

So about those potholes



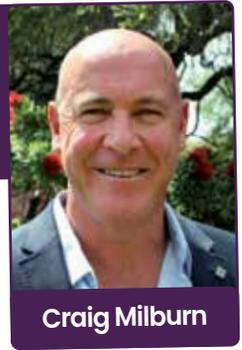
[ksc.pub/potholes](https://www.ksc.nsw.gov.au/potholes)



KEMPSEY
Shire Council

Message from the General Manager

More than **\$40m** on roads



Craig Milburn

The wet weather that we've had this year had a huge impact on our roads. The Macleay floodplain is unique. The sheer size of it and the level of roads we've got on it. For that reason I broadly categorise our roads into four categories, not just sealed and unsealed, because they're all impacted differently by the wet weather.

- Roads downriver from Kempsey • Upriver roads
- Sealed roads • Unsealed roads

Our upriver unsealed roads run through gullies. A lot of them aren't on flat areas. So there's a lot of runoff and they get damaged because of that.

Our downriver sealed roads are on an extensive floodplain where it's very, very hard to find a foundation. The foundation is the key and it's also the big cost.

The tar on the top of roads is really just like a raincoat. It's not the actual road. It limits the wearing of tyres and it keeps the water out. What we find downriver, because it's a floodplain, the water comes in underneath, and it sits there. It gets into the foundations of the road and that's why you start to see movement.

There were sections on Plummers Lane a couple of years ago where we were going down 1200, 1500 millimetres to try and find the foundation. Once you start going down that far, the resources intended to build a kilometre of road only build 200 meters of road.

This year we've got the most we've ever put into road repair and maintenance, and that is in excess of \$40 million.

That money will be spread across resealing roads, resheeting gravel roads, repairing them and doing a lot more heavy-patching. Heavy-patching will fix roads for a lot longer, but it is highly complex.

Council is always looking at options to improve the way we deliver things. Recently we've adopted some state government road standards that we are meeting.

We've increased the level of testing on the gravel that's being supplied to ensure it meets the requirements.

We've been looking at what we do in terms of our machinery to give us the best outcome. Rollers are a good example. Sometimes people think 'heavy roller is better' but if you put a really heavy, vibrating roller on a road with water under it, all it does is bring the water up.

There is a lot of work that our engineers do to work out what is the best method of building, or repairing, or resealing a road in a particular area.

We've been doing a lot more work that involves chopping up the road then rolling it back down, but with stabilizer in which gives that a lot more strength.

For us it will always be an ongoing challenge dealing with roads on the floodplain, and dealing with gravel roads particularly in steep terrain. To keep on top of those Council has to balance the funds we have, over the demands for a road, and just how far can we reconstruct or build a road, or repair a road, to a level that's acceptable.



Meet the people who hate potholes more than you do

Everyone in Kempsey is sick of the potholes and without a doubt there's no one who hates them more than Kempsey Shire Council's road crews.

For all the good rain brings to the Kempsey Shire, it also presents big challenges, often in the form of big potholes.

So how do Council's road repair teams cope in periods of wet weather and flooding?

The answer is:

The best they can.

Kempsey Shire

Council Coordinator

Maintenance Response Garick

Cahill, said the shire's road network is made up of around 672 kilometres of sealed and 587 kilometres of unsealed roads. There are two repair crews dedicated to the sealed roads and another two dedicated to unsealed roads.

One of the most frustrating tasks for Tash, James and Frank's crew is re-patching potholes that they have only just recently repaired.

"Water has a clever way of finding its way into the smallest of cracks, failures and even into recently patched potholes. It makes repairing



roads very difficult and often the root cause of the failures dates back to when and how the roads were made.

"We understand the community is frustrated and we share this frustration with them, but crews are doing their best to complete this often thankless task," said Mr Cahill.

There are a lot of patching repairs ahead for crews and Council asks for patience and understanding of the challenges crews are facing who are working hard to repair roads as swiftly as possible.

Going the distance

Each year Kempsey Shire Council repairs thousands of potholes across the shire's 1,250km road network – that's almost as far as driving from **Kempsey to Melbourne.**

Why don't you just do it properly and redo the road?

We'd love to! The reason Council doesn't reseal more roads from scratch is that the cost to build a new road averages \$1 MILLION PER KILOMETRE. Road repairs cost a fraction of that.

New road surfaces require expensive equipment, lots of workers and that's why they often need funding from the government.

Rocking the road

Immediately after repairs there is always gravel on the road. That's why we send the street sweeper through in the days after to tidy up after ourselves.

Why the band aids?

As we can't reseal most roads we try to sustain and extend the life of each road. We also try to put in temporary repairs as quickly as possible. That means patching, which yes, looks like band aids.



Have you found a problem on our roads?

While Council's repair crews go to great lengths to monitor and maintain our roads, they can't be everywhere at once.

That's why Council welcomes your help in locating issues that have emerged on our road network, especially during wet weather.

It's easy to report a pothole:

- email us at ksc@kempsey.nsw.gov.au
- use the Snap Send Solve app on your phone
- call Council Customer Service on **6566 3200**
- complete the How Can We Help form on our website.

As always, we ask you to drive to the conditions when travelling on damaged roads or during wet weather in Kempsey Shire and beyond.

What do you call a car that fills its own pot holes?

Sounds like a joke but it's real. In the middle of 2022 Kempsey Shire Council took ownership of a brand new jetpatcher. It fills the potholes quicker and it fills them better.



Name the truck!

The patching team have been so busy using it they haven't had time to name it, and that's where you come in.

Head to [ksc.pub/nameourpatcher](https://www.kempsey.nsw.gov.au/ksc/pub/nameourpatcher) and tell us what you'd like to call our pothole repairer. Prizes for the best answers!

Why do potholes appear?

The most common way for a pothole to form is when water gets through the road surface. This is why we see more potholes in periods of heavy rain.

Council uses a range of methods to prevent potholes from forming, including resealing, rejuvenation and pavement rehabilitation.

To prevent potholes returning in the same location, Council teams do heavy patch repairs to rehabilitate and reseal a broad section of road. This significantly reduces the chances of a pothole opening again.

Which hole gets fixed?

A pothole or other type of road failure that occurs in a high-traffic area will be a priority for heavy patching.

Council regularly inspects and assesses all road surfaces to pinpoint problems like potholes and determine the priorities for improvement and preventive maintenance.

As well as traffic volume, repairs are prioritised on the basis of each road's classification and other features, including:

- the regional or local significance
- the speed limit
- local bus routes
- proximity to schools and places of public interest
- pedestrian activity

THIS IS BIG! JOIN YOUR LOCAL

Better TOGETHER NETWORK

Come along to one of the interactive, community asset mapping workshops.

Help develop communication channels to improve the flow of information between your community and Council to improve services and responses particularly in times of an emergency.



For more info & to book your spot visit ksc.pub/btn



Hate the hole, not the human

Believe it or not, whether it's hot or it's wet, filling in potholes isn't that much fun.

It's even less fun when our Council team members cop abuse hurled from a car window or on social media.

If you're looking for someone to blame, you could yell at the clouds, but we promise, we're not digging the holes!



Whose road is it anyway?

Not all roads are created equal, so who has responsibility for each road type?

The NSW Government is responsible for maintaining the main roads that run through our shire, while Kempsey Shire Council maintains the 1,250 kilometres of local roads in the shire.

Council has two road crews who carry out ongoing maintenance across our sealed road network, including patching and repairing potholes and cracks in the road surface.

Two other crews maintain our unsealed roads, and several other crews are available to step in and help with road repairs after major weather events.

To see which road repairs Council is working on each week, head to ksc.pub/works



WORK FOR *your* COUNCIL



ksc.pub/careers



KEMPSEY
Shire Council

Taking the back road

Getting off the beaten track is one of the things we love doing in the Macleay Valley. So how does Council look after our unsealed roads?

Just like sealed roads, unsealed roads need certain maintenance to remain safe and usable for the community.

Grading: Unsealed roads need to be graded to reshape and re-compact the road. This helps to reduce 'lumps and bumps' and ensure the road sheds water away from its centre after rain.

Council develops a grading maintenance schedule each year and prioritises roads for grading depending on their classification, condition and amount of use, among other factors.

Resheeting: On unsealed roads, gravel wears away over time depending on weather conditions and the type, volume and speed of traffic.

Gravel resheeting is when new gravel is added to an unsealed road to improve its condition. In this process, gravel is generally laid in loose layers, then trimmed and compacted using a grader, water cart and roller to give a road depth of about 100mm.

Don't forget to head to ksc.pub/works to see which unsealed roads Council is working on every week.



Love sport? Art? What's on?
Developments?
Or community decisions?

Sign up for our e-newsletter!

ksc.pub/e-news

