risk facilities.

General Matters – NBN Community Wi-Fi Rollout and Digital Champion Role

The installation of the free NBN Community Wi-Fi Mesh network in Hope Vale is now complete, with the service fully operational across the township. Instructional posters have been distributed to assist residents in connecting, and the project has already begun improving digital connectivity for households and public areas.

To officially celebrate this milestone, Council will host a **Community Wi-Fi Launch Event on Tuesday, 17 June 2025**, with senior NBN leadership in attendance, including the Chair of NBN, Kevin Russell. The day

will include a Council briefing with the Mayor and Councillors, followed by a community event near the Council office, supported by local catering, giveaways, and digital literacy sessions.

This launch marks a significant step in bridging the digital divide and promoting greater access to essential online services for all Hope Vale main township residents and visitors alike.

GRANT OPPORTUNITY – Secure Communities Partnership Program

Program Overview

Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council has been invited to submit applications under the Queensland Government's *Secure Communities Partnership Program – Local Councils Small Business (SCPPLC)*. Round 1 provides **\$10 million in funding** aimed at supporting local infrastructure projects to **deter crime and improve safety for small and family businesses**.

Key Grant Features

- **Eligible Applicants: Queensland Local Councils**
 - **Submission Limit:** Up to two applications per council
 - **Funding Areas:**
 - Physical infrastructure upgrades
 - Surveillance and alarm systems
 - Perimeter and property defence
 - **Application Deadline: 11 July 2025**
 - **Project Completion: By 30 June 2026**
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Recommended Projects for Council Consideration

Based on operational risks, known vandalism hotspots, and Council interest, the following projects are suggested for submission:

Option 1: Township-Wide Additional Lighting & CCTV (*Recommended Priority*)

Project Summary:

Provide additional streetlights in the township with LED lighting with integrated CCTV at strategic locations, connected to a central monitoring system (either local or cloud-based). Focus on areas with known issues: park surrounds, civic buildings, the Store, Muni St corridor, and road entries.

Option 2: UPGRADE of Existing lighting, CCTV Precinct and Securing of Council Assets

Project Summary:

Rather than new infrastructure, this option proposes:

- Replacing or upgrading existing lighting and/or CCTV cameras with higher-resolution, low-light/night-capable devices
- Securing access to council assets via inclusion of physical barriers, for example gates or similar to known hot spot areas.
- Adding remote-access capability, including app-based notifications to centralised locations accessible to multiple council representatives
- Establishing a 3-year surveillance and maintenance service agreement to ensure operational continuity

Both projects align with current safety concerns and support Council's strategic goals to enhance business security and community trust.

Recommendation:

That Council:

1. **Endorses the preparation and submission of a funding application** under the *Secure Communities Partnership Program* for the following priority project:

Council to explore options around deterring known vandalism hotspots.

2. **Notes** that the proposed project will:
 - Enhance public safety through increased visibility and deterrence,
 - Support Council's ongoing efforts to reduce antisocial behaviour and asset vandalism,
 - Include ongoing service and maintenance agreements to ensure surveillance continuity.

Summary of Recommendations:

That Council:

1. **Accept & Endorse the updated draft of the Hope Vale Environmental Health Management Plan 2024–2029**, incorporating recent amendments, as highlighted in version circulated by Tropical Public Health Services.

2. **Endorse the shortlisting of two (2) local mechanical service providers** who responded to EOI
Reference: *HVASC Mechanical Services 2025*, and invite each to inspect the Council-owned workshop facility to assess operational requirements and service delivery suitability.
3. **Notes** the need for future operational budget allocations to ensure the mechanical workshop remains in good working order, and that ongoing maintenance requirements be clarified as part of service negotiations, including whether such costs will be self-funded by the successful provider(s) or partly subsidised by Council.
4. **Endorses & supports** the adoption of a dual-provider model for mechanical servicing, including one or more mobile service providers in addition to the proposed new local workshop-based supplier
5. **Endorses the preparation and submission of a funding application** under the *Secure Communities Partnership Program* for Council to explore options around deterring known vandalism hotspots.