

ITEM 16 STATEMENT OF INVESTMENT - APRIL 2025

This report provides an overview of Council's investment portfolio performance for the reporting period April 2025.

Council had an average weighted return for April 2025 of 0.39% which was above the benchmark return of 0.35%. The result was primarily due to the positive valuations on the consolidated Floating Rate Notes and interest income recognised on the term deposits that were purchased at higher interest rates than currently offered in the market. The remainder of Council's portfolio continues to provide a high degree of credit quality and liquidity.

RECOMMENDATION

Council receive the Statement of Investment for April 2025.

REPORT AUTHORISATIONS

Report of: Brian Jenkins, Chief Financial Officer
 Authorised by: Renee Campbell, Director Corporate Services - Connected + Engaged City

ATTACHMENTS

- 1 Statement of Investment - April 2025
- 2 Investment Income Compared to Budget 2024-2025

ACRONYMS USED IN REPORT

Abbreviation	Meaning
CBA	Commonwealth Bank of Australia
Order	Ministerial Investment Order
RBA	Reserve Bank of Australia

BACKGROUND

Council staff monitor Council's cash flow on a daily basis and mandated to invest surplus funds in accordance with the Ministerial Investment Order and Office of Local Government guidelines. The Order reflects a conservative investment approach and restricts investment types available to Council. In compliance with the Order and Office of Local Government guidelines, Council adopted an Investment Policy on 12 December 2022. The Investment Policy provides a framework for Council to manage investment credit quality, institutional diversification and maturity constraints. Council's investment portfolio was controlled by Council's Finance Division during the period and has remained in compliance with the Investment Policy. Council's Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee provide oversight of Council's Investment Policy and Investment Management Strategy.

Council's Responsible Accounting Officer, the Chief Financial Officer, is required to sign the complying Statement of Investment contained within the report, certifying that all investments were made in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1993* and the *Local Government Regulation 2005*.

Council's investment holdings at 24 April 2025 were \$176,311,963 (Statement of Investment attached) [26 April 2024 \$160,137,077] and includes Council's interest in CivicRisk Mutual Ltd recognised at fair value as at 30 June 2024.

Council had an average weighted return for April 2025 of 0.39% which was above the benchmark return of 0.35%. The result was primarily due to the positive valuations on the consolidated Floating Rate Notes and interest income recognised on the term deposits that were purchased at higher interest rates than currently offered in the market. The remainder of Council's portfolio continues to provide a high degree of credit quality and liquidity. The global markets are experiencing levels of volatility in interest rates driven primarily by the persistent inflation issues from geo-political trade tensions.

Australia's annual inflation rate is holding steady at 2.4% and inside the Reserve Bank's 2-3% target range, however, the Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) is expected to hold its current cautious approach to markets and closely monitoring inflation trends and economic conditions. The RBA Board will meet eight times each year effective from February 2024, in order to spread monetary policy decisions across fewer meetings and allow the Board to gather more information. At their April 2025 meeting, the RBA decided to hold the official cash rate at 4.10% with market expectation of a rate cut of 0.25% at their next meeting, with the cash rate remaining at 3.85% for the remainder of 2025. Rates available to Council on purchased investments are assessed regularly and across credit and maturity spread to maximise returns on committed capital.

At 24 April 2025, year to date interest and investment revenue of \$7,477,853 was recognised compared to the year to date proposed budget of \$7,812,581.

Council's 21 Floating Rate Notes had a net increase in value of \$97,362 for April 2025.

Council holds two Mortgaged Backed Securities that recorded a net increase in value of \$8,309 for April 2025. The market value of this security considers the extended term of the security with limited liquidity and the coupon margin reflects pre-Global Financial Crisis pricing. While the maturity dates are outside Council's control, the investment advisors had previously indicated capital is not at risk at this stage and recommended a hold strategy due to the illiquid nature of the investment.

Council holds two investments within the NSW TCorpIM Funds; Long-Term Growth Fund and Medium-Term Growth Fund. The Long-Term Growth Fund recorded a net decrease in value of \$36,798 and the Medium-Term Growth Fund recorded a net decrease in value of \$15,049 in April 2025. The fluctuations in both the Long-Term Growth and Medium-Term Growth Funds are a reflection of the current share market volatility both domestically and internationally and is diversified across a number of different asset classes with differing risk and return characteristics.

The current Investment Policy sets a 40% maximum exposure limit to individual institutions within the AAA category. This limit is currently considered to include funds held within the Commonwealth Bank of Australia (CBA), savings account which holds Council's operating cash balances. At the end of April 2025, the exposure to CBA was 20.96%, which is below the investment strategy target of 25%.

The current investment portfolio complies with Council's Investment Policy which was endorsed by Council on 12 December 2022. Council's Responsible Accounting Officer has signed the Statement of Investment contained within the report, certifying all investments were made in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1993* and the *Local Government Regulation 2005*.

PLANNING AND POLICY IMPACT

This report contributes to the delivery of Our Wollongong Our Future 2032 Goal 4 – 'We are a connected and engaged community'. It specifically delivers on the following:

Community Strategic Plan 2032		Delivery Program 2022-2026	
Strategy		Service	
4.8	Council's resources are managed effectively to ensure long term financial sustainability.	Financial Services	

CONCLUSION

The investments for April 2025 recorded an average weighted return that was above the AusBondBank Bill Index Benchmark and performed unfavourably when compared to the year-to-date budget.

RESPONSIBLE ACCOUNTING OFFICER

