

## ITEM 1 DRAFT QUARTERLY REVIEW STATEMENT DECEMBER 2023

The Quarterly Review Statement outlines progress towards the achievement of Council's Strategic Planning documents, in particular, the Delivery Program 2022-2026 and Operational Plan 2023-2024. The Statement addresses the financial and operational performance of Council and includes the Budget Review Statement.

### RECOMMENDATION

The draft Quarterly Review Statement December 2023 be adopted.

### REPORT AUTHORISATIONS

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

### ATTACHMENTS

- 1 Draft Quarterly Review Statement December 2023

### BACKGROUND

Council's draft Quarterly Review Statement December 2023 outlines the operational and financial performance of Council's Strategic Planning documents – the Delivery Program 2022-2026 and Operational Plan 2023-2024.

This report also provides an overview of achievements against priority areas and demonstrates the organisation's performance through the inclusion of performance indicators.

Significant highlights during the quarter include:

- Stuart Park All Ages All Abilities Playground was officially opened on 18 December;
- Stage 1 of the North Wollongong beach seawall renewal was completed;
- Cringila Hills Recreation Park was awarded national Park of the Year award at the Parks and Leisure Australia Conference Awards;
- Council adopted a new Climate Change Mitigation Plan 2023-2030 and Industrial Lands Review;
- The inaugural *Culture Mix* festival was held as a celebration of Wollongong's diverse multicultural community attracting over 12,000 patrons and showcasing more than 30 different cultural identities;
- Council partnered with Illawarra Indigenous Business Network to host the first *Illawarra Aboriginal Business Expo* with 30 businesses exhibited on the day and over 300 people in attendance;
- Christmas 2023 was launched in the City Centre precinct with Australiana-themed decorations and an 8.5 metre tall City Christmas Tree.

### CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Executive Management Committee

Senior Leadership Team

### PLANNING AND POLICY IMPACT

This report contributes to the delivery of Our Wollongong 2032 goal 4 "*We are a connected and engaged community*". It specifically delivers on the following:

Community Strategic Plan		Delivery Program 2022-2026
Strategy		Service
4.1	Provide our community with equitable access to information and opportunities to inform decision-making.	Corporate Strategy

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Council commenced 2023-2024 with a budgeted deficit Operating Result [pre-capital] which broadly reflected the longer term average deficit position showing in Council's forecasts for future years. At the September Quarterly Review, a change to the long term position was created by further increases to the budgeted depreciation caused by year end indexation of infrastructure assets (\$7M). The current year budget was further impacted by timing issues caused by the removal of the 2023-2024 Financial Assistance Grant income which was paid early in 2022-2023 (\$19.5M), and by increased expenditure related to significant funded projects (\$11.7M) where the income was received last year. This had created a strikingly significant deficit when on its own without context.

The proposed movements in the December Quarterly Review will result in a further negative adjustment of \$4.1M resulting in a budgeted Operating Result [pre capital] deficit of \$51.5M. The proposed adjustments include the further introduction of projects funded from internally and externally restricted assets already received and adjustments to Commercial Waste income and Domestic Waste expenditure that are offset by decreased NSW Waste Levies and Restricted Assets. There is also reduced rates income due to adjustments for revaluation objections (recoverable in future years) and a new rates exemption (no long term impact). On the positive side, there is a proposed increase to Interest on Investments.

While the current year deficit is proposed to increase, these adjustments have not substantially impacted the future year forecasts or underlying position of Council.

The proposed Funds Result deficit of \$18.5M indicates an improvement of \$1.4M compared to current budget.

While this Quarterly Budget Review Statement is the second review of the Operational Plan 2023-2024, it is part of a continuous 10 year budget review process that looks to plan for the effects of external and internal financial environmental impacts and decisions over the short and long term. This review, therefore, reflects the continued planning, changing financial environment and the initial actions to move back towards Council's financial sustainability targets.

The following table provides a summary of the changes to budget at an Income Statement level and a Funds level. A more detailed analysis is provided in the attachment to this report.

2023-24 QUARTERLY REVIEW FINANCIALS			
NET VARIATIONS	OPERATING RESULT [pre capital]	OPERATING RESULT	FUNDS RESULT
<b>OPERATIONAL PLAN RESULT</b>	<b>(11.4)</b>	<b>27.3</b>	<b>(0.2)</b>
September QR - Financial Assistance Grant, Depreciation, Introduction of Funded Projects & Capital Grants Income	(36.0)	(45.8)	(19.7)
<b>SEPTEMBER 2023 QR RESULT</b>	<b>(47.4)</b>	<b>(18.5)</b>	<b>(19.9)</b>
Interest on Investments	1.4	1.4	1.4
Waste Facility - Commercial	(1.2)	(1.2)	
Domestic Waste	(0.5)	(0.5)	
Rates	(0.5)	(0.5)	(0.5)
Projects (Funding & Timing)	(1.9)	(1.9)	0.5
Prior Year Capital Transferred to Operating	(1.3)	(1.3)	
Developer Contribution & Capital Grants Income		16.1	
Other Minor Variations	(0.1)	(0.1)	
<b>OPERATING RESULT [pre capital] DECEMBER 2023 QR</b>	<b>(51.5)</b>	<b>(6.5)</b>	<b>(18.5)</b>

A more detailed analysis is provided in the attachment to this report.

## CONCLUSION

This draft Quarterly Review Statement December 2023 has been prepared following input and assistance from all Divisions. It is submitted for consideration and adoption by Council.



Image: Children on Corrimal Beach

Wollongong City Council

# Quarterly Review Delivery Program 2022-2026 and Operational Plan 2023-2024

October – December 2023



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Image: North Beach, Wollongong  
Photo Caitlyn Phanith (Unsplash)

## General Managers Message

This Quarterly Review Statement (October to December 2023) reports on progress towards achieving the five Councillor Strategic Priorities from the Delivery Program 2022-2026 and Operational Plan 2023-2024.

Actions and updates from the Operational Plan 2023-2024 and 33 Council Services, which form the Delivery Program, are reported by the six Community Goals from the Our Wollongong 2032 Community Strategic Plan. Highlights from this quarter include:

- Stuart Park All Ages All Abilities Playground was officially opened on 18 December;
- Stage 1 of the North Wollongong beach seawall renewal was completed;
- Cringila Hills Recreation Park was awarded national Park of the Year award at the Parks and Leisure Australia Conference Awards;
- Council adoption of a new Climate Change Mitigation Plan 2023-2030 and Industrial Lands Review;
- The inaugural *Culture Mix* festival was held as a celebration of Wollongong's diverse multicultural community attracting over 12,000 patrons and showcasing more than 30 different cultural identities;
- Council partnered with Illawarra Indigenous Business Network to host the first *Illawarra Aboriginal Business Expo* with 30 businesses exhibited on the day and over 300 people in attendance;
- Christmas 2023 was launched in the City Centre precinct with Australian-themed decorations and an 8.5 metre-tall City Christmas Tree.

This Delivery Program includes a \$400M investment for major projects and maintaining our existing infrastructure to help build communities in our suburbs, while also providing employment opportunities to local contractors, suppliers and businesses.

Priorities in these plans include investment in footpaths, shared paths and dedicated cycleways to make it safer for kids to get to school and easier for people of all ages and skill levels to use active modes of transport. We're taking steps to improve our facilities, including additional drainage in our sports fields, creating more amenities and improving accessibility for all in our community.

We are investing in major infrastructure to improve access to the areas around West Dapto, including West Dapto Road and Cleveland Road. We're also ensuring the developments in these areas are well thought out with footpaths and green spaces to build liveable communities and places.

These are exciting plans for our community. While Council continues to maintain a strong financial position, we're not immune to current economic pressures and inflation. This challenging business environment requires significant ongoing focus and attention, and we are committed to using our community's resources responsibly.

We continue to focus on improving our customer service to best serve our community and are committed to be the best possible local government authority we can be to deliver on our promise of creating an extraordinary Wollongong.

I would like to thank all staff and the community for their contributions to the achievements identified in this Quarterly Review and Budget Review Statement. This Review will inform the Annual Report due in November 2024.

Greg Doyle  
General Manager



## About this Report

The Quarterly Review reports on Council's progress and outcomes against services and actions from the Delivery Program and Operational Plan. It presents Council's financials and budget and provides the community with the original and revised annual budgets with explanations if any significant adjustments have occurred.

It is important to present regular updates to the community to provide communication on the progress of Council's Plans, including achievements, delays or changes. While Council works to deliver all Services as planned, there can be changes required due to a number of factors, that may impact on Council's Services and their delivery. The Quarterly Review Report provides a regular opportunity to provide updates to our community.

This Quarterly Progress Review reports outcomes against Council's Delivery Program and Operational Plan 2023-2024 for the December quarter.

Council's 33 Services form the foundation of the Delivery Program and Operational Plan. Council's Services are presented under their best fit goal. Council's internal Services form an additional group called Support Services to demonstrate that these Services support the delivery of all goals.

Council reviews Services as part of a

continuous improvement approach based on community feedback with the aim of creating efficiencies and improving service delivery to the community.

Wollongong City Council regularly tracks and monitors the Delivery Program and Operational Plan and reports to the community on progress through this Quarterly Report as well as on an annual basis. Council also tracks progress towards the Community Strategic Plan through the State of the City Report. All reports will be available on Council's website.





## Strategic Priorities

Our Councillors have made a commitment to support our organisation and community in making Wollongong a better place to live, work, visit and play. To focus Council's attention to achieve this, Councillors have agreed to five Strategic Priorities. These are outlined in the Delivery Program 2022-2026. A summary of progress made in the December Quarter has been outlined below:



Implementation of activations and infrastructure for the Safer Cities: Her Way project focused on Port Kembla, Dapto and MacCabe Park, Wollongong commenced from November.

Community safety audits were conducted at Kanahooka Point Boat Harbour, Dapto Square, MacCabe Park and Wentworth Street Port Kembla.

The *Paint the Gong REaD* reading tent was delivered at the Port Kembla Community Christmas Feast. *Bright Spark* the mascot attended Lake Heights Public School kindergarten orientation and the reading day for *Paint Shellharbour REaD*.

Connecting Neighbours Grants were available to support events or activities in local communities that connect people to each other and food.



Policies and projects to support Council's commitment to sustainability and reducing greenhouse gas emissions continues to be a focus for Council. Progress on some of the larger strategic projects this quarter included:

- Implementation of the Climate Change Adaptation Plan through progressing key actions of the Wollongong Urban Heat Strategy adopted in September 2023.
- Implementation of the Climate Change Mitigation Plan 2020-2022 through initiatives such as supporting the installation and monitoring of kerbside electric vehicle charging infrastructure pilot; input into the development of the Regional Energy Strategy; and delivery of a sustainable buildings design tool.
- Adoption of a new Climate Change Mitigation Plan 2023-2030 adopted by Council in November 2023.
- Continued implementation of the Lake Illawarra Coastal Management Program for which 34 of the 39 actions are scheduled for commencement.
- Procurement process of the coastal hazard studies for Stage 2 of the Open Coast Coastal Management.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

In addition to these core projects, other key actions undertaken this quarter include:

- Issue of three Sustainable Wollongong e-newsletters which have approximately 2,700 subscribers.
- consideration and response to NSW Department of Planning and Environment comment on the draft Biodiversity package for West Dapto.
- expert advice on options to manage the blue-green algal bloom at Coomaditchie Lagoon.
- provision of approximately 100 environmental referrals and pre-lodgment advice for development applications.

### Active Transport and Connectivity

Council is currently working closely with an engaged consultant on a Cycling Network Plan and Program which is delivering on multiple actions of the Wollongong Cycling Strategy 2030. Work is underway and is expected to conclude by end of the financial year 2023-2024.

The Grand Pacific Walk strategy is underway to inform management of the existing network and direction on the future expansion.

Lake Illawarra Active Transport Masterplan (draft) prepared by a consultant is currently being reviewed.

Council staff attended the Minister Helen Moller Micro-mobility shared scheme roundtable as an expert panel member to convey the challenges local government experience with delivering active transport.

### Business and Investment

This quarter saw 20 Business/investor enquires ranging from business support and information to facilitating larger projects through *Invest Wollongong*.

October was Small Business Month, with Council holding the following events held for Wollongong businesses:

- 12 October – Illawarra Aboriginal Business Expo. Council partnered with the Illawarra Indigenous Business Network to host the first Illawarra Aboriginal Business Expo at Wollongong Art Gallery with approximately 300 people attending.
- 17 October – Cybersecurity: Step by Step workshop on how to protect your business with 43 people attending.
- 27 October – ‘Planning your website for success’ with 30 people attending.

On 18 October, *Invest Wollongong* welcomed former English cricketer Lord Ian Botham, the United Kingdom (UK) Prime Minister’s Trade Envoy to Australia and Louise Cantillon, UK Consul-General and Deputy Trade Commissioner Asia Pacific – Australia and New Zealand. The event brought together the local business community to showcase our city.

*Invest Wollongong* continued its new digital marketing campaign this quarter, with a range of different collateral including display banner ads, Search Engine Marketing (Google AdWords) and LinkedIn advertising. An article ‘*How Siligong Valley emerged from the Gong’s high-tech heart*’ was published in the Australian Financial Review, featuring interviews with local technology companies.

BlueScope unveiled its Master Plan to develop 200 hectare of surplus land adjacent to the Port Kembla steelworks into a next-generation multi-industrial



## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

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precinct - larger than the size of the Melbourne CBD. BlueScope have indicated the Master Plan has potential to create up to 20,000 jobs across a range of emerging industries.



### West Dapto

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Council endorsed the draft West Dapto Development Contributions Plan 2024 to be placed on public exhibition between 6 November and 4 December 2023. The draft Plan incorporates recommendations from the West Dapto Social Infrastructure Needs Assessment. Following exhibition and subject to Council adoption, the draft Plan and exhibition submissions will be referred to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) for assessment.

During the quarter infrastructure designs and construction projects continued with Stage 1 of West Dapto Road upgrade progressing and 50% design of the Stage 5 roads package being achieved.

Council staff reported two Planning Proposals to Council which were adopted for finalisation. This included significant urban zoning of Stage 3 of West Dapto release area, which will provide for more than 2,000 future homes. Neighbourhood Plans and concept Development Application assessments continued with a large focus on Stage 5 of the release area, while Development Applications for land subdivision continue to be assessed in Stage 1 and 2 and parts of Stage 3.

## Reporting against the Delivery Program 2022-2026 and Operational Plan 2022-2023






This Quarterly Review reports on progress of activities and actions within Council's 33 Services. Council's Services are presented under their best fit goal. Council's internal Services form an additional group called Support Services to demonstrate that these Services support the delivery of all goals.





## Summary of Progress by Goal

### Status of Actions for December Quarter

Status		Goal 1	Goal 2	Goal 3	Goal 4	Goal 5	Goal 6	Support Services	Total
<b>On-Track</b> Action is progressing as planned		90% (27/30)	100% (8/8)	100% (10/10)	96% (25/26)	90% (27/30)	83% (5/6)	77% (10/13)	91.1% (112/123)
<b>Complete</b> Action or project achieved as planned		0% (0/30)	0% (0/8)	0% (0/10)	4% (1/26)	3.3% (1/30)	0% (0/6)	0% (0/13)	1.6% (2/123)
<b>Deferred</b> A decision has been made to reschedule the timing of the project or actions		6.7% (2/30)	0% (0/8)	0% (0/10)	0% (0/26)	0% (0/30)	0% (0/6)	7.7% (1/13)	2.4% (3/123)
<b>Not scheduled to commence</b> The action was not due to commence during the reporting quarter		0% (0/30)	0% (0/8)	0% (0/10)	0% (0/26)	0% (0/30)	0% (0/6)	0% (0/13)	0% (0/123)
<b>Delayed</b> Unforeseen event has changed the timing of a project or action		3.3% (1/30)	0% (0/8)	0% (0/10)	0% (0/26)	6.7% (2/30)	17% (1/6)	15.3% (2/13)	4.9% (6/123)

## GOAL 1 | WE VALUE AND PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT

### December Quarter Highlights



*Council attended events at the University of Wollongong supporting Global Climate Change week 2023.*



*Two solar-powered aeration pumps were installed at Coomaditchie Lagoon to combat a persistent blue-green algal bloom affecting the popular waterway.*



*The Poem Forest award ceremony was held at William Beach Reserve, Brownsville with finalists reading their poems and participating in tree planting within the reserve.*

## GOAL 1 | WE VALUE AND PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT

### Development Assessment

#### Responsibility Manager Development Assessment and Certification

##### About this Service

The service undertakes assessment and determination of planning matters to facilitate balanced planning outcomes to serve the current and future community. This includes development applications, construction certificates, complying development, building and subdivision certificates, pre-lodgement advice, managing panels, Fire Safety Statements and upgrades, building compliance inspections, audits on completed buildings, providing expert evidence in Land and Environment Court Appeals, and advice to Council and stakeholders in all aspects of the development assessment process.

##### Quarterly Progress Update

Council continued to assess a diverse range of development applications. Pre-lodgement advice was provided for a variety of stakeholders. Council also continues to provide a service as a Principal Certifying Authority for buildings and subdivisions as an alternative option to the private sector.




Council worked with the Design Review Panel to achieve design excellence through providing advice on 17 matters during the quarter.

Working with the Wollongong Local Planning Panel saw the Panel consider eight matters in the quarter.

Work with the Southern Regional Planning Panel saw the Panel determine two matters and briefed on a further 17 applications during the quarter.



Process improvement continued to be a focus with ongoing investment in resolving issues with the NSW Planning Portal integration and the review of publicly available information relating to development application processes.

##### Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update

Actions	Status	Comment
Carry out the OneCouncil integration project with the New South Wales planning portal	Delayed 	Council continues to work on the OneCouncil Integration with the NSW Planning Portal project. The ongoing evolution of the planning portal initiated by NSW Planning presents a challenge and the project group needs to continually adapt. Council has highlighted the challenges to the Department and the subsequent prolonging of the project as a consequence. A degree of assistance from the Department is anticipated, with a view to finalising the project prior to June 2024.
Review the customer experience around access to information related to Development Assessment as part of the Service Optimisation Program	On-Track 	The aim of the evaluation process is to consider accessibility to and understanding of the information Council provides to customers to help them through the development application journey. The last few months have been focussed on significant data analysis of customer enquiries through customer service requests and website traffic. The project will now focus on information gathering from key internal stakeholders including the duty planner, duty building surveyor and other staff. Benchmarking against other councils has commenced.
Administer Design Review Panel in relation to key sites or significant development	On-Track 	Council continues to work with the Design Review Panel to achieve design excellence in the assessment and determination of Development Applications. The Panel provided advice on 17 matters during the December quarter.

## GOAL 1 | WE VALUE AND PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT

### Development Assessment Continued

Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update		
Actions	Status	Comment
Administer the Wollongong Local Planning Panel	On-Track 	Council continues to work with the Wollongong Local Planning Panel to finalise the assessment and determination of Development Applications. The Panel considered eight matters during the October-December quarter.
In conjunction with the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment administer the Southern Regional Planning Panel	On-Track 	Council continues to work with the Southern Regional Planning Panel to finalise the assessment and determination of significant Development Applications. The Panel determined two matters and was briefed on a further 17 applications during the December quarter.

## GOAL 1 | WE VALUE AND PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT

### Emergency Management

*Responsibility Manager Infrastructure Strategy and Planning*

#### About this Service


The service provides support in the planning and preparation for significant emergencies that may impact the safety and security of residents and visitors to the city.

#### Quarterly Progress Update

Council continued to prioritise emergency management throughout the quarter, fulfilling its role of providing executive support to the Illawarra Local Emergency Management Committee in accordance with the Illawarra Emergency Management's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Council's Emergency Management Officer (EMO) has played a crucial role in various projects aimed at enhancing the city's resilience. These include the development of a comprehensive Illawarra Risk Assessment to identify the higher risk areas of future weather events, and the continued development of dam safety exercises for the Council managed prescribed dams. The risk assessment informs the next major update to the Illawarra Emergency Plan scheduled for 2024. Council has actively supported the Illawarra Local Emergency Management Committee in addressing the challenges posed by severe weather events. Council collaborated closely with the committee, particularly during the activation of the Illawarra Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) in response to severe storms / heavy rainfall.

During the quarter an independent review of Council's management of Asset Protection Zones and fire trails was completed.

#### Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update

Actions	Status	Comment
Continue to progress design and construction of a new Wollongong State Emergency Services unit	Deferred 	The State Emergency Service (SES) and Council are working together to consider the requirements of the SES across the Local Government Area and the location and function required for buildings.

## GOAL 1 | WE VALUE AND PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT

### Environmental Services

*Responsibility Manager Open Space and Environmental Services*



#### About this Service

This service involves Council working with the community in relation to local climate change mitigation, adaptation, monitoring and reporting, coastal and estuary management, biodiversity planning, contaminated lands controls, development assessment for environmental impacts, environmental education, volunteer management and partnerships, waste minimisation and environmental advocacy.

#### Quarterly Progress Update



During the quarter the following work was completed: 6,400 trees planted as part of the National Red Room Poetry Competition; a Koala Conservation Food Forest was planted at Eleebana Reserve Kanahooka; Summer readiness with Asset Protection Zone mowing and Green Waste Public Drop off events were held; \$410,000 grant funds received for further riparian restoration of Lake Illawarra, and also coastal dunes; Stormwater and deodoriser upgrades completed at Whytes Gully to improve environmental performance at the site.

#### Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update

Actions	Status	Comment
Deliver commitments made under the Global Covenant of Mayors and support Council's climate emergency declaration	On-Track 	Council's latest Climate Change Mitigation Plan 2023-2030 was adopted on 27 November 2023 and meets the Global Covenant of Mayors (GCoM) requirements.  GCoM reporting was submitted for 2023 and compliance with GCoM badges was maintained.  An energy poverty pillar has been introduced as an additional GCoM commitment. The Illawarra Energy Strategy development is investigating opportunities to address energy poverty on a regional basis.
Prepare the Climate Change Mitigation Plan 2022-2026	On-Track 	The Climate Change Mitigation Plan (CCMP) 2023-2030 exhibition concluded during the quarter, with the updated Plan adopted at the 27 November 2023 Council meeting.  The CCMP documents and content were updated on Council's webpages.  Key actions progressed during the quarter include: sustainable buildings design tool was finalised for internal use; Council's Administration building Electric Vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure project was finalised; Regional Energy Strategy development progressed; kerbside public EV charging infrastructure pilot delivered including the finalised Memorandum of Understanding; Global climate change week events delivered; Community solar project investigation commenced; advocacy and support for local renewable energy generation and emissions reductions initiatives via submission to Illawarra Offshore Wind Zone proposal and NSW Climate Change Bill; review of Council's Climate action governance framework commenced; public EV destination charging grants information package delivered to local businesses and EV ready Strata buildings information and grants package delivered to 199 local strata managed buildings.

## GOAL 1 | WE VALUE AND PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT

### Environmental Services Continued

Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update		
Actions	Status	Comment
Implement priority actions from the Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2023-2027	On-Track 	Climate Change adaptation actions including heat strategy actions have been progressed including internal consultation with a range of Council teams.  Engagement and educational activities for culturally and linguistically diverse groups are planned for 2024.
Prepare and implement the Wollongong Coastal Management Program	On-Track 	Funding has been awarded by the NSW Coastal and Estuary Program to assist with the preparation of coastal hazard studies and subsequent development of a Coastal Management Program (CMP) for the coastline. Tenders for the coastal hazard studies component have been invited and it is anticipated a consultant will be engaged in early 2024. Funding for two other projects submitted during the previous quarter are still pending outcomes (Aboriginal Heritage Study and Littoral rainforest/coastal wetland mapping).

## GOAL 1 | WE VALUE AND PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT

### Land Use Planning

Responsibility *Manager City Strategy*

#### About this Service

Land Use Planning manages the plans, policies and certificates that help our community understand the role and function of land within Wollongong. The team undertakes detailed studies to make long term plans for how we can live, work and play sustainably, protecting what we value and ensuring development contributes to great places for our community.

#### Quarterly Progress Update

The following progress has been made during the December quarter: The Industrial Lands Review was adopted; a Planning Agreement for the former Port Kembla Public School site for 5% Affordable Rental Housing was adopted; a Planning Agreement for an accessway at *Wilkie's Walk*, Thirroul was adopted; the Heritage Strategy was adopted.

Following an exhibition process, the Plans of Management for 32 Crown Reserves and Helensburgh Park were endorsed by Council and referred to the NSW Department of Planning and Environment - Crown Lands for authority to adopt.






An amendment was made to the Local Environmental Plan to heritage list Miala House, Marshall Mount. Planning Proposals for the re-classification of 340 West Dapto Road and for minor amendments along transport corridors was exhibited; a Planning Proposal to rezone land for 2,275 residential housing lots at Cleveland Road, West Dapto was adopted for finalisation and 5,936 Planning Certificates have been issued for the calendar year.

#### Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update

Actions	Status	Comment
Partner with the Greater Cities Commission with the development of the Region and Cities Plan	On-Track 	<p>Council continues to partner with the Greater Cities Commission (GCC) on the development of the Region and Illawarra Shoalhaven City Plan. Council has participated in vision setting workshops and provided feedback on the GCC's Six Cities Discussion paper.</p> <p>During the development of the plans, Council has provided advice to the GCC regarding Wollongong's Housing and Centres strategies and discussed opportunities for the City Plan to include key objectives and outcomes for the Wollongong Metropolitan Centre and the Corrimal, Dapto and Warrawong Strategic Centres.</p> <p>Council is involved in regular dialogue with the GCC through workshops and other correspondence.</p> <p>Council understands that the Region Plan and some portions of the Illawarra Shoalhaven City Plan will be exhibited in 2024.</p> <p>Council will continue to seek out opportunities to collaborate on the development of these plans.</p>

## GOAL 1 | WE VALUE AND PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT

### Land Use Planning Continued

Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update		
Actions	Status	Comment
Review the Local Strategic Planning Statement	On-Track 	Regular discussion with NSW Department of Planning and Environment and Greater Cities Commission is underway regarding alignment and development of the Illawarra Shoalhaven City Plan.  During the quarter, the adoption of the Industrial Lands Review and Climate Change Mitigation Plan 2023-2030 are other important documents that will inform the updated Local Strategic Planning Statement.  An internal workshop with key staff was held on 15 December to inform the development of the Statement.
Continue the review of West Dapto Land Release Area by developing a Local Infrastructure Plan	On-Track 	The draft West Dapto Development Contributions Plan 2024 was adopted for exhibition by Council on 30 October 2023. The public exhibition of the draft Plan commenced on 6 November. During the first half of 2024 the draft Plan will be reported to Council with a themed summary of the submissions received and seek a resolution to submit the draft Plan to the NSW Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) for review.
In collaboration with key agencies, facilitate the West Dapto Review Committee to deliver the West Dapto Urban Release Area	On-Track 	The West Dapto Review Committee is a component of Council's governance arrangements for delivery of the West Dapto Urban Release Area. The Committee is Chaired by the Lord Mayor and includes Ward 3 Councillors. The NSW Department of Planning and Environment has an ongoing invitation to attend committee meetings. The Lord Mayor and Ward 3 Councillors meet bi-monthly. Matters relating to West Dapto Urban Release Area are discussed as required.
Progress the City Centre Planning Strategy	Deferred 	In December 2020, Council resolved to defer the draft City Centre Planning Strategy pending progression of other informing projects.  Two major studies were raised as actions in the Council resolution. One of the supporting strategies, the Wollongong Retail & Business Centres Strategy is now complete and adopted by Council in March 2023.  During the year, Council engaged a consultant to complete the City Centre Movement and Place Plan, the second supporting strategy included in the resolution. Stakeholder workshops were completed in August 2023. The draft Plan was progressed during the December quarter with input from Council staff.
Develop and install the Sandon Point Aboriginal Place Interpretive Strategy and Indigenous Art Project	On-Track 	The Sandon Point Interpretation Strategy has been completed in consultation with the Joint Management partners and broader Aboriginal community. Four interpretative signs have been erected. Consultation is ongoing with stakeholders on the installation of Aboriginal artworks that tell local stories.

## GOAL 1 | WE VALUE AND PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT

### Land Use Planning Continued

Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update		
Actions	Status	Comment
Finalise the development of the Housing Strategy and commence implementation on initial priorities	<p>On-Track</p> 	<p>The Wollongong Housing Strategy was adopted by Council in February 2023 and endorsed by the NSW Department of Planning and Environment in July 2023. Implementation of the strategies and actions is underway.</p> <p>During the quarter, a Planning Agreement for the former Port Kembla School site providing 5% Affordable Rental Housing has been adopted; a Planning Proposal to reduce development potential of large properties zoned R2 Low Density Residential in the Illawarra Escarpment foothills which have environmental and infrastructure constraints has been exhibited. A Planning Proposal to rezone an additional 2,275 lots in the Cleveland Road precinct at West Dapto has been approved to be finalised and a Neighbourhood Plan for the Bluescope Lands at Kembla Grange has been adopted.</p>

## GOAL 1 | WE VALUE AND PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT

### Natural Area Management

Responsibility *Manager Open Space and Environmental Services*

#### About this Service

Manage Council's natural areas restoration works program, carry out weed and pest management and coordinate volunteer programs in natural areas. Management and restoration of natural areas under Council care and control and conservation of endangered ecological communities and threatened species. These activities are funded through a combination of Council's own operating funds, external grants, partnerships with other organisations and the support of community volunteers.


#### Quarterly Progress Update

Natural Area restoration continues throughout our reserves, supported by contractors and volunteer groups. Council was successful in acquiring \$410K in external funding aimed at supporting environmental restoration around Lake Illawarra, Port Kembla Dunes and Puckeyes dunes.

The End of Year Environmental Volunteer Recognition and Celebration was held in December with Rise and Shine, Bushcare, Dunecare and FiReady volunteers.

The Indian Myna Bird workshops have continued and there is now an online workshop that has seen a dramatic uptake of participants.

#### Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update

Actions	Status	Comment
Implement annual bushfire hazard reduction works program for Asset Protection Zones on Council managed lands	On-Track 	<p>The Mt Kembla Community Protection Plan was adopted during the quarter.</p> <p>Five Community meetings were held across the local government area (LGA) to engage with high-risk communities to educate and help the community to be prepared for the bush fire season.</p> <p>Three green waste events were held at Berkeley, Helensburgh and Corrimal to allow the community to remove excess garden waste from their properties to reduce fuels.</p> <p>A full review of bushfire risk within the LGA and Council's Operational Plan was completed during the quarter. No additional Asset Protection Zones (APZs) were recommended from review. Operational service delivery adjustments such as 'no mow zones' were established for extreme and catastrophic forecasted fire days near bushfire prone areas.</p>

## GOAL 1 | WE VALUE AND PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT

### Regulatory Compliance

*Responsibility Manager Regulation and Enforcement*

#### About this Service

This service involves environment and development compliance, animal control and parking in accordance with statutory requirements and Council Policy.

Providing education programs and information to raise community awareness also forms part of this service.

#### Quarterly Progress Update

Council continued to respond to requests received throughout the December quarter.


Response to companion animal management requests included: 124 dog attack incidents; 365 nuisance barking dog requests; 46 stray roaming dogs returned to owner or impounded.

As part of the continued school zone parking program, 50 schools were patrolled, with 13 schools displaying Council banners. A total of 235 patrols were conducted, with 62 penalty notices issued, 101 written and verbal warnings issued, and 72 educational discussions.

Development and Environment compliance programs continued during the December quarter with staff receiving 302 Customer Service Requests for development related matters relating to the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act. Investigations were conducted into illegal and unauthorised development and use of premises, with 36 Notices and Orders issued to rectify non-compliances and five fines for development related offences.



Staff worked collaboratively to improve the management and regulation of noise from excavation on construction sites. Modifications to the customer request lodgement process were made, Council's website information was updated and conditions of development consent were reviewed and modified.

#### Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update

Actions	Status	Comment
Carry out a proactive surveillance and inspection program of known dumping hot-spots and implement education and awareness raising programs aimed at reducing illegally dumped waste	On-Track 	Council conducted a total of 162 investigations of illegal dumping incidents within Wollongong Local Government Area. Following investigations a total of six verbal clean up notices were issued along with four cautions/ warnings.


## GOAL 1 | WE VALUE AND PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT

### Regulatory Compliance Continued

Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update		
Actions	Status	Comment
Maintain a proactive compliance program for companion animals in public places, including beaches, foreshore areas and parks.	On-Track 	<p>During the quarter, Council conducted 205 patrols of beach and foreshore locations and monitored dog and owner behaviour during these patrols. Three penalty notices were issued, seven written warnings issued, and 14 verbal warnings issued.</p> <p>Council staff undertook 74 educational discussions and attended the Bunnings Pet Awareness Day on 26 October 2023 promoting awareness of Beach and Park Access for dogs. The day promoted responsible pet ownership, such as microchipping, registering and desexing your pet. Promotional and Education brochures were given out to customers, including dog leads.</p> <p>Council worked towards updating the Dogs on Beaches and Parks Policy, including consultation with the Illawarra Local Aboriginal Land Council.</p>
Develop and implement an education and awareness raising program regarding swimming pool barriers	On-Track 	<p>The Swimming Pool Safety Barrier program continued throughout the quarter, with 198 inspections conducted to assess compliance with the Swimming Pool Act 1992.</p> <p>Staff completed 20 Compliance Certificate Applications during the quarter and actioned 46 Customer Service Requests relating to swimming pool safety barriers. Seven Notices were issued to achieve compliance with the Swimming Pool Act.</p> <p>Work continued on developing a Community Education Program to promote key swimming safety messages during the warmer months of the year. Elements of the education program include mailouts to swimming pool owners and real estate agents in the Wollongong Local Government Area and social media messaging.</p> <p>Staff worked to design swimming pool safety posters to be displayed at Council aquatic facilities, pool shops and learn to swim schools. The posters contain educational messages and a QR code that takes people directly to Council's website.</p>

## GOAL 1 | WE VALUE AND PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT

### Regulatory Compliance Continued

Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update		
Actions	Status	Comment
Undertake a trial to target compliance of subdivision and residential building sites for sediment and erosion control, hours of operation, waste management (including storage and management of building materials) and dust control	On-Track 	<p>The Building Sites Inspection program continued with a focus on erosion and sediment control, dust management, waste and building materials management at development sites across the Local Government Area.</p> <p>Throughout the quarter, staff conducted 182 inspections of building sites, with 15 fines and 47 warnings issued, 97 educational conversations had, 22 referrals to private certifiers for issues requiring review and four notices issued to rectify non-compliance.</p> <p>Council staff presented at a building industry seminar to educate builders on their responsibilities regarding best practice environmental controls and management on building sites. This initiative was well received, and further industry education initiatives are being planned.</p> <p>To improve the program and enhance environmental outcomes, staff collaborated with surrounding Council's, the NSW Environmental Protection Authority and NSW Department of Primary Industries regarding developing educational materials and discussing similar programs being conducted.</p>

## GOAL 1 | WE VALUE AND PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT

### Stormwater Services

*Responsibility Manager Infrastructure Strategy and Planning*




#### About this Service

This service strategically plans for a coordinated approach to floodplain risk management and stormwater management including protection of waterways, beaches, lakes, lagoons and creeks. This service manages and maintains 835 kilometres of drainage and associated infrastructure assets across the city that aim to be safe, efficient, effective and sustainable.

#### Quarterly Progress Update




During the quarter, 74 customer requests were addressed and completed. Four engineering designs for capital stormwater projects, and three technical review design projects (stormwater network maintenance) have been handed over to the respective construction teams.

#### Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update

Actions	Status	Comment
Develop and implement the Floodplain Risk Management Plans	On-Track 	Several localised issues were highlighted by the community during recent Community Information sessions and consultation for the Fairy and Cabbage Tree Creek Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan and Allans Creek Flood Study and Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan. The floodplain management team and consultants have been investigating and addressing these issues and contacting community members to discuss further.  The tendering process for Lake Illawarra Flood Study and the Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan has commenced.  Floodplain and Stormwater staff attended a Department of Planning Workshop to discuss the recently released Flood Risk Management Manual (2023), which has superseded the Flood Risk Development Manual (2005).  The Northern Floodplain Risk Management Committee Meeting was held on 6 December. Discussions were held on the current Flood Risk Management Studies and Plans progress and the Collins Creek Flood Risk Management Study and Plan was endorsed for public consultation stage.
Develop an awareness campaign to educate the community on landowner's obligations for managing creeks and waterways on private land	On-Track 	With the floodplain educational videos completed, staff have prepared the associated content to accompany the videos on Council's web page.
Plan and deliver stormwater maintenance, renewal and upgrade works	On-Track 	During last quarter, 74 customer requests were addressed and completed.  In addition, four engineering designs for capital stormwater projects, and three technical review design projects (stormwater network maintenance) were handed over to the respective delivery teams.  A works and project prioritisation and work allocation schedule was developed during the quarter to prioritise and track minor stormwater and floodplain works and projects.

## GOAL 1 | WE VALUE AND PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT

### Stormwater Services Continued

Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update		
Actions	Status	Comment
Deliver rolling program of flood and stormwater infrastructure condition and safety inspections	On-Track 	Stormwater pipe Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) and pit inspections continued during the quarter. Inspections undertaken were a combination of scheduled inspections and reactive inspections required to investigate issues raised by the community. Across this period, approximately 147 stormwater lines, totalling 2,548 metres, and 325 pits were inspected.  Monthly routine surveillance inspections for Council's Declared Dams were also completed, in line with our obligations under the Dam Safety Act, 2015.
Implement priority actions of the certified Coastal Management Program for Lake Illawarra	On-Track 	The Program is in its third year of implementation and 34 of 39 actions are now scheduled to have commenced. Of these actions: 28 are in progress; 2 are complete; 4 are "as required" actions.  Applications for NSW Government funding have been successful to extend the catchment water quality monitoring program, implement outcomes of the NSW Department of Planning risk-based framework for stormwater reduction targets and conduct foreshore protection and revegetation works. Key priority actions were progressed over the quarter including the development of a fauna monitoring program, community engagement and education and the development of an online hub and the Lake entrance options study. A bathymetric survey report of Lake Illawarra and its tributaries is now complete.
Enhance the management of Council owned water and wastewater assets	On-Track 	Managed water and wastewater systems continue to be monitored via telemetry with early warning alerts mitigating potential events.

## GOAL 1 | WE VALUE AND PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT

### Waste Management

*Responsibility Manager Open Space and Environmental Services*

#### About this Service



Deliver high quality, value for money, customer focused municipal waste services to the Wollongong community in the form of waste facilities and collection services.

The service includes community education programs, waste collection and recycling, operation of the Wollongong Waste and Resource Recovery Park, public domain waste collection and facilities cleaning.

#### Quarterly Progress Update

During the quarter the following works occurred: continuation of the development of specifications for the upcoming domestic waste contract in consultation with Shellharbour Council; waste education focusing on Food Organics Garden Organics (FOGO), removal of garden waste in preparation for the bushfire season, and Christmas cardboard drop-offs; tender process for a new landfill compactor; landfill gas capture and flaring removed the equivalent of 7,265.92 kg of carbon dioxide emissions from Whytes Gully this financial year. Further expansion of the landfill gas capture system is planned for installation early in 2024.

#### Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update

Actions	Status	Comment
Educate and continue to deliver waste diversion programs aligned with problematic waste streams	On-Track 	Education programs continue to be delivered across the community to promote the diversion of waste from landfill through avoiding, reducing, reusing and recycling materials.  Work during the quarter included promotion of the Hydrogen Waste Collection compactor truck, Green waste drop offs, National Recycling Week and planning for Christmas servicing and Recycling drop offs.
Continue to develop and implement the landfill gas management system at Whytes Gully	On-Track 	Landfill gas capture and flaring has removed the equivalent of 7,265.92 kg of carbon dioxide from emissions from Whytes Gully this financial year. Further expansion of the landfill gas capture system is planned for installation in early 2024.

## GOAL 1 | WE VALUE AND PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT

### Measuring Success

Measure	Target/Desired Trend	Comparative Data Where Available – December 2022	Result December 2023
<b>Development Assessment</b>			
Outstanding DAs < 90 days	200	246	180
Outstanding DAs >90 days	50	104	120
Average net determination days	50	41	39
<b>Environmental Services</b>			
Participation Rate in Education Programs	Increase	1,221	1,386
Tonnes of waste collected from clean up activities	Decrease	4.1	3.47
<b>Natural Area Management</b>			
Participation rate in environmental programs	Increase	9,914	6,016
Number of volunteers worked at Bushcare, Dunecare and FIREady sites	Increase	184	216
<b>Waste Services</b>			
Waste diverted from landfill	Decrease	54%	54%
Waste Education Workshops and Events - number	Increase	29	29
Waste Education Workshops and Events - Participants	Increase	6,510	1,542 <sup>#</sup>
Waste Removed from Our Creek and Waterway SQIDs and Trash Racks	Decrease	Not applicable (annual)	Not applicable (annual)
Recycling Contamination In Public Waste Bins	Decrease	Not applicable (annual)	Not applicable (annual)

<sup>#</sup> Number of participants were significantly lower than previous year due to Household Chemical Cleanup and Garage Sale Trail events not being held.

Performance measures from the Delivery Program are reported in the Quarterly Review where data is available on a quarterly or annual basis. Performance measures that are tracked every two years will be reported in the State of the City Report.

## GOAL 2 | WE HAVE AN INNOVATIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

### December Quarter Highlights



*The Parklet in Crown Street Mall, Wollongong was refurbished with artificial turf being replaced, sandstone seating, plantings and garden bed edging to further improve this inviting green space.*



*Christmas 2023 was celebrated in the City Centre precinct with Australiana-themed decorations and an 8.5 metre-tall City Christmas Tree.*

## GOAL 2 | WE HAVE AN INNOVATIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

### City Centre Management

Responsibility **Manager Community Culture and Engagement**

#### About this Service

From Wollongong Station to the foreshore, City Centre Management supports the revitalisation of the City Centre through the coordination and delivery of a range of strategies in collaboration with various stakeholders. The service also ensures the smooth operation of the City Centre, particularly Crown Street Mall, which is funded by the Special Mall Levy.

#### Quarterly Progress Update

Strategies focused on supporting local economic recovery by attracting visitors back into the Wollongong CBD, particularly during the peak retail Christmas Season. Visitor attractors included showcasing local business offerings and the Christmas schedule of free family events. The *Live@Lunch* performances and *Second Saturday Swap* initiative also supported this approach.


Council continued to meet with precinct-based Working Groups to foster a collaborative approach to support businesses and build on the visitor experience. The newly formed Crown Lane Working Group met for the first time during the quarter.

The Crown Street Mall parklet received a refresh. This highly utilised space has been upgraded with new turf, plantings and garden bed edging to further improve this inviting green space.

The Merrigong Theatre Company opened its first '*Shakespeare in the Gardens*' – a production of *A Midsummer Nights' Dream*, at the Wollongong Botanic Garden and launched an exciting Season 2024, '*Come Together*', comprising a mix of productions from around the country, with a strong *MerrigongX* program, showcasing local artists.

To further build on the Wollongong CBD visitor experience during the peak retail Christmas Season, maintenance and operations were a key focus area.




#### Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update

Actions	Status	Comment
Deliver increased City Centre marketing and activation initiatives to support local and regional economic recovery in response to COVID-19	On-Track 	A key focus has been on continuing to leverage the Wollongong CBD social media following to promote CBD businesses and encourage engagement from followers. This quarter the Wollongong CBD Instagram account hit the milestone of 5,000 followers, up from 2,900 followers at the beginning of the year. Since 1 October 2023, over 100,000 people with viewers engaging with content more than 3,000 times. Utilising our social media platforms in conjunction with the Wollongong CBD website, we provided marketing support to key activations in the City Centre including the <i>Culture Mix</i> Festival, Christmas 2023 free events, and live music events on the Crown St Mall Stage.  Council continues to liaise and work directly with CBD businesses through a precinct based working group model. These groups work towards sharing matters of common interest between businesses and Council to support the amenity and vibrancy of the Wollongong CBD.

## GOAL 2 | WE HAVE AN INNOVATIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

### City Centre Management Continued

#### Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update

Actions	Status	Comment
Implement a range of activation initiatives across the City Centre Precincts	On-Track 	<p>Christmas 2023 was launched in November 2023 with Australian-themed decorations and the festive messaging of 'giving', 'togetherness' and 'magic'. The 8.5 metre-tall classic City Christmas Tree is adorned with shiny baubles, beautiful Australian native floral decorations, and fairy lights in coordinated colours. The Crown Street Mall banners, pole wraps, deck chairs and ground decals further incorporated vibrant native floral motifs and Christmas messaging. Additional child-focused Christmas graphics on the ground in key seating areas encouraged interactive play.</p> <p>Christmas-themed key events included Santa's Arrival with a Christmas themed market, Biker's Toy Run, and City of Wollongong Giving Tree. An entertainment program including live music performances on the Crown Street Mall stage, Lola Gypsy Caravan and Laughter House entertainment, local choirs singing Christmas carols, Irish Céilí dancers and roving entertainment.</p> <p>To support businesses during the Festive Season, over 30 ground floor Crown Street Mall and Globe Lane businesses dressed their windows with complimentary themed decals.</p> <p><i>Live@Lunch</i> and the 'Second Saturday Swap' initiative continued during the quarter.</p>
Deliver an integrated marketing campaign that reflects the 'city experience'	On-Track 	<p>Council's '<i>Celebrate the Season</i>' Christmas Campaign commenced in November 2023. This year's Australian-themed decorations were complemented with the festive messaging of 'giving', 'togetherness' and 'magic'. The community were encouraged to celebrate together the magic of an Aussie Christmas and include a visit to the Wollongong CBD. The campaign focused on increasing awareness of, and visitation to, the variety of hospitality and retail spaces in the Wollongong CBD, as well as encouraging attendance to activations in the Crown Street Mall including Santa's Arrival and the Bikers Toy Run. The integrated marketing campaign leveraged blog posts, social media, digital advertising (social media and search engine marketing), e-newsletters, radio advertising, plus site dressing of Crown Street Mall (including banners, pole wraps, window and ground decals). Featured content included '<i>Shop the Look: Wattle Wonderland</i>', '<i>Santa Photos in Wollongong</i>', and '<i>Hot Spots for your Christmas Celebrations</i>'.</p>
Develop and implement City Centre Wayfinding	On-Track 	<p>The feasibility study on Ethel Hayton Walkway as a potential site for the next creative wayfinding piece is scheduled for completion in early 2024.</p>

## GOAL 2 | WE HAVE AN INNOVATIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

### Economic Development

Responsibility *Director Planning and Environment*

#### About this Service

This service promotes sustainable economic development across Wollongong Local Government Area working with business and industry to attract business, support educational and employment opportunities, to retain young people, local talent and create employment pathways for the unemployed. The service contributes to a number of economic development programs and initiatives in partnership with business, government, the University of Wollongong and a range of business and industry stakeholders.


#### Quarterly Progress Update

This quarter saw 20 business/investor enquires ranging from business support through to facilitating larger projects through *Invest Wollongong*.

The monthly Economic Development business e-newsletter which goes out to over 10,000 businesses across the Local Government Area, continues to be well received. Recent newsletters have included information on the broad range of events during Small Business Month, along with the range of business support services available to local businesses.



Council also continues to work closely with the local team at *Business Connect* and Services NSW, to provide local businesses with access to free business advice on a range of topics, supported by the NSW Government.

#### Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update

Actions	Status	Comment
Deliver the Economic Development Strategy 2019-2029	On-Track 	<p>NSW Small Business Month was held during October 2023, as an initiative to support local small businesses, with Council hosting three events to celebrate and educate: 12 October – Illawarra Aboriginal Business Expo. Council partnered with the Illawarra Indigenous Business Network to host the first Illawarra Aboriginal Business Expo at Wollongong Art Gallery with approximately 260 people attending; 17 October – Cybersecurity: Step by Step workshop on how to protect your business with 43 people attending and on 27 October – Planning your website for success with 30 people attending.</p> <p><i>i3Net</i> held their 11th annual <i>Illawarra Industry Showcase</i>, to showcase the capability of the region's manufacturing, engineering and industrial businesses. The associated dinner was attended by over 200 people with over 20 delegate companies representing major project opportunities.</p> <p>BlueScope unveiled their Master Plan to develop 200 hectares of surplus land adjacent to the Port Kembla steelworks - larger than the size of the Melbourne CBD with the potential to create up to 20,000 jobs. This development has the potential to be one of the most significant announcements in our economic landscape in recent decades.</p>

## GOAL 2 | WE HAVE AN INNOVATIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

### Economic Development Continued

Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update		
Actions	Status	Comment
In partnership with NSW Government and the University of Wollongong, deliver the Invest Wollongong program	On-Track 	<p>On 18 October <i>Invest Wollongong</i> welcomed former English cricketer Lord Ian Botham, the United Kingdom (UK) Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Australia and Louise Cantillon, UK Consul-General and Deputy Trade Commissioner Asia Pacific – Australia and New Zealand. This event brought together the local business community to showcase our city.</p> <p><i>Invest Wollongong</i> shared a stand with <i>Investment NSW</i>, Department of Regional NSW, Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Defence Network and <i>i3Net</i> at Indo Pacific 2023 to promote the region's capabilities in this sector.</p> <p><i>Invest Wollongong</i> continued its new digital marketing campaign promoting the economic opportunities in Wollongong across a range of key sectors. The campaign features a range of elements include banners on Australian Financial Review, targeted Linked-in advertising, as well as Google Search Advertising.</p> <p>In December as part of the campaign the first of a number of articles in the Australian Financial Review appeared titled; '<i>How Siligong Valley emerged from the Gong's high-tech heart</i>' featuring interviews with local tech companies - Easy Agile, Scalapay and Novigi.</p>
Report against the five pillars of the Destination Wollongong Funding Agreement 2021-2026 including: Marketing, Major Events, Business Visitor Economy, Tourism Infrastructure and Product Development and Cycling	On-Track 	Destination Wollongong continued to deliver against the five pillars outlined in the Destination Wollongong funding agreement 2021-2026. Destination Wollongong have continued to deliver work on the Grand Pacific Drive, Wollongong as a Bike City, business events and conferencing and social media campaigns highlighting our Wollongong Local Government Area.

## GOAL 2 | WE HAVE AN INNOVATIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

### Tourist Parks

Responsibility *Manager Sport and Recreation*

#### About this Service


Wollongong City Tourist Parks provide beachside accommodation for visitors to the Wollongong Local Government Area at Bulli, Corrimal and Windang. The three Tourist Parks compete in a commercial environment and operate accordingly to ensure they remain commercially viable and provide an acceptable return to Council.

#### Quarterly Progress Update

Staff have worked continuously over spring, getting the parks ready for the busy summer season, ensuring the parks are presented to visitors to the highest standard. This work has included inspections of over 200 annual sites for compliance, with rectification notices issued to those in disrepair.

Other works include the remarking of sites (over 450) and services so visitors can easily identify the location of where they are staying. All three parks were inspected for licensing resulting in a five-year approval to operate being issued.

#### Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update

Actions	Status	Comment
Commercially manage Council's three tourist parks at Bulli, Corrimal and Windang to optimise service delivery and contribute to Council's financial sustainability	On-Track 	The tourist parks have continued to be busy over spring with favourable weather leading to an excellent six months.

## GOAL 2 | WE HAVE AN INNOVATIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

### Measuring Success

Measure	Target/Desired Trend	Comparative Data Where Available – December 2022	Result December 2023
<b>City Centre Management</b>			
Number of People Movements Within Crown Street Mall <sup>^</sup>	1,000,000 (annual)	548,670	-
<sup>^</sup> Data unavailable.			
<b>Economic Development</b>			
Business Enquiries Facilitated	Increase	13	20
<b>Tourist Parks</b>			
Tourist Parks occupancy rate of cabins	Greater than 60%	81%	72.52%
Tourist Parks occupancy rate of powered sites	Greater than 50%	61%	55.97%

*Performance measures from the Delivery Program are reported in the Quarterly Review where data is available on a quarterly or annual basis. Performance measures that are tracked every two years will be reported in the State of the City Report.*

## GOAL 3 | WOLLONGONG IS A CREATIVE, VIBRANT CITY

### December Quarter Highlights



*The inaugural Culture Mix festival celebrated our diverse multicultural community attracting over 12,000 people with stage performances, food stalls, a cultural marketplace and workshops.*



*A new 45 metre mural at Western Suburbs Pool, Unanderra by Wollongong based artist Karla Hayes inspired by the Great Southern Reef.*

## GOAL 3 | WOLLONGONG IS A CREATIVE, VIBRANT CITY

### Cultural Services

Responsibility *Manager Community Culture and Engagement*

#### About this Service


Provide direction for the creative sector, support and grow creative industries and support community participation in creative life and celebrate our unique places and spaces.

#### Quarterly Progress Update




Wollongong Art Gallery continues to develop and manage the permanent art collection which is a cultural, community and financial asset. The collection has grown by over 1,200 items in the past 15 years with 29 new artworks added in the December quarter. The collection has 3,500 artworks now in place. The collection which focuses on Aboriginal art from around Australia, Early Illawarra Landscapes contemporary Australia art and Art from Asia grows through careful and informed acquisitions through both purchase and gift. The collection is currently valued at over \$18M.

In October 2023 Council piloted the inaugural *Culture Mix* festival for Wollongong, a celebration of Wollongong's diverse multicultural community. This project was led by teams from across Cultural Services. The free, all ages event was the culmination of ten months of extensive community engagement to deliver eight hours of programming across nine indoor and outdoor venues in the CBD. The event attracted 12,000 patrons in its first year and has received overwhelmingly positive feedback from the community.

#### Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update


Actions	Status	Comment
Implement priorities from Framing our Future: Wollongong Art Gallery Strategic Plan 2020-2025	On-Track 	<p>This quarter Wollongong Art Gallery carried over three exhibitions from the previous quarter: <i>FLOW</i> Contemporary Watercolour Prize, <i>Courage to Care</i> and <i>Hypnagogia with Mirrors</i>.</p> <p>This quarter the Gallery presented four new exhibitions. <i>Mai Nguyen-Long</i>: Kogabino investigation about ongoing impacts of the Vietnamese diaspora; <i>Horny Sticks and Whispering Lines</i> and <i>A Gentle Response</i>, two exhibitions exploring the life and art of influential local artist Ian Gentle; <i>I Arrived with One Suitcase</i> an exhibition by Julijana Griffiths: exploring her mother's story and the migrant experience. The Gallery also presented three community-based exhibitions, the <i>CEO Childrens Christmas Story</i> exhibition, <i>The Drawing</i> a local Artist group exhibition, <i>DaVinci Studio</i> student exhibition.</p> <p>The Gallery delivered 35 education programs including 14 <i>Courage to Care</i> Programs, eight <i>ARTsmart</i> after school art programs, one Art Enrichment program for students, three <i>Junior Art Trails</i> for pre-schoolers, three <i>Art &amp; Dementia</i> programs and five guided tours. The Reflection online photographic competition attracted 382 entries from students from Year 3 to 12. There were 647 social media engagements.</p> <p>33 public programs were delivered including, five exhibition openings, nine artist and curator talks, three <i>INSPIRE MUSIC</i> events, the <i>Word Ceramic Form</i> book launch, three Friends of the Gallery events, eight access programs and four adult art workshops.</p> <p>The Gallery had 38 facility hire and Council and community events in the quarter. 50 works were acquired through purchase and donations. Acquisitions included donations of 15 Central Desert artist prints from collector Adrian Newstead, four works by Leonie Watson,</p>

### GOAL 3 | WOLLONGONG IS A CREATIVE, VIBRANT CITY

		<p>a major work by artist Colin Lanceley from his widow Kay Lanceley and 14 Works on Paper by artist Ian Gentle from the AGNSW and two works by Leonie Watson gifted by Deidre Arthur Armstrong. Purchases included major new works by artist Jemima Wyman and Rachel Ormella, and series of works by Jade Pegler and Bonnie Brennan.</p>
Deliver annual community cultural development festival	<p>On-Track</p> 	<p>On Saturday 21 October 2023, Council delivered the inaugural <i>Culture Mix</i> festival for Wollongong, which showcased Wollongong's diverse multicultural community. The project was supported by Multicultural NSW, with Council providing additional funding and in-kind support. Approximately 12,000 are estimated to have attended the event and enjoyed eight hours of free performances, workshops, installations, and food from around the world at multiple venues in the Wollongong CBD.</p> <p>The event was the culmination of ten months of extensive community engagement with Wollongong's multicultural groups. It showcased more than 30 different cultural identities and 120 program elements on the day. Eight hundred and fifty individuals from the community helped deliver these activities on the day. The event was an accessible and inclusive event, offering programming for a diverse range of groups such as an AUSLAN program, and programs for vision impaired, young people, children, people with sensory needs, older people and women.</p> <p>The economic impact of the festival is projected to be approximately \$500,000 across the Wollongong Local Government Area and more than one million people are estimated to have engaged with the event via Google ads and social media. Attendee and post-event surveys have reflected a significant positive response.</p>
Develop a new Cultural Plan	<p>On-Track</p> 	<p>The development of the new cultural plan is underway, with extensive external community consultation taking place. This includes an online survey for the public, three ward-based industry focus groups and one music industry focus group. There have been five sessions with children and young people providing extensive feedback. The engagement report is due in the first quarter of 2024 and will inform the draft strategy.</p>
Deliver key strategies from Creative Wollongong Implementation Plan 2019–2024	<p>On-Track</p> 	<p>An Expression of Interest for the 2024 round of Lower Town Hall artist studio residencies is open. Musical recordings from the <i>Jam n Bread</i> 'New Gen' project have been released onto online platforms and new works of public art delivered in Unanderra, Hooka Creek and Koonawarra.</p> <p>Community artworks installed in the Ethel Hayton walkway, as well as an exhibition installed in the Curio Gallery as part of 'Head On' photography project.</p> <p>Many of this year's small cultural grant projects are approaching completion, including an outdoor photo exhibition at the Port Kembla Breakwater and a drumming performance at Flagstaff Disability Services for Disability Awareness Week.</p>

## GOAL 3 | WOLLONGONG IS A CREATIVE, VIBRANT CITY

### Cultural Services Continued

Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update		
Actions	Status	Comment
Implement the 'Animating Wollongong: Public Art Strategy 2022-2032'	<p>On-Track</p> 	<p>New artworks added to the public art collection this quarter include: mural projects at Western Suburbs Pool, Unanderra, Integral Energy Park, Kembla Grange and a community art mural at Fowlers Road, Dapto underpass. Community designed hoardings have been developed to be installed at the Southern Suburbs Library and Community Centre once construction begins. There were a number of temporary public artworks created and displayed as part of <i>Culture Mix</i> festival including a community lantern project, new works installed in the Ethel Hayton Walkway light boxes and the Head On Photographic exhibition in the Curio Gallery.</p> <p>Marketing and communications of public artworks has seen a new video promoting the launch of <i>Spin</i> in Lang Park, Wollongong and the mural at Western Suburbs pool, Unanderra. There was a media launch with PortsNSW for the new open air photographic exhibit at the Breakwater in Port Kembla, which was supported through a small cultural grant from Council.</p>

## GOAL 3 | WOLLONGONG IS A CREATIVE, VIBRANT CITY

### Engagement, Communication and Events

*Responsibility Manager Community Culture and Engagement*

#### About this Service

The service is responsible for internal and external communications including media, community engagement, delivery of major community events, management of Sister City Relations, coordination of Council's Financial Assistance Policy and the provision of graphic design, digital content, print and signage needs for the organisation.

#### Quarterly Progress Update



Opportunity for community input was provided for a number of strategies through community engagement channels including: the Allans Creek and Fairy and Cabbage Tree Creeks Floodplain Risk Management Studies and Plans; Creative Wollongong; Shared paths Wollongong and West Wollongong, as well as Grand Pacific Walk – Austinmer Shared Paths; Port Kembla Community Centre; Pop-up Cycleways; Warrawong Streetscape Upgrade Plans and Safer Cities Her Way. Several plans and policies were placed on public exhibition, including: Discover, Learn and Connect Libraries Strategy 2024 – 2028 and Climate Change Mitigation Plan 2023 – 2030.

Council delivered and supported a number of civic events including a call for nominations for the City of Wollongong Awards. The City of Wollongong Giving Tree ran during December, culminating in the Bikers Toy Run, resulting in approximately 1,600 gifts being distributed to families in need across the region. Council's annual New Year's Eve Event was held successfully with crowds in excess of 25,000 to view the 9pm fireworks.

This quarter a significant communications and marketing campaign for *Culture Mix* celebrated City of Wollongong's reputation as a welcoming and diverse city and promoted Council through a range of advertising and media outlets.

Top performing news stories featured New Years Eve activities and the E-Scooter trial. Social media regarding Towradgi rock pool and the process to remove the sand reached a 170, 000 people. Our followers across social media channels have grown to 77, 000. A wide range of visual communications were delivered with 464 graphic design, signage, print and audio-visual jobs completed. Highlights include the Merrigong 2024 Season Guide and deploying electric vehicle signage on Council's compliance vehicles.

#### Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update

Actions	Status	Comment
Host six major events reflecting priority sectors and contribute to the acquisition and management of signature events	On-Track 	Destination Wollongong hosted events representing the sports, arts and great outdoor sectors including the National Girls Youth Football Tournament, Yours & Owls Festival, National Women's Veterans Cricket, Summer of Surf Ironman Classic, CrossFit Down Under Championships and Thirroul Music Festival.
Deliver civic activities which recognise and celebrate the city's people	On-Track 	City of Wollongong Giving Tree was held during this period, providing an opportunity for the community to donate gifts to support families in need this Christmas season.  City of Wollongong Awards which recognise individuals and groups who make an outstanding contribution to the city was open to nominations, receiving just over 100 entries with winners announced in January 2024.

## GOAL 3 | WOLLONGONG IS A CREATIVE, VIBRANT CITY

### Engagement, Communication and Events Continued

#### Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update

Actions	Status	Comment
Deliver a diverse range of community engagement opportunities to receive feedback and guide Council's services	On-Track 	<p>Opportunity for input was provided for a number of strategies, including: Allans Creek and Fairy and Cabbage Tree Creek's Floodplain Risk Management Studies and Plans, Creative Wollongong, Shared Paths Wollongong &amp; West Wollongong, Grand Pacific Walk – Austinmer Shared Paths, Port Kembla Community Centre, Pop-up Cycleways, Warrawong Streetscape Upgrade Plans, Safer Cities: Her Way, Helensburgh Community Centre and Library, and Warrawong Town Centre Streetscape Upgrade.</p> <p>Several plans and policies were placed on public exhibition, including: Discover, Learn and Connect Libraries Strategy 2024 – 2028, Climate Change Mitigation Plan 2023 – 2030, Draft Planning Agreement – Wilkies Walk, Debt Recovery and Hardship Assistance Policy, West Dapto Development Contributions Plan 2024, Planning Proposal – Reclassification of 340 West Dapto Road, Draft Development Control Plan Chapter D21 Tallawarra Lands, Illawarra Escarpment Mountain Bike Trail Network Supporting Infrastructure, Pop-Up Cycleways and Port Kembla Community Centre Refurbishment Stage 2.</p> <p>Targeted engagement was undertaken with local Aboriginal communities on a range of projects including: floodplain risk management studies, Creative Wollongong, shared paths, Climate Change Risk Mitigation, Hill 60 stage 1 upgrade, mobile skate parks, Australia Day activities, Southern Suburbs District Community Centre and Library, Libraries Strategy, and Lake Illawarra Entrance Options Study.</p>
Engage with the local community regarding the Draft Illawarra Escarpment Mountain Bike Strategy	On-Track 	<p>The engagement report and conversation snapshot were distributed to all participants.</p> <p>Information about the project continued to be shared with Kembla Visioning and Aboriginal Reference Group and other key stakeholders.</p>
Develop and deliver an organisational Brand Strategy	On-Track 	<p>This quarter a significant marketing campaign for <i>Culture Mix</i> celebrated City of Wollongong's reputation as a welcoming and diverse city and promoted Council through a range of advertising and media outlets. Visible and well-loved Council services such as Libraries and Lifeguards are updating their visual branding to greater reflect City of Wollongong through corporate colours, logo on signage, vehicles and websites. Council's website homepage is scheduled to be updated to improve navigability and an improved look and feel with higher quality imagery.</p>

## GOAL 3 | WOLLONGONG IS A CREATIVE, VIBRANT CITY

### Measuring Success

Measure	Target/Desired Trend	Comparative Data Where Available – December 2022	Result December 2023
<b>Cultural Services</b>			
Wollongong Art Gallery Partnership Projects Engaging With First Nations And CALD Communities	2 per annum	12	14
Subsidised Artist Studio Space - Opportunities Accessed	6 per annum	10	6
Wollongong City Gallery visitation	Increase	16,414	10,635
IPAC and Town Hall Visitation	Increase	41,372	37,179
<b>Engagement, Communications and Events</b>			
Followers, Reach and Engagement Across Council's Social Media Channels	Increase	68,609	74,006

*Performance measures from the Delivery Program are reported in the Quarterly Review where data is available on a quarterly or annual basis. Performance measures that are tracked every two years will be reported in the State of the City Report.*

## GOAL 4 | WE ARE A CONNECTED AND ENGAGED COMMUNITY

### December Quarter Highlights



Council partnered with Illawarra Indigenous Business Network to host the first *Illawarra Aboriginal Business Expo*.



*Youth Power Hour* podcast made by young people, for young people.



Children participated in creating artworks for the *Stuart Park All Ages All Abilities Play space*.

## GOAL 4 | WE ARE A CONNECTED AND ENGAGED COMMUNITY

### Aged and Disability Services

Responsibility *Manager Library and Community Services*

#### About this Service

Build the capacity of older people and people with disability to participate fully in community life. Enhance access to services for frail, older people and people with disability and their carers to enable them to continue to live independently in the community.

#### Quarterly Progress Update

This quarter saw the annual Expression of Interest opened to eligible community groups and service providers for the hire of subsidised community transport buses.



International Day of Volunteers on 5 December enabled Council to acknowledge and reward our volunteers for the significant contributions they make to the delivery of community services by recognising milestone years of service (5,10,15, 20 years) and an end of year lunch.

A driver's awareness training course was delivered to volunteers, educating drivers on road safety and responsible driving behaviours.

Social Support clients enjoyed the *Music in the Morning* event, at the Town Hall. Thirroul Social Group got crafty creating Melbourne Cup fascinators in preparation for race day; and our Fairy Meadow Social Group have been busy refreshing the garden beds at the Community Centre, with amazing results.


The first of a series of free, drop-in sessions for older people and their families, was held at Wollongong library. The sessions allow community members to have one-on-one, in person discussions about the upcoming changes to in-home aged care funding, the steps to follow to access aged care services, as well as information about Council's direct run Social Support and Community Transport services. Sessions have been widely promoted through service newsletters and paid social media, with a strong turn-out for the first session.

#### Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update

Actions	Status	Comment
Deliver the Community Transport Services Program across the Wollongong and Shellharbour Local Government Areas	On-Track 	Highlights for the quarter include: annual Expressions Of Interest to eligible community groups and service providers to express their interest to hire our buses. A community transport driver's awareness safety campaign continued to educate our drivers on road safety and responsible driving behaviours.
Develop and deliver a marketing strategy for community transport	On-Track 	The first of a series of free, drop-in sessions for older people was held at Wollongong Library with discussions about the upcoming changes to in-home aged care funding, the steps to follow to access those services, for those who do not yet receive any aged care services, as well as information about Council's direct run Social Support and Community Transport services. Sessions have been widely promoted through service newsletters and paid social media, with a strong turn-out for the first session.

## GOAL 4 | WE ARE A CONNECTED AND ENGAGED COMMUNITY

### Aged and Disability Services Continued

Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update		
Actions	Status	Comment
Investigate options for alternative service delivery models for Community Transport, in response to Commonwealth and NSW Government policy	On-Track 	<p>The Commonwealth Government advised they will run a pilot of the new proposed model of service delivery for community transport from January to April 2024. Results are expected to be released by June 2024. The aim of the pilot is to test and develop a more accurate way of accounting for service delivery components and their relationship with costs. This will further delay the release of relevant information about the new 'Support at Home' model for community transport.</p> <p>The Commonwealth Home Support Service will not be ready to transition to the new model until July 2027. However, some changes can be expected from July 2024 to the funding approach.</p>

## GOAL 4 | WE ARE A CONNECTED AND ENGAGED COMMUNITY

### Community Programs

Responsibility *Manager Library and Community Services*

#### About this Service

Community programs deliver support to people living in Wollongong Local Government Area. These services deliver community programs, building community capacity and wellbeing related to target groups and communities. Language Services (Interpreter service and Language Aides), volunteer services, placemaking, community safety and social planning.

#### Quarterly Progress Update

A range of community development activities and programs were delivered focussing on diversity, access, inclusion, capacity building and community safety.



Social impact and crime prevention through environmental design advice was provided on development, pre-lodgement and event applications.

Access advice was provided on a range of Council projects including the proposed North Beach access ramp and *Culture Mix festival*.

In October 2023, Council partnered with Illawarra Indigenous Business Network to host the first *Illawarra Aboriginal Business Expo*. 30 businesses exhibited on the day and over 300 people attended. Feedback from the day was overwhelmingly positive.




Children and young people participated in engagement activities for the Stanwell Park Play Space, Creative Wollongong, Reconciliation Action Plan and the Stuart Park All Ages All Abilities Play Space artwork.

#### Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update

Actions	Status	Comment
Implement the Child Safe Implementation Plan	On-Track 	Child Safe Actions Plans for January to March 2024 are in development.  There will be an increased focus on internal communication and development of service level risk assessments. Plans are underway for early 2024 rollout of training.
Deliver the Reconciliation Action Plan 2021-2023	On-Track 	In October 2023 Council partnered with Illawarra Indigenous Business Network to host the first <i>Illawarra Aboriginal Business Expo</i> . Thirty businesses exhibited on the day and over 300 people attended. Feedback from the day was overwhelmingly positive.  In November, approximately 60 senior staff attended one of two decolonisation workshops to enhance understanding.  A range of opportunities to engage in reconciliation events and activities were communicated to Council staff including an invitation to attend one of our <i>Yarning Circles</i> in November and December 2023 and reconciliation workshops to share their ideas.





## GOAL 4 | WE ARE A CONNECTED AND ENGAGED COMMUNITY

### Community Programs Continued

Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update		
Actions	Status	Comment
Deliver a range of community development activities and programs that focus on diversity, access, inclusion, and capacity building	On-Track 	<p>Living Books was delivered at Keira High and Bulli High Schools. An end of year and 15th year celebration was held for Living Books volunteers.</p> <p>The <i>Paint the Gong REaD</i> reading tent was delivered at the Port Kembla Community Christmas Feast. The mascot, <i>Bright Spark</i> attended Lake Heights Public School kindergarten orientation and the reading day for <i>Paint Shellharbour REaD</i>.</p>
Deliver the Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2020 2025	On-Track 	<p>Site visits were undertaken at Wollongong Memorial Garden, Wollongong Cemetery, and the Crematorium to review access provisions for people with disability.</p> <p><i>Culture Mix</i> festival provided a range of access features to support the participation of people with disability including a social story, the quiet space and a program of activities with access to Auslan interpreters. Physical access inclusions across the festival were provided, including continuous accessible paths of travel, accessible drop off zone and toilets, accessible viewing area and access map, as well as community transport and seating for participating seniors.</p> <p>A calendar of events to celebrate International Day of Persons with Disability was developed in partnership with Shellharbour City Council.</p> <p>As part of International Day of People with Disability, '<i>Conversations About Inclusion</i>' were held. Participants had the opportunity to hear lived experience of people with disability and their managers in the workplace.</p> <p>Tours of access barriers for people who are blind and have low vision were provided by Guide Dogs NSW for Council Officers in the Wollongong CBD. The tours provided participants with an understanding of common access barriers related to streetscapes and activity centres.</p> <p>Autism awareness training was delivered to Council staff.</p> <p>An online booking system for Council wheelchairs has been implemented. The new system has seen an increase in bookings.</p>
Provide support and participate in the Illawarra Domestic and Family Violence Trauma Recovery Centre Consultative Working Group	On-Track 	Council continues to support and participate in the Illawarra Domestic and Family Violence Trauma Recovery Centre Consultative Working Group.

## GOAL 4 | WE ARE A CONNECTED AND ENGAGED COMMUNITY

### Community Programs Continued

Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update		
Actions	Status	Comment
Deliver the Safer Cities: Her Way Wollongong Initiative, in partnership with the community.	On-Track 	Safer Cities: Her Way Project moved into the design phase of the project, which involved site audits, internal stakeholder meetings, development of design plans and scoping practices. An updated project plan and budget was approved by Transport for NSW.  The activations and infrastructure for the Safer Cities: Her Way project commenced implementation in November.
In partnership with South32 develop a plan that reflects the values and aspirations of the Mt Kembla and Kembla Heights stakeholders.	On-Track 	Targeted engagement was held with organisations, businesses and groups connected to the Mount Kembla/ Kembla Heights area to support the development of the Kembla Community Visioning Project.
Deliver Round 3 of the Commonwealth Funded Affordable Housing Grant Program	On-Track 	The funding agreement for the Round 3 tender is being finalised and will be reported to Council. The 'Our Housing' fact sheet is in the final review stage.
Deliver the Community Safety Action Plan 2021 - 2025	On-Track 	Council assisted the <i>Reclaim the Night</i> march which was held in October.  Safer Cities: Her Way design stage was completed with ongoing consultation with community and internal stakeholders. The trial interventions began in November 2023 and runs until April 2024.  Council, in partnership with The Illawarra Committee Against Domestic Violence held a services speed networking event during the 16 Days of Activism Against Gendered-Based violence, with guest speakers from eSafety Commission and the Good Shepherd Program.

## GOAL 4 | WE ARE A CONNECTED AND ENGAGED COMMUNITY

### Corporate Strategy

Responsibility *Chief Financial Officer*

#### About this Service



Corporate Strategy monitors and reports on progress to our community, coordinates research and performance measurement and carries out strategic and business improvement projects.

#### Quarterly Progress Update

The September Quarterly Review Statement was finalised and adopted by Council on the 28 November 2023. Council's 2022-2023 Annual Report, which includes the audited financial statements, were endorsed by Council at the 28 November meeting. The Annual Report was prepared in a new format to improve accessibility of information shared with the community, and the first of the new Delivery Program 2022-2026.

An Expression of Interest process was finalised to roll out Project Management training throughout the organisation, with the first session conducted in late November 2023. A range of corporate research was also undertaken throughout the quarter, including the 2023 Community Satisfaction Survey.

#### Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update

Actions	Status	Comment
Coordinate Council's Service Optimisation Program	On-Track 	The Service Optimisation Program continues, with focus on the first review program which is about improving accessibility to, and understanding of, the information customers need to help them through the development application journey. Working with the Development Assessment team, Council commenced reviewing a significant range of data sources, to better understand how the community / customers are accessing information via the available channels.  Work continued to map out functional requirements for a system to track program progress. Council also commenced work on the next round of evidence-based prioritisation in preparation for the next services to be reviewed in 2024-2025.
Coordinate the preparation and review of Council's Delivery Program and Operational Plan	On-Track 	A strategic planning workshop was held with Councillors during the quarter to progress the development of the 2024- 2025 Operational Plan.  Preparations are underway for a second Councillor planning workshop in February 2024 and community engagement for the public exhibition period (April - May 2024). The review of Council's Delivery Program and Operational Plan remains on track and is scheduled to be adopted by Council by 30 June 2024 per legislative requirements.

## GOAL 4 | WE ARE A CONNECTED AND ENGAGED COMMUNITY

### Integrated Customer Service

*Responsibility Manager Customer and Business Integrity*




#### About this Service

Provision of a professional and efficient customer service experiences with Council through a variety of methods.

#### Quarterly Progress Update

Work has continued to integrate customer centricity into Council's processes. A customer experience concept plan was presented to Executive in December. This presentation outlined why customer experience for both internal and external customers should be at the core of Council's process. It also outlined a draft 5-year plan on proposed actions to increase and embed a customer experience culture.

#### Operational Plan 2022-2023 Update

Actions	Status	Comment
Review and enhance Council's customer service and engagement channels with a focus on inclusion and participation	On-Track 	Work has continued to increase accessibility into Council's processes. A Customer Experience concept plan was presented to Executive in December. This presentation focused on increased customer engagement and outlined a draft 5-year plan on proposed actions to increase and embed a customer experience culture.
Identify and implement customer service improvement opportunities	On-Track 	Work has continued with business units to create processes that lead to first contact resolution through expanding the information available to customer service.
Upgrade Customer Contact Centre System	On-Track 	A supplier of a new customer contact system has been selected.

## GOAL 4 | WE ARE A CONNECTED AND ENGAGED COMMUNITY

### Libraries

Responsibility *Manager Library and Community Services*

#### About this Service

Wollongong City Libraries delivers information, learning outcomes and access to resources for residents and visitors to the Wollongong Local Government Area. The service is delivered from seven libraries and ten street libraries, across the city, and through the Home Library Service, and a range of online services.

#### Quarterly Progress Update

Fifty one items were catalogued into the Local Studies Collection. From the Illawarra Mercury Image Project, 77 print images were catalogued, 1,488 negatives were scanned and 159 negatives were catalogued. Five new oral history recordings were added to the Illawarra Stories collection as well as a range of Local Studies workshops held.



Wollongong City Libraries delivered a range of programs for community members with a disability including a Korean Sensory Puppet Workshop, a Taiko drumming workshop for the vision impaired community, Aboriginal weaving for the deaf community amongst others.

The draft Library Strategy 2024 - 2028 was placed on public exhibition for community feedback.

Digital inclusion was enhanced with tablets for loan introduced at Dapto and Wollongong libraries in November.





Energy Efficiency Toolkits were launched in October, with a toolkit available for loan in each of the seven libraries.

#### Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update

Actions	Status	Comment
Deliver the Comic Gong Festival	On-Track 	Planning continues for Comic Gong 2024 with a number of activities, shows and artists confirmed.  Exhibitor applications have opened with over 60 applications received so far. A framework for assessment was developed and successful applications to be notified.  The Comic Gong team will meet with the City Centre team to discuss options for lower Crown Street Mall and amphitheatre activation during Comic Gong. The team are preparing hard copy and online marketing and promotions with official artwork confirmed and sponsorship prospectus live.
Implement a customer voting system for new titles to be added to the library catalogue	Complete 	Customers continue to use the variety of feedback channels, online or in person at library service points, to request/vote for titles for the Library to purchase, with over 700 titles being requested by customers for during the quarter, all of which were acquired. The acquisitions focus this quarter has been junior literacy material, with 300 items being added.

## GOAL 4 | WE ARE A CONNECTED AND ENGAGED COMMUNITY

### Libraries Continued

Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update		
Actions	Status	Comment
Implement the Wollongong Learning City Project based on the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization framework and principles	On-Track 	<p>The Project Leader has furthered stakeholder mapping against the Community Strategic Plan, Operational Plan and Sustainable Development Goals. Engagement with internal and external stakeholders continues including Workers' Educational Association (WEA) and Healthy Cities Illawarra.</p> <p>A project snapshot has been drafted with the next major steps to include a draft learning strategy in consultation with stakeholders and establish a Steering Group with appropriate representation.</p>
Deliver customer driven, evolving library collections	On-Track 	<p>The quarter saw physical loans of over 237,000, concluding the 2023 calendar year's figure of over 977,000 loans. This represents continuous growth in physical loans since the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>Online loans (eAudio and eBook) show an even greater increase, with over 99,000 loans for the quarter and over 350,000 loans for the 2023 calendar year, a 6.7% increase from 2022 calendar year.</p> <p>Both physical and online collections have continued to be prioritised and marketed to customers, with budget allocated according to demand and additional content and extra copies of high-demand titles being acquired.</p> <p>Customers have continued using the catalogue to place reservations in increasingly high numbers: over 48,000 reservations for the period, a 17.2% increase from 2022.</p>
Deliver tailored library programs to facilitate access and participation of people with disability	On-Track 	<p>Library programs delivered for community members with disability included a Korean sensory puppet workshop, a Taiko drumming workshop for the vision impaired community, Aboriginal weaving for the deaf and Persian polymer clay session for the deaf community, Autism awareness talk by Cassandra Kavanagh and Disability Trust Storytime at Dapto Library.</p> <p>Gingerbread House sessions for the vision impaired; and AUSLAN interpreted Gingerbread House sessions for the hearing impaired.</p>
Deliver library programs that recognise, reflect and celebrate the cultural diversity of our community	On-Track 	<p>A range of programs were delivered including <i>Queerstories</i> held at Thirroul. It was a successful event with six speakers and a full house of 150 people. Two Pokémon drawing workshops were held celebrating Japanese pop culture.</p> <p>An exhibition of refugee artworks was displayed at all seven libraries, featuring 140 artworks by students from refugee backgrounds from Warrawong Public School and TAFE. The theme was <i>'Finding Freedom -- what does it mean to them?'</i></p> <p>Other programs included K-Pop dance workshops with the Korean cultural centre, sushi making, Aboriginal weaving workshop, Voice Referendum information session with Catherine Moyle from University of Wollongong and Multicultural Storytime.</p>

## GOAL 4 | WE ARE A CONNECTED AND ENGAGED COMMUNITY

### Property Services

*Responsibility Manager Commercial Operations and Property*

#### About this Service

This service manages over 450 leases and licenses on behalf of Council and includes the management, development, maintenance and disposal of Council owned property in order to meet Council's statutory requirements and contribute to the expansion of Council's revenue base. Leases and licenses also ensure the effective management and coordination of community and business use of Council's public spaces, buildings and facilities.

#### Quarterly Progress Update


An appointment was made to act on Council's behalf for the sale of 231 Sheaffe's Road, Stream Hill with an Expression of Interest commencing on 21 September 2023.

Long term leases for Surf Clubs on Crown Land, which are subject to the finalisation of a Plan of Management have progressed pending Ministerial consent.

A commercial agreement was issued for North Wollongong Surf Lifesaving Club for the leasing of the commercial component of the facility to an operator to be directly managed by the Surf Club.

Compulsory acquisitions for West Dapto road widening works endorsed by Council during the quarter is progressing.

#### Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update

Actions	Status	Comment
Identify and implement business improvement initiatives to enhance commercial returns on Council's property portfolio	On-Track 	Rent reviews were a focus this quarter with a view to maximising return to Council. Continuation of income through lease renewals was also a key focus.  An extensive audit was undertaken of Council's parking assets to ensure optimal occupancy. Allocation of available spaces is underway.  An audit and revision of internal processes was undertaken for the management of outstanding debtors.

## GOAL 4 | WE ARE A CONNECTED AND ENGAGED COMMUNITY

### Youth Services

Responsibility *Manager Community Culture and Engagement*

#### About this Service

Youth Services provides a program of recreation, cultural and education activities to meet the needs of young people aged 12 - 24 at Wollongong Youth Centre and across the Wollongong Local Government Area. These programs build social connections and inclusion, community engagement, information and referrals. Council funds the Neighbourhood Youth Work Program (NYWP) in three areas (Port Kembla, Berkeley and Dapto and surrounds) to support the needs of young people in the community.



#### Quarterly Progress Update

A program of recreation, cultural and education activities continued to be provided for young people aged 12 to 24 at Wollongong Youth Centre and across the Wollongong Local Government Area.

Sector support was provided including coordination of the Wollongong Youth Network, sector training for youth workers and funding was provided for the Neighbourhood Youth Work Program.

Local high schools, TAFE Illawarra and University of Wollongong were visited to provide information about Youth Services activities.

#### Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update

Actions	Status	Comment
Deliver a range of youth development opportunities with a focus on engagement, inclusion, skill development, sector development and support	On-Track 	A range of youth development opportunities were delivered, including <i>Rainbow League</i> , <i>PRISM + Rainbow Club</i> , <i>Girls Café</i> , <i>Dungeons and Dragons</i> , <i>Youth in Fashion</i> , <i>Bundaleer Connect</i> , <i>Teenz Connect</i> , and art, mindfulness and cooking workshops.
Provide opportunities for young people to develop skills, experience and exposure in creative industries	On-Track 	<p>A fully equipped music rehearsal space is available at the Youth Centre and a weekly performance space, hosted bands, open mic nights, world music nights and DJ's. Guitar lessons for beginners and the new band jam weekend program were delivered.</p> <p><i>Team Ignite</i> provided a platform for young people to inform live music, production activities and events at Wollongong Youth Centre. This quarter events included Music for the Mind – Halloween, Jamble Bells - New Band Jam 2, and Blahaj Garaj - Holigays.</p> <p>'<i>I love Wollongong because...</i>' exhibition was launched for Aus Music Month (November), featuring young people's images from local live music venues and events.</p> <p>The <i>Youth Power Hour</i> podcast made by young people, for young people delivered eight episodes.</p>

## GOAL 4 | WE ARE A CONNECTED AND ENGAGED COMMUNITY

### Measuring Success

Measure	Target/Desired Trend	Comparative Data Where Available – December 2022	Result December 2023
<b>Aged and Disability Services</b>			
People Over 65 Using Community Transport - Number	Increase	1,242	1,162
Hours of Social Support Provided to People Aged Over 65	Maintain	5,459	6,113
<b>Integrated Customer Service</b>			
Telephone calls are answered within 30 seconds <sup>1</sup>	80%	71%	33.93%
Correspondence Met to Target	80%	89%	84%
<b>Libraries</b>			
Library visitations	Increase	222,891	379,485
Library - membership	Increase	88,101	80,043
Library – total number of loans	Increase	284,851	343,870
Library programs: number of programs	Increase	482	642
Library programs: number of participants	Increase	9,387	12,419
<b>Property Services</b>			
Occupancy rates of commercial buildings	90%	96%	96%
<b>Youth Services</b>			
Wollongong Youth Services - participation of young people in programs and projects	24,000 Per Annum	12,706 Accumulative	13,507 Accumulative

<sup>1</sup>There has been a change of focus from answering telephone calls within 30 seconds to first contact resolution and changes in Rates delivery. This has had a significant impact on the results of this indicator. The indicator will be revised in line with the adoption of the Customer Experience Strategy in 2024-25.

Performance measures from the Delivery Program are reported in the Quarterly Review where data is available on a quarterly or annual basis. Performance measures that are tracked every two years will be reported in the State of the City Report. 53

## GOAL 5 | WE HAVE A HEALTHY COMMUNITY IN A LIVEABLE CITY

### December Quarter Highlights



*Work completed on Stage 1 of the North Wollongong Beach Seawall Renewal with the area opening to the public in time for the busy summer months. An official opening is planned early for 2024.*



*Stuart Park All Ages All Abilities Playground was officially opened on 18 December by dignitaries including Wollongong City Lord Mayor Councillor Gordon Bradbery AM, Member for Cunningham, Ms Alison Byrnes MP, Minister for Planning and Public Spaces and Member for Wollongong The Hon. Paul Scully and Disability Trust CEO Carol Berry.*

## GOAL 5 | WE HAVE A HEALTHY COMMUNITY IN A LIVEABLE CITY

### Aquatic Services

Responsibility *Manager Sport and Recreation*

#### About this Service

Wollongong City Council operates 17 patrolled beaches, two heated swimming pools at Dapto and Corrimal, six free public swimming pools located at Helensburgh, Thirroul, Western Suburbs (Unanderra), Continental Baths Wollongong, Port Kembla and Berkeley. We have nine ocean rock pools situated at Coalcliff, Wombarra, Coledale, Austinmer, Bulli, Woonona, Bellambi, Towradgi and Wollongong Gentleman's pool. Aquatic Services also provides ocean and pool lifeguard services and surf education programs.

#### Quarterly Progress Update



During the quarter, the re-opening of Berkeley Swimming Pool was delayed whilst emergency works were undertaken. Improvements to Thirroul Pool were completed including an automated cut-off switch that reduces the likelihood of flooding within the salt water pool complex which usually takes place when the outlet is blocked by sand or debris.

The Toddlers pool at Corrimal pool was re-opened after minor works were performed. These works have enabled the re-opening of the toddlers pool this summer period.

During this period, a large weather event impacted on the shade structure at Corrimal Pool which has now been replaced. At the Continental Pool, four high wind rated umbrella's were installed on the pool surrounds. Investigations are continuing in relation to a suitable heating system replacement for Dapto Swimming Pool.



An additional 20 new starters were engaged in the Beaches team leading up to our peak period. Beaches staff participated in the Water Safety Multicultural Day event in November. A total of eight requests for Beach Wheelchairs were taken during this period.

#### Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update

Actions	Status	Comment
Plan, design and undertake renewal works at Council's Community, Commercial Pools and Ocean Rock Pools in accordance with the Infrastructure Delivery Program	On-Track 	Council is currently developing site concept plans for the upgrade of the Helensburgh Pool facility which includes the replacement of the 25m pool and installation of a contemporary splash pad for toddlers and other supporting works. Council has received grant funding support under the NSW Government Multi Sport Community Facility Fund for this project.
Work with the North Wollongong Surf Life Saving Club to explore storage options	On-Track 	Investigations are continuing into additional storage for two surf boats. Discussions were recently undertaken with North Wollongong Surf Lifesaving Club.
Progress concept plans, investigations, and detailed designs for a Community Recreation & Aquatic Centre at Cleveland to service the Southern Suburbs	On-Track 	Concept plans are currently being developed for the site of the future Community and Aquatic Centre in Cleveland/West Dapto. These plans incorporate site constraints, adjacent proposed uses as well as best practice into facility planning.

## GOAL 5 | WE HAVE A HEALTHY COMMUNITY IN A LIVEABLE CITY

### Aquatic Services Continued

Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update		
Actions	Status	Comment
Design and implement stage 1 of North Wollongong Beach Seawall Renewal	Complete 	Council has completed Stage 1 of the installation of concrete bleachers, seawall, beach access ramp and associated landscaping. The area has been opened to the public with the official opening planned early in 2024.
Design Stage 2 of the North Wollongong Beach Seawall Renewal	On-Track 	Detailed design is progressing and due for completion early 2024. Council has lodged a grant application under the Coastal and Estuary Grants program for assistance with this project. Construction is programmed to commence May 2024 if grant funding is approved.

## GOAL 5 | WE HAVE A HEALTHY COMMUNITY IN A LIVEABLE CITY

### Botanic Garden and Annexes

Responsibility *Manager Open Space and Environmental Services*

#### About this Service

The Botanic Garden and Nursery service involves managing and promoting the conservation, education, recreation and aesthetic values of the main 30 hectare site in Keiraville, including the maintenance of the Gleniffer Brae grounds and the three natural area annexes of Mt Keira, Puckey's Estate and Korrungulla Wetland. Environmental education programs and interpretation are conducted at the Discovery Centre.

#### Quarterly Progress Update



Public visitation remained consistent over the December quarter, including a noted increase due to the Merrigong *Shakespeare in the Garden* event.

The Garden presentation remains at a high standard with the annexes being inspected monthly and remaining in a safe condition for public use. Isolated rainfall events led to the closure of the Puckey's Estate Boardwalk on two days which was rectified once the Tom Thumb Lagoon was reopened. Garden path safety improved via grinding of the concrete slab displacement. Power and lighting were reassessed for compliance safety at major events for the Garden. Trainees and Leading Hand recruitments were finalised during the quarter which will assist the site during the busy summer period.

The Botanic Garden draft Masterplan and Gleniffer Brae Conservation Management Plan were presented to key internal and external stakeholders.




Approximately 40,000 people visited the Garden for the quarter and 7,000 plants were sold from the Nursery.

#### Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update

Actions	Status	Comment
Deliver priority actions from the Urban Greening Program	On-Track 	During the December 2023 quarter, Council's partnership with Red Room poetry saw 6,400 tree poems written across the nation as part of <i>Poem Forest</i> , which was matched by 6,400 trees being planted in Wollongong Local Government Area. A wrap up event with winners' presentation was held at William Beach Park, Brownsville.  Our first <i>Koala Feed Forest</i> was planted at Eleebana Reserve Koonawarra with the local school community, volunteers and project partner Symbio Wildlife Park.  Council's <i>Tiny Forests</i> project was Highly Commended at the NSW Local Government Excellence in the Environment Awards in the Natural Environment Protection and Enhancement: On Ground Works category.
Enhance Botanic Garden visitor experience with programs, interpretation, education, events and priority actions from the Masterplan	On-Track 	Merrigong Theatre Company hosted Shakespeare's <i>A Midsummers Night Dream</i> , drawing almost 3,000 visitors to the Garden. The Friends volunteers provided guided walking and buggy tours, <i>Budding Bookworms</i> , bird spotting tours and the sculpture interpretive sign was installed adjacent to the winning Banksia sculpture. The <i>Disco Gardeners</i> , <i>Willing Weeders</i> and propagation team volunteers continue to contribute the volunteer programs.  ABC's Gardening Australia filmed a special program on the Rose Garden and native plants which is planned to be aired in 2024. Plant sales were successful and on track to improve from the September 2023 quarter.

## GOAL 5 | WE HAVE A HEALTHY COMMUNITY IN A LIVEABLE CITY

### Botanic Garden and Annexes Continued

Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update		
Actions	Status	Comment
Finalise the review of the Botanic Garden Plan of Management, including future uses of Gleniffer Brae	On-Track 	The Botanic Garden Plan of Management has been adopted by Council.  The draft Botanic Garden Masterplan has been updated based upon feedback from stakeholders with the draft Masterplan planned for review by Council with the Gleniffer Brae Conservation Management Plan in early 2024.
Implement priority actions from the Botanic Garden Masterplan	On-Track 	Two capital projects identified within the draft Botanic Garden Masterplan are being designed: a new fully accessible amenities block and new rainforest boardwalk and accessible pathway.
Manage the Mt Keira Summit Park in accordance with the Plan of Management	On-Track 	Council resolved to prepare a submission to NSW Heritage to include: Council's in principle support as the landowner of Mount Keira Summit Park and Gooyong Street Reserve for their inclusion in the Djeera (Mount Keira) and the Five Islands Aboriginal Place, as it will recognise the special cultural significance of both locations. Council requested the finalisation and adoption of a Management Plan for the Aboriginal Place accompany any Aboriginal Place declaration and particulars around The Management Plan. The submission also encouraged NSW Heritage to undertake broader community consultation to inform the finalisation of the Aboriginal Place nomination.

## GOAL 5 | WE HAVE A HEALTHY COMMUNITY IN A LIVEABLE CITY

### Community Facilities

Responsibility *Manager Library and Community Services*

#### About this Service

This service manages and operates 56 Council-owned community facilities across the Wollongong Local Government Area. This includes Neighbourhood Centres, Senior Citizens Centres, Childcare Centres, Libraries, Community Centres and Community Halls.





#### Quarterly Progress Update

Community Centres and Halls require constant reviews and upgrades to continue to provide the level of service expected by the community. Council's community facilities were highly utilised for the Voice Referendum. Centres also added new regular hirers building the utilisation and provision of services to the community.

Many Council buildings across the Wollongong Council area are managed by not-for-profit community groups, who provide essential services to the needs of the most vulnerable people within our Local Government Area.

Current projects at licensed centres include: Bulli Senior Citizens Centre - turning circle and parking signage consultation taking place with the childcare centre; Bellambi Neighbourhood Centre - new blinds installed throughout the centre; Cringila Multipurpose Centre - roof replacement and external painting completed; Koonawarra Community Centre - roof replacement underway with work anticipated to be completed in early 2024 and Port Kembla Community Centre - completion of concept design and community consultation in preparation for development application lodgement.

#### Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update

Actions	Status	Comment
Plan for a new Community Centre and Library to meet the needs of the community in Helensburgh and surrounding suburbs	Delayed 	Exhibition period closed for Draft Plan of Management, community feedback received and Plan to be submitted to the NSW Department of Planning and Environment. The Plan of Management would enable the site on Helensburgh Park to be used for the purpose of an integrated Community Centre and Library with the Helensburgh Swimming Pool amenities. Council continues to refine and finalise centre scope and site options pending a response from the Department.
Plan for a new Community Centre and Library at Warrawong to serve Wollongong's southern suburbs	On-Track 	Project currently undertaking tender selection phase while a grant application has progressed to next stage. Work continues with licensee groups to support their search for alternate locations during the construction phase.
Progress planning and construction of Wongawilli Hall extension and refurbishment	Delayed 	A building condition report identified significant issues. Investigations are ongoing into the future direction for this facility in light of the structural issue identified.
Develop and deploy 'Places for People' Forward Directions Plan 2022-2036 (Implementation Plan)	On-Track 	Implementation approach has been developed and the plan deployed internally. Newly identified projects have been placed onto the Infrastructure Delivery Program list of 'unfunded projects' for future Council consideration. Feasibility Studies at Bong Bong Road, Yallah/Marshall Mount and Figtree commenced.

## GOAL 5 | WE HAVE A HEALTHY COMMUNITY IN A LIVEABLE CITY

### Community Facilities Continued

Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update		
Actions	Status	Comment
Complete Social Infrastructure Feasibility Studies at Bong Bong Road, Yallah/Marshall Mount and Figtree	On-Track 	Yallah/Marshall Mount Social Infrastructure Feasibility Study brief has been prepared and tendered. A consultant has been engaged, site inspection held and project is progressing as planned.

## GOAL 5 | WE HAVE A HEALTHY COMMUNITY IN A LIVEABLE CITY

### Leisure Centres

Responsibility *Manager Commercial Operations and Property*


#### About this Service

This service involves the provision of commercially operated recreation centres at Beaton Park, Wollongong and Lakeside Leisure, Kanahooka.

#### Quarterly Progress Update

The focus this quarter has been on the implementation of a new Point of Sale operating system. The new system allows customers to enrol, pay and manage their bookings online for all aspects of leisure centre use including learn to swim, memberships and group exercise classes. The system provides the user with a seamless platform to manage their interactions with the leisure centre, whilst enabling staff to spend more time interacting with customers. Despite some teething issues, the platform has been well received.

#### Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update

Actions	Status	Comment
Deliver the renewal and relocation of Beaton Park Tennis Courts in accordance with the Beaton Park Masterplan	On-Track 	Work has continued with substantial underground stormwater work completed. Challenges with the site have been experienced however it is expected concrete will be poured early in 2024.

## GOAL 5 | WE HAVE A HEALTHY COMMUNITY IN A LIVEABLE CITY

### Memorial Gardens and Cemeteries

Responsibility *Manager Commercial Operations and Property*

#### About this Service

This service provides memorial, burial and funeral service facilities at six sites across the Local Government Area.


#### Quarterly Progress Update

Ongoing engagement and education of our community continued this quarter with four presentations completed for community groups on the importance of memorialisation.

Annual services for still born babies and the Christmas service were held, with attendees happy with Council's ongoing commitment to hosting these events and providing opportunities for them to remember lost loved ones.

Significant works also continued in developing processes and procedures to ensure compliance with the Cemetery Interment Scheme which commenced in October 2023. The scheme requires all cemeteries to be licensed in order to be able to provide interment options to the community. It requires compliance across five main areas including customer service, consumer contracts, cemetery maintenance, pricing transparency and religious, cultural and spiritual principles.

#### Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update

Actions	Status	Comment
Manage Council's commercial businesses to optimise service delivery at Wollongong Memorial Gardens and cemeteries	On-Track 	Work continued on the design for a new Aboriginal and children section at Kembla Grange. A dedicated Jewish section was consecrated in October 2023 at Kembla Grange, providing the Jewish community with a dedicated area for burials. A natural burial area has also been surveyed and identified and will be promoted for use in early 2024.  Tenders have also been completed for new gardens at Scarborough Cemetery with works to commence in February 2024.

## GOAL 5 | WE HAVE A HEALTHY COMMUNITY IN A LIVEABLE CITY

### Parks and Sports Fields

Responsibility *Manager Sport and Recreation*

#### About this Service

This service operates 493 parks, 65 sports fields, 220 playing fields, seven outdoor fitness stations, nine turf wickets and 154 playgrounds across the Wollongong Local Government Area and includes Russell Vale Golf Course. Provision of passive access to community parks and playgrounds, and affordable and equitable access to sports fields and facilities. Twenty two sports fields are licensed by volunteer or semi-professional sporting clubs.






#### Quarterly Progress Update

Council continued to work with sporting clubs and internal teams to enable the transition between winter and summer sports on our sports fields.

A number of casual and one off bookings occurred across parks and sports fields during this period including one off events.







The team has also provided a number of land owner consent referral's on behalf of sporting clubs to support grant applications.

#### Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update

Actions	Status	Comment
Progress the planning and development of a Northern Suburbs Skate Park	On-Track 	Council is currently investigating three sites within the northern suburbs area to support delivery of a skate park.  The engagement of a consultant is currently underway to support the identification of a site and the development of a concept sketch to support future community engagement in 2024.
Finalise the Bulli Showground Masterplan	On-Track 	Community engagement has been completed and a report now being considered as part of minor adjustments to the plan. It is proposed these changes will be completed by the end of 2023 to support the adoption in early 2024.
Implement the Landscape Masterplan recommendations for Hill 60 Reserve, Port Kembla	On-Track 	Engagement has been completed for Stage 1A of the detailed landscape plans. These plans are currently being finalised to enable construction. Cost estimates have recently been completed to support project delivery.
Progress the development of the Lang Park Masterplan	On-Track 	A project plan has been created and internal engagement commenced prior to community engagement. It is proposed engagement with the community will be undertaken in the first half of 2024.
Complete the drainage project at Guest Park, Fairy Meadow training ground of the Illawarra Stingrays	On-Track 	Works at Guest Park including drainage and top dressing has been completed on-site. These works coincided with the summer period and was supported by the Illawarra Stingrays and their use of the site.

## GOAL 5 | WE HAVE A HEALTHY COMMUNITY IN A LIVEABLE CITY

### Parks and Sports Fields Continued

Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update		
Actions	Status	Comment
Deliver amenities upgrades at Figtree Oval and Thomas Gibson Park, Thirroul	On-Track 	An application has been submitted to the NSW Government 'Level the Playing Field' grant program for Thomas Gibson Park, Thirroul amenities building. The application included a concept plan as well as cost estimates and letters of support from various stakeholders. Detailed plans continue to be developed.  Figtree Oval amenities design has been completed and programmed for construction in 2024-2025 financial year. It is anticipated the project will likely be constructed during the summer period to minimise impact on the AFL season.
Collaborate with Destination Wollongong and the Australian Baseball League to establish Wollongong as a home base location for a National Baseball League team	On-Track 	Site investigations are continuing to progress for a proposed location for the National Baseball League. Investigations include a site feasibility assessment as well as an electrical investigation to determine if the site can meet Australian Baseball League requirements.
Progress the planning and development of a Wollongong City Centre Skate Park	On-Track 	Additional funding has been secured through Club Grants category 3 for \$300,000. This grant would support the delivery of a skate park in the city centre.  During the quarter extensive investigations occurred for identifying a site within the Wollongong City Centre.
Finalise the draft licence with Illawarra Stingrays for a home ground at JJ Kelly Park, Wollongong.	On-Track 	A draft licence agreement for JJ Kelly Park has been issued to the Illawarra Stingrays and is pending sign off by the Stingrays.
Deliver funded sportsfield irrigation and drainage infrastructure projects	On-Track 	A contractor has been engaged to undertake works with completion anticipated by February 2024. The sites include Cawley Park, Russell Vale, Judy Masters Park, Balgownie and King George V Football Oval, Port Kembla . The Lakelands Oval project has been deferred due to scope adjustment.
Preparation of the Bellambi Foreshore Precinct Plan	On-Track 	The precast amenities block has been installed near the Bellambi Boat Ramp, with commissioning works and final concrete and asphalt to be finalised. An anti-graffiti mural will be commissioned in 2024 for the building.  Council has undertaken a condition assessment of the Bellambi boat ramp jetty and is currently reviewing options for refurbishment of this facility.

## GOAL 5 | WE HAVE A HEALTHY COMMUNITY IN A LIVEABLE CITY

### Public Health and Safety

#### Responsibility Manager Regulation and Enforcement

##### About this Service

This service conducts and manages the registration, inspections and monitoring of regulated public and environmental health premises including public swimming pools and on-site sewage management systems with the aim of ensuring compliance. Development of environmental and public health policies, community education programs and customer information.

##### Quarterly Progress Update

Public health and safety inspection programs were implemented throughout the quarter, with staff completing 74 inspections of onsite wastewater systems and skin penetration premises. The annual inspection program regarding cooling towers is programmed to continue in future months.



Customer Service requests relating to public health and safety were also responded to during the reporting period, with staff actioning 15 requests.

The school zone parking compliance program continued during the quarter with 235 patrols conducted of primary schools. Educational banners were displayed at schools, containing important safety messages.

Customer service requests were also actioned during the quarter, with over 1,326 requests received regarding abandoned motor vehicles and parking related incidents.

Service planning in preparation for the Christmas and New Year period was carried out.

##### Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update

Actions	Status	Comment
Inspect all medium and high-risk retail food premises annually	On-Track 	The food surveillance program continued with 374 completed inspections of fixed, temporary, mobile and home-based food premises.  Staff observed a high level of compliance with the Food Act 2003 and food safety standards, with one Improvement Notice issued during the period.  Staff responded to customer service requests with 70 received relating to food businesses during the quarter.
Maintain inspection programs for public swimming pools, places of shared accommodation and mortuaries	On-Track 	Staff completed annual inspections of five public shared accommodation premises during the quarter, with further inspections programmed for future months.  Annual inspection program for mortuaries has been developed and will commence in 2024. Further annual inspections of public swimming pools are programmed to be conducted throughout the second half of 2023-2024.

## GOAL 5 | WE HAVE A HEALTHY COMMUNITY IN A LIVEABLE CITY

### Measuring Success

Measure	Target/Desired Trend	Comparative Data Where Available – December 2022	Result December 2023
<b>Aquatic Services</b>			
Total Visits commercial heated pools: Corrimal	At least 180,000 per annum	67,055 Accumulative Year to Date	34,449 Accumulative Year to Date
Total Visits commercial heated pools: Dapto	At least 180,000 per annum	31,635 Accumulative Year to Date	27,884 Accumulative Year to Date
<b>Botanic Garden and Annexes</b>			
Wollongong Botanic Garden - Visitation	At least 400,000 per annum	154,101 Accumulative Year to Date	128,496 Accumulative Year to Date
<b>Community Facilities</b>			
Utilisation of Direct-Run District Level Community Facilities	Increase	7,784	11,060
Direct-Run District Level Community Facilities visitation	Increase	47,019	94,006
Community Hall/ Centre - Hours of Use	Increase	2,512	3,458
Community Halls/Centres - Visitation	Increase	10,850	9,139

*Performance measures from the Delivery Program are reported in the Quarterly Review where data is available on a quarterly or annual basis. Performance measures that are tracked every two years will be reported in the State of the City Report.*

## GOAL 6 | WE HAVE AFFORDABLE AND ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORT

### December Quarter Highlights



*Otford Causeway, Otford Road was reopened after being destroyed by heavy rainfall.*



*Footpath repairs underway at Murphys Avenue, Gwynneville.*

## GOAL 6 | WE HAVE AFFORDABLE AND ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORT

### Transport Services

*Responsibility Manager Infrastructure Strategy and Planning*

#### About this Service

This service provides the delivery, management and advocacy of transport infrastructure. The service aims to provide a transport network that is safe, efficient, equitable, effective and sustainable. The service supports the community through creating the provision of transport access for residential, business, recreation, leisure and tourism activities. This Service also includes provision of road safety, traffic and integrated transport planning support and advice. Road Safety Education Programs and promotion is a critical activity implemented across all aspects of our transport services.

#### Quarterly Progress Update

During the quarter, the Transport team actioned and completed 260 customer requests.


Two Wollongong Traffic Committee meetings were held in October and November 2023 which had thirty items (including 15 General Business items, 11 Regulation of Traffic items & 3 Design items) and 14 unique locations passed onto NSW Police for monitoring as part of 'Dob in a Hoon'. Two online extraordinary Traffic Committee meetings were held in October and November related to the regulation of traffic approvals.

Improvements have been made to the Transport Project Priority Lists, which include aligning projects to the Community's Strategic Goals with an emphasis on improved road safety outcomes, and active and sustainable transport goals.

Council processed 176 consent requests from the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator which covered a range of vehicle types including oversize, over mass, performance based, higher mass limit and b-double vehicle applications.




Council was notified of its successful submission for Round 3 of the Strategic Local Government Asset Assessment Project (SLGAAP) Program. This program delivers bridge and culvert asset assessments to support Council decision making in heavy vehicle permit assessments. Five structures nominated by Council were accepted for Round 3 of the SLGAAP program.

#### Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update

Actions	Status	Comment
Work with key agencies and partners to progress the Illawarra Regional Transport Plan	On-Track 	Council staff have reviewed the report by Regional Development Australia <i>Enabling 30-minute City through Public Transport</i> against Council's draft Integrated Transport Strategy and Transport for NSW (TfNSW) Regional Transport Plan.  Council staff are working with TfNSW on a number of projects including the Integrated Transport Strategy, Bus Service Plan, Strategic Corridors Cycleway and the TfNSW Service Plan.



## GOAL 6 | WE HAVE AFFORDABLE AND ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORT

### Transport Services Continued

Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update		
Actions	Status	Comment
Develop road safety programs, education and promotion of sustainable multi modal transport options	On-Track 	<p>The Wollongong E-scooter trial commenced on 29 September 2023 offering the community a smart and sustainable transport option around several areas of our city. Some 18,000 riders have taken over 50,000 trips with a total distance travelled of 108,000kms (as at 20 November 2023). The Wollongong E-scooter Provider (Neuron) are undertaking a review of the usage data to determine the percentage of trips have reduced/substituted car travel and subsequently increasing the multimodal options of our city. Council will continue to educate the community on rules for the trial and monitor safety before working with Transport for NSW on the expansion of the trial area in the coming months.</p> <p>Road Safety Officer events for the quarter included a motorcycle event – <i>Breakfast Torque</i> in October. Council partnered Sutherland Shire Council, Georges River Council, local businesses, Scouts, and Transport for NSW with approximately 1,600 motorcycle riders and 2,500 with stallholders and organisers.</p>
Collaborate with the New South Wales Government to fund and deliver the Safe Routes to School Program	On-Track 	<p>During the quarter, the Safer Routes to School Program team progressed the finalisation of two reports, Bulli and Lake Heights Public. One report has been received with comments from the school for review (Dapto High School). Six reports are with school principals and community for review (Elonora Montessori School, Corrimal East Public School, Corrimal High School, St Columbkille's Catholic Primary School, Dapto Public School, Cedars Christian College).</p> <p>The Safer Routes to School working group are continuing to complete onsite audits, meeting with principal and Parents and Citizens associations and finalising reports for other schools across the Wollongong Local Government Area.</p>
Implement actions from the Wollongong Cycling Strategy 2030	On-Track 	<p>Council staff are working closely with a consultant to develop the Cycling Network Plan and Program which will deliver on multiple actions of the Wollongong Cycling Strategy 2030. The Plan and Program are expected to be delivered by June 2024.</p> <p>A review of the Grand Pacific Walk Strategy is underway to assess the condition of the existing network and determine priorities for the future expansion.</p> <p>The Lake Illawarra Active Transport Masterplan has been drafted and is being reviewed by Council staff.</p> <p>Council staff attended the The Hon. Jo Haylen, NSW Minister for Transport micro-mobility shared scheme roundtable as an expert panel member to convey the challenges, opportunities and positives from a local government perspective when delivering active transport.</p>

## GOAL 6 | WE HAVE AFFORDABLE AND ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORT

### Transport Services Continued

Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update		
Actions	Status	Comment
Subject to funding, explore the installation of tactile and braille street signage to support navigation and wayfinding throughout the Wollongong Local Government Area	Delayed 	Transport for NSW have advised there is no funding currently available for the installation of tactile and braille street signage to support navigation and wayfinding throughout the Wollongong Local Government Area.  Council will continue to advocate for funding.
Develop and implement the Integrated Transport Strategy	On-Track 	Several workshops involving multiple stakeholders were held throughout 2023 to develop the Integrated Transport Strategy. The draft Integrated Transport Strategy has been received by Council and is under review, with community consultation expected in March 2024 quarter.



## GOAL 6 | WE HAVE AFFORDABLE AND ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORT

### Measuring Success

*Performance measures from the Delivery Program are reported in the Quarterly Review where data is available on a quarterly or annual basis. Performance measures in Goal 6 are tracked every two years via the Community Survey and will be reported in the State of the City Report.*

## SUPPORT SERVICES

### December Quarter Highlights



*The Annual Financial Statements were approved by Council and presented to the community as part of the Annual Report 2022 – 2023.*



*Grant funding opportunities to support delivery of programmed works continued to be sought to assist in funding projects such for the Southern Suburbs Community Centre and Library (artists impression).*

## SUPPORT SERVICES

### Employee Services

Responsibility *Manager People and Culture*


#### About this Service

Council's Employee Services provides support, advice and information to staff, including staff attraction and retention, health and wellbeing initiatives, and ongoing learning and development. This service fosters a safe and equitable work environment where people are skilled, valued and supported.

#### Quarterly Progress Update



A collaborative Business Plan has been developed for Employee Services to further support service delivery of key Human Resources functions which includes: Workforce Management Strategy outcomes; Learning and Development Strategy; Recruitment Strategy; Reward and Recognition Strategy; best practise review of the injury management function; payroll integration and process improvement; Our Safety program and Industrial Relations Strategy.

#### Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update

Actions	Status	Comment
Enhance Council's Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Programs	<p>On-Track</p> 	<p>Council is participating in the Council for Intellectual Disability's (CID) Inclusion Works. Council has worked with the Disability Trust and has identified a position within our Regulation and Enforcement Team to provide a paid 12 week paid work experience opportunity. Members of the People and Culture and Regulation and Enforcement Teams attended tailored training to support this placement. This opportunity will support the implementation of inclusive employment priorities outlined in their Disability Inclusion Action Plans and other inclusion and diversity strategies.</p> <p>To recognise International Day of People with Disability, Council ran two events. One was a workshop to facilitate meaningful discussions among individuals (both employees and managers/ supervisors) with personal experience of disability in the workplace. These conversations are pivotal in supporting the successful delivery Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2020-2025. The second event was a BBQ lunch hosted by the People with Disability and Carers Peer Collective, where employees came together to connect, shared lived experiences and raise awareness across Council.</p> <p>Training continues to be rolled out across the organisation including cultural intelligence, diversity awareness and bullying and harassment eLearning.</p> <p>Council's Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Policy has been reviewed in accordance with Council's Policy Framework resulting in changes to reflect Council's purpose. Council's definition of diversity has been refined to better reflect our community. It is proposed the draft Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Policy supersedes the Workforce Diversity Policy. As of December 2023, this is with Council for endorsement.</p>

## SUPPORT SERVICES

### Employee Services Continued

Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update		
Actions	Status	Comment
Implement Safety and Wellbeing Programs	On-Track 	Work on the Our Safety Program included the completion of the Our Safety Scorecard which outlines the Key Performance Indicators for the organisation. The Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) Management System Procedures, WHS Operational and Contractor Management Procedures were finalised. The mental health training programs for leaders continued during the quarter.
Implement the Workforce Strategy 2022-2026	On-Track 	Council is in the process of implementing a new Workforce Planning approach to support Divisional Workforce Plans. A Workforce Planning Tool has been developed and a pilot of the approach was undertaken. Learnings and findings have been utilised to improve the process, the tool and guides. A data report is being built in OneCouncil which will be used to populate information into the WFH tool.  Hybrid Working Approach Guidelines, Facts and Questions and all staff presentation documents have been drafted.

## SUPPORT SERVICES

### Financial Services

Responsibility *Chief Financial Officer*

#### About this Service

Wollongong City Council is a large and diverse organisation that provides services from the funding it receives from its community through rates, fees, and charges. Financial Sustainability and efficiency are aims of this service. This is achieved through financial strategy, policy, budgets and controls; while ensuring Council meets its taxation obligations, investment return, and internal and external reporting that provides transparency about decision-making. Council's primary source of income is property rates and sundry debtors systems used for billing and recovery, and customer service relating to these areas.

#### Quarterly Progress Update


Financial Services continued to provide services internally and externally during the quarter. The audit of the Annual Financial Statements was completed, and the Statements were approved by Council and presented to the community.

The first financial quarterly review of the annual and 10-year budgets was completed with adjusted indices (i.e. forecasted changes in the level of prices for goods and services) for future financial years. Financial and investment reports continued to be provided monthly to Council and the community.

Over 65,000 rates instalment notices issued in accordance with the Revenue Policy and second quarter instalment receipts in line with forecasts. The Debt Recovery & Hardship Policy was reviewed and placed on exhibition prior to adoption by Council with enhancements, including an option for eligible self-funded retirees to defer rates if required.

Payment of Council's accounts have continued to be paid, exceeding targets for payment within agreed terms.

#### Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update

Actions	Status	Comment
Review the rating structure to align to legislative changes	Deferred 	Regulations and Guidelines are not yet available, although these were anticipated in December 2023 they were not released. It is understood that an Industrial sub-categorisation option will be considered in a 2023-2024 update to legislation but change to introduce an Environmental Category has been deferred. It is considered that any change to Council's rate structure is best considered when the full suite of legislative change is released to ensure a full understanding and to provide the flexibility required to best fit Wollongong's circumstances through one change process if required.

## SUPPORT SERVICES

### Governance and Administration

*Responsibility Manager Customer and Business Integrity*


#### About this Service

The Governance and Administration Service includes policy, internal audit, legal, insurance, claims management, supply chain, risk management, business paper functions and corporate governance. The service also captures the Office of the General Manager and Executive Group, support for Councillors and the Professional Conduct Coordinator.

#### Quarterly Progress Update

Ongoing support continued to be provided to the organisation with the governance, Councillor support and risk management functions. Support was provided for four ordinary council meetings this quarter. Support was also provided for one ordinary and one extraordinary Audit Risk and Improvement Committee Meeting. In addition, the Annual returns were collated and tabled at the Council in October 2023.

#### Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update

Actions	Status	Comment
Deliver the Internal Audit Program	On-Track 	A new internal audit contract was commenced in the September 2023 quarter. The 2023-2024 internal audit plan has commenced with the first audit near completion and the next quarters audit in the planning stage.

## SUPPORT SERVICES

### Information Management and Technology

Responsibility *Chief Information Officer*

#### About this Service

This service delivers digitally enabled, information driven and secure services that empower our customer community.




#### Quarterly Progress Update

This quarter saw the finalisation of the OneCouncil and mobility projects.

Efforts have been initiated to upgrade OneCouncil from 2022B to 2023B, which will bring with it many improvements to all modules in the product suite. Similarly, the procurement processes for the Contact Centre and the improvement of the audio visual equipment in the Council Chambers has also been completed. These projects are also scheduled to commence early in 2024.



As Council is well advanced of many councils in NSW, staff have been active in presenting the lessons learned to Local Government and Technology forums. These presentations have been well received.

#### Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update

Actions	Status	Comment
Continue to consolidate information technology systems and platforms	On-Track 	OneCouncil project has been completed with the movement of Human Resources and Payroll into business as usual. A post implementation review will be completed to finalise the project.
Pilot and expand the use of robust SMART technologies across Council	On-Track 	During the quarter, SMART technologies were enhanced to include data from sensors and other smart devices through the implementation of an Internet of Things Bridge. This technology will aide in making sensor technology more accessible to council in the future. Other projects include; the initiation and planning of the Intelligent Defect Management, previously titled Road AI; sports-field monitoring project; Workplace Health and Safety reporting, prescribed dam monitoring, smart waterways, smart parks, automated Environmental Protection Authority reporting and the memorial gardens project.  Work has been finalised on the first phase of the whole of Council emissions reporting system to understand Council's emissions to reach net zero by 2030 through monitoring waste processed, utility consumption and fuel utilisation.
Implement the Cyber Security Strategy	On-Track 	Implementation of the Council's Cyber Security is well progressed with Council achieving Level One Maturity on six out of the eight requirements of the Australian Cyber Security Centre's Essential Eight Maturity Model.  Council also scored 45/57 with progressing implementation of the NSW Government's Cyber Security Policy mandatory requirements.  Implementation of the Learning Management System has facilitated continuous monitoring of staff cybersecurity training.

## SUPPORT SERVICES

### Information Management and Technology Continued

Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update		
Actions	Status	Comment
Finalise the Information Technology Cloud Transformation Program	Delayed 	<p>A project manager has been appointed. The project manager has commenced detailed planning of the Cloud migration program.</p> <p>Work is anticipated to continue through the Christmas and New Year period to ensure that migration is completed by July 2024, when the support arrangements for the computer hardware in the Council's data centre will end.</p>
Implement the CCTV Strategy	On-Track 	<p>The Closed Circuit Television strategy implementation is on track with the upgrade at Southern Works Depot scheduled for the end of December 2023, with an additional 25 cameras upgraded on the city surveillance network.</p>

## SUPPORT SERVICES

### Infrastructure Strategy and Support

*Responsibility Manager Infrastructure Strategy and Planning*

#### About this Service




This service includes the strategic management and technical planning of Council's infrastructure that supports all Council Services. It also includes the development and review of Council's Asset Management Strategy, Asset Management Plans, the development and delivery of rolling capital works and planned annual maintenance programs.

#### Quarterly Progress Update

The Infrastructure Delivery Program continues to be reviewed and updated to address projects and priorities associated with Council's infrastructure.

Grant funding opportunities to support delivery of programmed works continued to be sought. During the 2023-2024 financial year, Council has applied for external funding to support the delivery of several key projects within the Infrastructure Delivery Program. More than \$30 million of funding has been applied for to support the delivery of key projects over the past six months, including: Southern Suburbs Community Centre and Library, North Wollongong Seawall (Stage 2) and Darkes Road Sporting and Community Hub.

#### Operational Plan 2023-2024 Update

Actions	Status	Comment
Develop and regularly review Asset Management Plans to ensure appropriate investment in Council's asset base	Delayed 	Summary Asset Management Plans have been drafted to support Council's Asset Management Strategy. Planning for the suite of Asset Management Plans has commenced.  A Project Manager commenced in December 2023 to review and modernise the Asset Management Plans. A project plan and schedule have been drafted for review.
Seek external funding to support core services that Council provides in the Infrastructure Delivery Program	On-Track 	Council has applied for external funding to support the delivery of several key projects within the Infrastructure Delivery Program. Grant applications have been prepared for more than \$30 million of grants to support the delivery of projects across the city, including the Stanwell Park playground upgrade, Thomas Gibson Park, Thirroul sporting amenities and Lakelands Oval, Kanahooka drainage.  Council was advised it had progressed to the next stage of assessment for its \$15 million funding application for the Southern Suburbs Community Centre and Library at Warrawong. The outcome of the second round of assessment is expected in March-April 2024.
Progressively implement the Asset Management Improvement Program	On-Track 	Planning for the suite of Asset Management Plans has commenced.  A Project Manager commenced in December 2023 to review and modernise the Asset Management Plans. A Project Plan and Schedule have been drafted for review.  Priority actions identified in Council's Asset Management Strategy and Plans have commenced with a focus on improving data confidence and documenting processes.

## SUPPORT SERVICES

### Measuring Success

Measure	Target/Desired Trend	Comparative Data Where Available – December 2022	Result December 2023
<b>Financial Services</b>			
Available funds.	3.5% to 5.5%	\$23.2M or 8.2%	\$29.8M or 9.8%
Operating result pre capital income, including depreciation	Small Operational Surplus (average over 3 years)	-\$11.9M	-\$18.3M
<b>Information Management and Technology</b>			
Formal GIPA Applications Processed Within 20 Days	100%	100%	100%

*Performance measures from the Delivery Program are reported in the Quarterly Review where data is available on a quarterly or annual basis. Performance measures that are tracked every two years will be reported in the State of the City Report.*



Image: Coledale Beach

## Quarterly Budget Review Statement

*October 2023 – December 2023*

### Introduction

This Quarterly Review is the second review of the Operational Plan 2023-2024.

The Quarterly Budget Review Statement provides financial information and updates to the Council and the community on income and expenditure in comparison with the approved annual budget. It outlines the Original budget, approved Current Budget, and year to date spend, as well as proposed variations to the budget and future year forecasts that have been identified in the Quarter.

Changes to Council's income and expenditure occur throughout the financial year due to both external and internal factors. This report provides the mechanism to communicate such changes to the Councillors and community in a transparent manner. The Quarterly Budget Review Statement is composed of the following budget review components:

- 1 Income and Expenses and Capital Budget Commentary
- 2 Combined Income and Expenses Statement
- 3 Summary of Variations – Operational and Capital
- 4 Budget Review Cash and Investments Position
- 5 Budget Review Key Performance Indicators
- 6 Contracts and Other Expenses; and
- 7 Statement by the Responsible Accounting Officer

Appendix 1 – Supporting Documents Report

Appendix 2 – Detailed Capital Project Reports by Asset Class

### Income and Expense Statement

This Budget Review Statement includes revised estimates of income and expenditure for 2023-2024 financial year. The Income and Expenses Statement can be found in Table 1.

*Commentary:* Council commenced 2023-2024 with a budgeted deficit Operating Result [pre-capital] which broadly reflected the longer term average deficit position showing in Council's forecasts for future years. At the September Quarterly Review, a change to the long term position was created by further increases to the budgeted depreciation caused by year end indexation of infrastructure assets (\$7M). The current year budget was further impacted by timing issues caused by the removal of the 2023-2024 Financial Assistance Grant income which was paid early in 2022-2023 (\$19.5M), and by increased expenditure related to significant funded projects (\$11.7M) where the income was received last year. This had created a strikingly significant deficit when on its own without context.

The proposed movements in this review will result in a further negative adjustment of \$4.1M resulting in a budgeted Operating Result [pre capital] deficit of \$51.5M. The proposed adjustments include the further introduction of projects funded from internally and externally restricted assets already received, and adjustments to Commercial Waste income and Domestic Waste expenditure that are offset by decreased NSW Waste Levies and Restricted Assets. There are also reduced rates income due to adjustments for revaluation objections (recoverable in future years) and a new rates exemption (no long term impact). On the positive side, there is a proposed increase to Interest on Investments.

While the current year deficit is proposed to increase, these adjustments have not substantially impacted the future year forecasts or underlying position of Council.

The proposed Funds Result deficit of \$18.5M indicates an improvement of \$1.4M compared to current budget. Further details are provided in the summary of variations.

### Supporting Documents

Council Supporting Documents (strategy and plan development) are prioritised in the development of the Delivery Program and Operational Plan. They, therefore, have an important role in planning for the community. Refer to Appendix 1 for the detailed report showing proposed variations to these projects.

### Capital Budget Statement

The capital budget review statement provides the Original, Current and Revised Capital Budget that has been varied through monthly resolution of Council. The changes against the Operational Plan 2023-2024 have been included for information to reflect the adjustments over the Quarter. The Capital Budget can be found in Table 1. Additional Project Capital Budget Reports outlining variations by asset classes are provided in Appendix 2.

*Commentary:* During this Quarter, the capital budget expenditure projections were decreased by \$0.8M through monthly adjustments. These adjustments have been reported and approved by Council through the monthly reporting process.

Table 1

<b>Wollongong City Council</b> <b>December Quarter 2023</b> <b>Income and Expense Statement</b>					
	2023/24 Original Budget \$'000	2023/24 Current Budget \$'000	Proposed v Current Variance \$'000	2023/24 Proposed Budget \$'000	2023/24 Actual YTD \$'000
<b>Income From Continuing Operations</b>					
Rates and Annual Charges	232,236	232,236	(856)	231,380	115,071
User Charges and Fees	39,001	39,390	(3,353)	36,037	18,007
Interest and Investment Revenues	5,693	5,693	1,989	7,682	4,971
Other Revenues	12,534	12,687	85	12,772	6,739
Grants & Contributions provided for Operating Purposes	29,533	12,954	41	12,995	11,918
Grants & Contributions provided for Capital Purposes	38,728	28,874	16,126	45,000	15,807
<b>Other Income:</b>					
	0	0	0	0	0
Profit/Loss on Disposal of Assets	0	0	0	0	(623)
<b>Total Income from Continuing Operations</b>	<b>357,724</b>	<b>331,834</b>	<b>14,032</b>	<b>345,866</b>	<b>171,889</b>
<b>Expenses From Continuing Operations</b>					
Employee Costs	154,642	158,247	446	158,693	77,245
Borrowing Costs	548	548	0	548	344
Materials & Services	94,923	103,884	1,922	105,806	51,131
Other Expenses	24,537	24,597	(354)	24,243	12,647
Depreciation, Amortisation + Impairment	79,116	86,116	0	86,116	42,562
Labour Internal Charges	(21,106)	(20,756)	0	(20,756)	(8,704)
Non-Labour Internal Charges	(2,249)	(2,295)	(0)	(2,295)	(864)
<b>Total Expenses From Continuing Operations</b>	<b>330,411</b>	<b>350,340</b>	<b>2,015</b>	<b>352,355</b>	<b>174,362</b>
<b>Operating Result</b>	<b>27,314</b>	<b>(18,506)</b>	<b>12,017</b>	<b>(6,489)</b>	<b>(2,473)</b>
<b>Operating Result [pre capital]</b>	<b>(11,414)</b>	<b>(47,379)</b>	<b>(4,109)</b>	<b>(51,489)</b>	<b>(18,280)</b>
<b>Funding Statement</b>					
Net Operating Result for the Year	27,314	(18,506)	12,017	(6,489)	(2,473)
Add back :					
- Non-cash Operating Transactions	97,176	104,548	1,333	105,881	53,543
- Restricted cash used for operations	14,690	26,423	3,144	29,567	14,414
- Income transferred to Restricted Cash	(59,505)	(52,560)	(15,086)	(67,646)	(31,680)
Leases Repaid	(152)	(152)	0	(152)	(262)
Payment of Employee Entitlements	(15,251)	(15,251)	0	(15,251)	(9,317)
	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Funds Available from Operations</b>	<b>64,272</b>	<b>44,501</b>	<b>1,408</b>	<b>45,910</b>	<b>24,225</b>
Loans Repaid	(2,564)	(2,564)	0	(2,564)	(1,275)
Advances (made by) / repaid to Council	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Operational Funds Available for Capital Budget</b>	<b>61,708</b>	<b>41,937</b>	<b>1,408</b>	<b>43,346</b>	<b>22,950</b>
<b>Capital Budget Statement</b>					
Assets Acquired	(99,037)	(98,200)	0	(98,200)	(44,764)
Contributed Assets	(7,876)	(7,876)	0	(7,876)	0
Transfers to Restricted Cash	(11,046)	(13,973)	0	(13,973)	(6,948)
Funded From :-					
- Operational Funds	61,708	41,937	1,408	43,346	22,950
- Sale of Assets	1,728	1,728	0	1,728	260
- Internally Restricted Cash	13,473	14,296	0	14,296	3,340
- Borrowings	0	0	0	0	0
- Capital Grants	22,548	23,815	0	23,815	12,814
- Developer Contributions (Section 94)	9,021	9,471	0	9,471	3,652
- Other Externally Restricted Cash	0	0	0	0	183
- Other Capital Contributions	9,326	8,876	(0)	8,876	1,122
<b>TOTAL FUNDS SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)</b>	<b>(156)</b>	<b>(19,927)</b>	<b>1,408</b>	<b>(18,518)</b>	<b>(7,391)</b>

## Summary of Variations

Budget variations being recommended include the following material items:

Variations	Net by Type \$000's
<b>Rates and Annual Charges</b> Decrease in the budget for rates is due to a write off of rates for an exempted property for current and prior years (this will not impact future year income) and writes offs due to revaluation objections (this will be a positive for next year as lost income can be recovered and will not have long term impact).	(856)
<b>User Fees and Charges</b> Decrease in forecast commercial tipping income due to reduction in large commercial customers business. This is partially offset by a decreased expenditure for EPA Levy and, in the short term, the application of restricted assets held.	(3,353)
<b>Interest and Investment Revenues</b> Increased interest and investment revenues based on performance of the investment portfolio throughout the first half of the financial year (\$1.6M). Increase in the budget for interest on rates charges (\$389K).	1,989
<b>Other Revenues</b> The increase in other revenues budget relates to an insurance claim at Wollongong Art Gallery and other minor variations.	85
<b>Grants &amp; Contributions (Operating)</b> The increase in operating grants and contributions mainly relates to Department of Planning & Environment grant for Wollongong Hazard Studies and Preparation of Coastal Management Program (\$168K), Social Support Contributions for Aged & Disability Services (\$75K), Southern Councils Regional Illegal Dumping Program funding (\$69K), Resilience NSW grant for review and update of bushfire asset protection zones (\$30K) and other minor variations, partly offset by a decrease in operating grants budget for Stormwater Services (\$213K), and a decrease in budget for the Regional Roads Block Grant (\$96K).	41
<b>Employee Costs</b> The increase in employee costs relates to movements between employee costs and materials, services and other expenses (\$357K), Affordable Housing implementation support (\$51K) and other minor variations.	(446)
<b>Borrowing Costs</b> No changes are proposed to the borrowing costs budget.	0
<b>Materials, Services &amp; Other Expenses</b> The increase in materials and contracts is associated with the introduction of an additional round of Affordable Housing Contributions (\$1,532K), Prior Year work costed to assets now transferred to Operating (\$1,330K) Domestic Waste Organics Collection contract (\$500K), introduction of Asset Management Planning project funded from Strategic Projects Restricted Asset (\$500K), adjustments to other funded projects (\$462K), return of unspent grant funds associated with the Commonwealth Home Support Program (\$180K), increased forecast for electricity across services (\$82K), and other minor variations partly offset by EPA Levy associated with commercial tipping (\$2,099K), adjustments to timing of project delivery to future years (\$625K), movements between materials, services & other expenses and other employee costs (\$357K).	(1,569)
<b>Depreciation</b> No changes are proposed to the depreciation budget.	0

Variations	Net by Type \$000's
<b>Internal Charges</b> No changes are proposed to the internal charges budget.	0
<b>Operating Variation (pre capital)</b>	<b>(4,109)</b>
<b>Grants &amp; Contributions (Capital)</b> The increase in capital grants & contributions relates to developer contributions for City Centre (\$722K), and the following capital grants and contributions: Local Roads & Community Infrastructure Program (LIRCI Program) funding (\$4.7M), Tennis NSW for Beaton Park Tennis Upgrade (\$3.1M), Department Planning & Environment Grant for Bellambi Gully Channel Improvements (\$2.15M), Transport NSW Disaster Assistance (\$1.75M), Department of Planning & Environment Everyone Can Play Program Grant and NSW Office of Responsible Gambling Grant for construction of Stuart Park All Access Playground (\$950K), Transport NSW - Get NSW Active (\$773K), Department of Regional NSW - Betterment of The Avenue, Figtree Culvert - Debris Control Structure (\$617K), Department of Regional NSW for Hill 60 Accessibility & Viewing Area Upgrades (\$500K), NSW Office of Sport for Helensburgh Park Multisport Facility Upgrade (\$500K), Department of Planning & Environment Thirroul Beach Stormwater Upgrade (\$250K), Transport NSW Federal Stimulus Road Safety Program (\$107K), and other minor variations.	16,126
<b>Non-cash operating transactions</b> Non-cash operating transactions include the Transfer of Prior Year Work In Progress to Operating (\$1,330K) and other minor variations.	1,333
<b>Restricted Cash used for operations</b> The increase in restricted cash used for operations mainly relates to Affordable Housing Contribution (\$1,532K), Domestic Waste Organics Collection contract (\$500K), introduction of Asset Management Planning project funded from Strategic Projects Restricted Asset (\$500K), adjustments to other funded projects (\$462K), return of unspent grant funds associated with the Commonwealth Home Support Program (\$180K), and other minor funding variations.	3,144
<b>Income transferred to Restricted Cash</b> This adjustment mainly relates the above budget variations for capital grants & contributions (\$16.1M) and operating grants & contributions (\$41K), interest on restricted assets (\$212K) and other minor variations, partly offset by a reduction in the transfer to restricted cash from Waste (\$1,214K)	(15,086)
<b>Funds Available from Operations</b>	<b>(1,408)</b>
<b>Capital Budget *</b>	0
<b>Funds Result</b>	<b>(1,408)</b>

\* Adjustments to the Capital Budget that have been adopted by Council through Monthly Financial Reports are outlined in Appendix 2.

### Cash and Investments Position

The Budget Review Cash and Investments Position (Table 2) shows the Original, Current, and proposed estimates for cash and investment positions, Available Cash and Available Funds.

Cash and Investment holdings forecasts have increased by \$22.8M compared to the adopted Current Budget. The Available Funds forecast has increased by \$1.4M as result of increased anticipated interest on investments.

The following table shows the movements in the projections of available funds for the 2023-2024 financial year as a result of the proposed changes through the December Quarterly Review.

**Table 2**

<b>Wollongong City Council</b> <b>29 December 2023</b> <b>Cash, Investments and Available Funds</b>				
	Original Budget 2023/24	Current Budget 2023/24	Proposed Budget 2023/24	Actuals YTD December 2023
	\$M	\$M	\$M	\$M
<b>Total Cash and Investments</b>	<b>133.3</b>	<b>147.2</b>	<b>170.0</b>	<b>184.1</b>
Less Restrictions:				
External	66.0	67.3	82.2	87.9
Internal	63.8	65.0	63.0	67.6
CivicRisk Investment			2.9	2.9
Total Restrictions	129.8	132.3	148.1	158.4
<b>Available Cash</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>14.9</b>	<b>21.9</b>	<b>25.7</b>
Adjusted for :				
Payables	(29.7)	(31.5)	(31.7)	(43.4)
Receivables	27.9	25.9	27.0	38.6
Other	13.2	6.3	(0.2)	8.8
Net Payables & Receivables	11.4	0.7	(4.9)	4.1
<b>Available Funds</b>	<b>14.9</b>	<b>15.6</b>	<b>17.0</b>	<b>29.8</b>

All investments held at 29 December 2023 were invested in accordance with Council's Investment Policy. Bank reconciliations have been completed as at 29 December 2023. Year to date cash and investments are reconciled with funds invested and cash at bank.

Table 3

WOLLONGONG CITY COUNCIL		
Cash Flows and Investments		
as at 29 December 2023		
	YTD Actual 2023/24 \$ '000	Actual 2022/23 \$ '000
<b>Cash Flows From Operating Activities</b>		
<b>Receipts</b>		
Rates & Annual Charges	131,103	215,632
User Charges & Fees	26,681	31,914
Interest & Interest Received	4,599	1,549
Grants & Contributions	20,856	64,618
Bonds, deposits and retention amounts received	-	1,201
Other	6,896	21,387
<b>Payments</b>		
Employee Benefits & On-costs	(69,778)	(131,464)
Materials & Contracts	(56,059)	(86,914)
Borrowing Costs	(34)	(442)
Bonds, deposits and retention amounts refunded	-	(755)
Other	(12,807)	(28,808)
<b>Net Cash provided (or used in) Operating Activities</b>	<b>51,458</b>	<b>87,918</b>
<b>Cash Flows From Investing Activities</b>		
<b>Receipts</b>		
Sale of Investments	20,548	54,491
Sale of Investment Property		
Sale of Real Estate Assets		
Sale of Infrastructure, Property, Plant & Equipment	260	2,161
<b>Payments:</b>		
Purchase of Investments	(33,501)	(59,990)
Purchase of Investment Property	-	-
Purchase of Infrastructure, Property, Plant & Equipment	(42,332)	(96,906)
<b>Net Cash provided (or used in) Investing Activities</b>	<b>(55,026)</b>	<b>(100,244)</b>
<b>Cash Flows From Financing Activities</b>		
<b>Payments:</b>		
Repayment of Borrowings & Advances	(1,275)	(5,496)
Repayment of Finance Lease Liabilities	(278)	(380)
<b>Net Cash Flow provided (used in) Financing Activities</b>	<b>(1,553)</b>	<b>(5,876)</b>
Net Increase/(Decrease) in Cash & Cash Equivalents	(5,120)	(18,202)
plus: Cash & Cash Equivalents - beginning of year	44,371	52,320
plus: Investments on hand - end of year	144,859	127,915
<b>Cash &amp; Cash Equivalents and Investments - year to date</b>	<b>184,110</b>	<b>162,033</b>

Table 4

WOLLONGONG CITY COUNCIL		
Cash Flows and Investments		
as at 29 December 2023		
	YTD Actual 2023/24 \$ '000	Actual 2022/23 \$ '000
<b>Total Cash &amp; Cash Equivalents and Investments - year to date</b>	<b>184,110</b>	<b>162,033</b>
<b><u>Attributable to:</u></b>		
External Restrictions (refer below)	87,935	94,280
Internal Restrictions (refer below)	67,619	61,684
Unrestricted	28,556	16,228
	<b>184,110</b>	<b>162,033</b>
<b>External Restrictions</b>		
Developer Contributions	48,846	45,109
RMS Contributions	357	2,158
Specific Purpose Unexpended Grants	13,516	20,299
Special Rates Levy Wollongong Mall	916	722
Special Rates Levy Wollongong City Centre	94	94
Local Infrastructure Renewal Scheme	-	-
Unexpended Loans	720	883
Domestic Waste Management	6,017	6,880
Private Subsidies	7,128	6,848
Housing Affordability	7,018	8,380
Stormwater Management Service Charge	3,323	2,907
<b>Total External Restrictions</b>	<b>87,935</b>	<b>94,280</b>
<b>Internal Restrictions</b>		
Property Investment Fund	9,769	9,531
Strategic Projects	29,753	27,181
Sports Priority Program	759	893
Car Parking Strategy	1,194	1,348
MacCabe Park Development	1,965	1,890
Darcy Wentworth Park	18	18
Garbage Disposal Facility	12,527	10,083
West Dapto Development Additional Rates	11,010	10,062
Natural Areas	173	173
Lake Illawarra Estuary Management Fund	451	505
<b>Total Internal Restrictions</b>	<b>67,619</b>	<b>61,684</b>

## Key Performance Indicators

The long term forecasts presented below are indicative of our existing position. Council has a continuous budget process that revises the long term forecasts in line with quarterly changes and resets assumptions and indices annually or where new information leads to an immediate requirement to change the indices.

Rates indices are proposed to be revised in line with the IPART rate peg issued during the Quarter. Indexation on fees and charges has also been adjusted to align with current economic trends.

Indices				
	2024/25 Original	2024/25 Revised Sep QR	2024/25 Revised Dec QR	2025/26+ Revised
Rate Increase	4.40%	4.40%	4.70%	3.50%
Rate Increase - supplementary rate growth	0.40%	0.40%	0.40%	0.40%
Rate Increase - IPART population growth gap	0.30%	0.30%	0.30%	0.30%
Fees & Charges	2.90%	3.50%	3.70%	2.90%

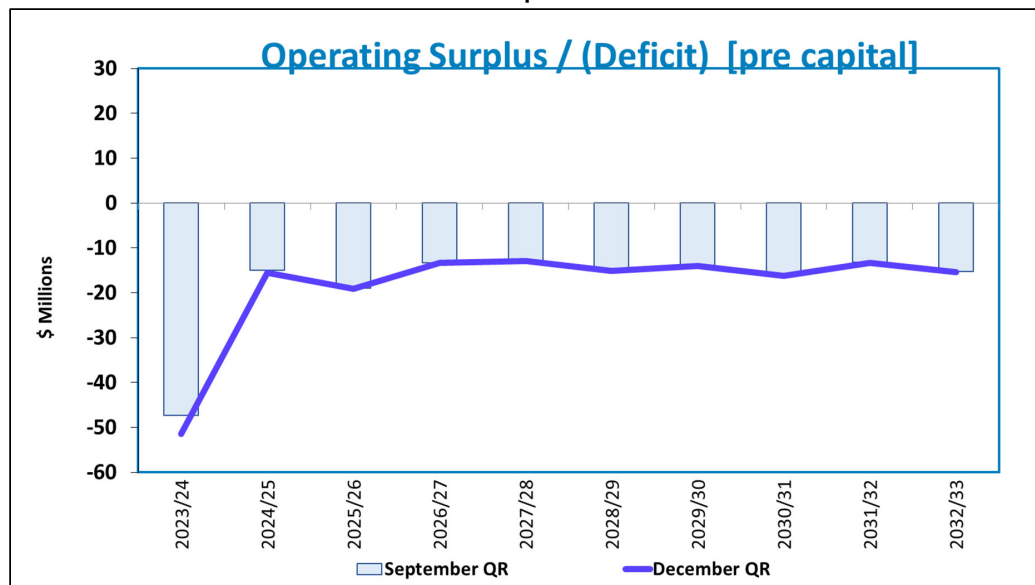
The projected long term indicators are primarily based on existing assumptions and indices from Community Strategic Plan, Delivery Plan and Resource Strategy and the Long Term Financial Plan.

### Indicator 1 - Long Term Operating Surplus/(Deficit) [pre capital]

Definition: The Operating Result [pre capital] provides an indication of the long term viability of Council. In broad terms, a deficit from operations indicates that Council is not earning sufficient revenue to fund its ongoing operations (services) and continue to renew existing assets over the longer term. While this measure is important, it does include timing issues and impacts from specific transactions and operations which make it less accurate in demonstrating current performance. The Funds Available from Operations below is a more accurate indicator of current financial performance.

Commentary on Current Result: The deterioration in the 2023-2024 result has been discussed throughout this report. The future years have been impacted marginally by the application of revised indices based on the forecast economic conditions.

Graph 1

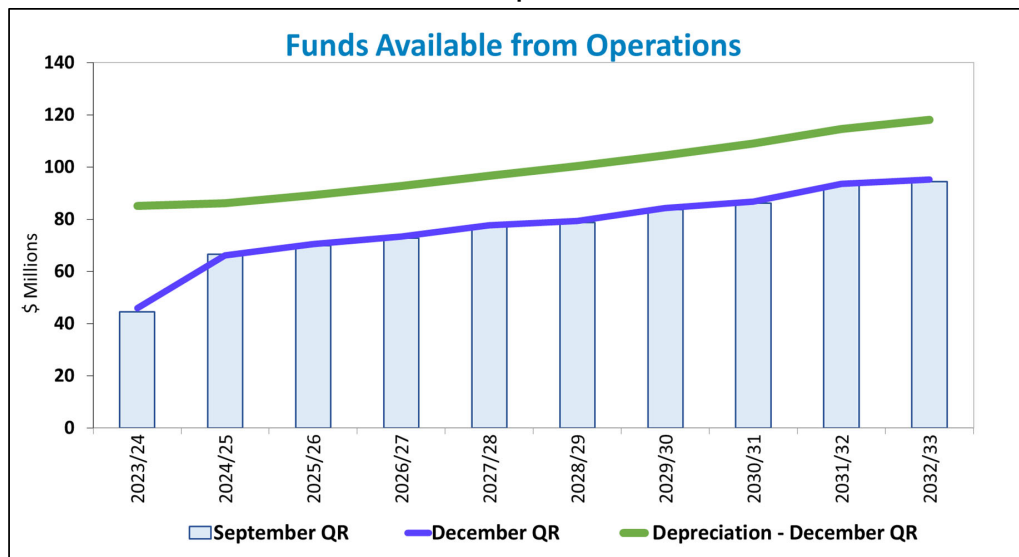


## Indicator 2 - Funds Available from Operations

**Definition:** The matching of Funds Available from Operations with Council's asset renewal target (currently depreciation over the long term) is a primary target of Council to provide for effective renewal of assets and growth in assets.

**Commentary on Current Result:** The following graph shows the forecast depreciation expenses compared to Funds Available from Operations. This indicator demonstrates a shortfall in capacity to generate sufficient funds from operations to meet the current depreciation level used as a proxy for asset renewal requirement. The shortfall became apparent as assets were revalued at the end of 2021-2022. Work is continuing to develop Asset Management Plans to determine better estimates of funding needs along with other proposals to bridge any gap over the longer term. Savings were introduced to the current financial year by not providing general CPI indexation to materials and contract costs across Service budgets. This savings was allocated through the September Quarterly Review to offset additional costs, primarily employee based not covered by the lower than required Rate Peg for the current year.

Graph 2



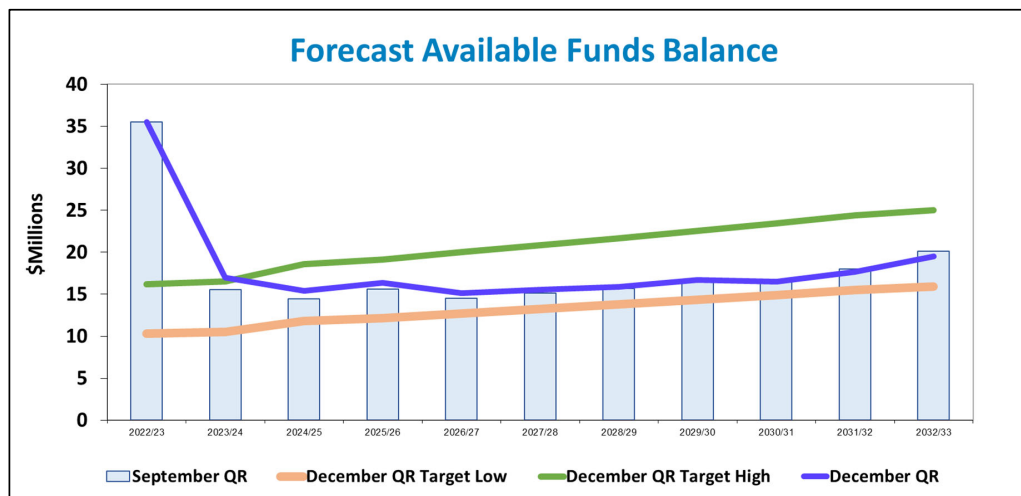
**Note:** The depreciation figures in the diagram above exclude the depreciation on Waste Remediation, SES & RFS vehicles, right-of-use assets and HACC vehicles that have specific funding sources outside Funds Available from Operations.

### Indicator 3 - Available Funds

Definition: Available Funds are the uncommitted funds of an organisation that assist in meeting the short term cash requirements, provide contingency for unexpected costs or loss of revenue and provide flexibility to take advantage of opportunities that may arise from time to time.

Commentary on Current Result: Council's Financial Strategy has a target to achieve and maintain an Available Funds position between 3.5% and 5.5% of operational revenue [pre capital]. The target range for Available Funds at December 2023 is between \$10.5M and \$15.9M (lower range) and between \$16.5M and \$25.0M (upper range) over the life of the Long Term Financial Plan. The revised forecast currently provide for Council to remain within the target range over time.

Graph 3



## Contracts and Other Expenses

The following list of contracts have been entered into during the Quarter that have yet to be fully performed. Details of contracts, other than contractors that are on a council's preferred supplier list that have a value equivalent of 1% of estimated income from continuing operations or \$50K, whichever is the lesser, are provided.

Wollongong City Council December Quarter 2023 Contract Listing					
Contractor	Contract Detail and Purpose	Contract Value \$'000	Commencement Date	Duration of Contract	Budgeted Y/N
Mattrec Holdings Pty Ltd	Mattress Collection & Recycling Detailed Design - New Sharepath Grand Pacific Walk	2,223	1-Oct-23	30-Sep-25	Y
J. Wyndham Prince Pty Ltd	Austinmer	352	3-Oct-23	31-Dec-25	Y
Advisian Pty Ltd	Design Consultancy Services for Natural Disaster Recovery	533	3-Oct-23	30-Jun-25	Y
Euro Civil Pty Ltd	Mt Keira Road Safety Upgrades - Guardrail	323	23-Oct-23	22-Dec-23	Y
Christopher Kent Consulting Pty Ltd	Wollongong City Smart Parking Consultancy	108	1-Nov-23	30-Jun-24	Y
The Green Horticultural Group	Sports Ground Drainage and Irrigation	1,547	9-Nov-23	15-Dec-24	Y
Interflow Pty Ltd	1 Sturt Place Bulli Pipe Reline	248	14-Nov-23	29-Mar-24	Y
Interflow Pty Ltd	10 Lang Street Pipe Reline	105	17-Nov-23	28-Jun-24	Y
Interflow Pty Ltd	4 Trevor Avenue Pipe Reline	168	17-Nov-23	28-Jun-24	Y
IntelliTrac Pty Ltd	Carpool Booking Software	76	22-Nov-23	22-Dec-26	Y
Interflow Pty Ltd	38 Railway Avenue Pipe Reline	88	24-Nov-23	28-Jun-24	Y
Cadifern Pty Ltd	Scarborough Cemetery Memorial Gardens	313	24-Nov-23	19-Apr-24	Y
Select Civil Pty Ltd	Fred Finch Park Netball Courts - Stage 2	2,224	1-Dec-23	10-May-25	Y
Brewster Hjorth Architects	PJ-3946 Helensburgh Pool - Principal Design Consultant	600	11-Dec-23	30-Jun-24	Y

The following tender was approved by the General Manager during the December Quarter of 2023-2024:

- T1000102 Supplier Panel for Provision of WHS Compliance Training

The following table identifies the amount expended on consultancies and legal fees for the financial year.

Definition: Consultants are defined as a person or organisation that is engaged under contract on a temporary basis to provide recommendations or high level specialist or professional advice to assist decision making by management. Generally, it is the advisory nature of the work that differentiates a consultant from other contractors.

Wollongong City Council December Quarter 2023 Consultancy and Legal Expenses		
Expense	Expenditure YTD \$ 000's	Budgeted Y/N
Consultants	1,648	Y
Legal Fees	319	Y

### Responsible Accounting Officer Statement

The following statement is made in accordance with Clause 203(2) of the Local Government (General) Regulations 2005.

There has been continuing and varying economic and valuation changes since the adoption of the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 budgets that have impacted Council's underlying or longer term financial position. There was also a significant mismatch between the 2023-2024 Rate Peg and cost increases that have created a gap in Council's financial capacity. This gap, created by the lag in the indices used by IPART in setting its Rate Peg, was anticipated to be 'caught up' in next year's Rate Peg. Unfortunately for councils due to its timing, IPART has seen fit to redefine its rate peg calculation to be based on forward indices for 2024-2025, meaning Council will not catch up on the highest year of inflationary impact that was skipped, and will need to fund the gap from future revenue increase, efficiency gain, or service reduction.

It is expected that funding mismatches will impact at least the next two and will require underlying budget adjustments to revenues, service and efficiency to align to long term financial requirements.

Notwithstanding the above, at this stage it is my opinion that the Quarterly Budget Review Statement for Wollongong City Council for the Quarter ended 30 December 2023 indicates that Council's projected financial position at 30 June 2024 will be *satisfactory* at year end, having regard to the projected estimates of income and expenditure and the original budgeted income and expenditure.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Brian Jenkins  
Responsible Accounting Officer  
Wollongong City Council

## Appendix 1 – Supporting Documents Report

Supporting Documents - Planning Studies & Investigations									
Service & Project	2023-2024	2023-2024	Variance	2024-2025	2024-2025	Variance	2025-2026	2026-2027	
	Current Budget \$'000s	Proposed Budget \$'000s		Current Budget \$'000s	Proposed Budget \$'000s		Proposed Budget \$'000s	Proposed Budget \$'000s	
<b>Corporate Strategy</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>484</b>	<b>514</b>	
Centralised Studies & Plans	0	0	0	0	0	0	484	514	
Community Strategic Plan Review	0	0	0	77	77	0	0	0	
<b>Land Use Planning</b>	<b>626</b>	<b>586</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>409</b>	<b>449</b>	<b>(40)</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>2</b>	
West Dapto Review WaterCycle Masterplan	75	75	0	0	0	0	0	0	
City Centre Planning Review	35	35	0	0	0	0	0	0	
City Wide LEP Review	100	60	40	100	140	(40)	0	0	
Development of Crown Land Plans of Management	0	0	0	2	2	0	2	2	
Landscape development plan for West Dapto - for riparian cor	20	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Battery Park, Smiths Hill & Flagstaff Hill Forts Heritage Co	120	120	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Review Riparian Corridor Management Study & Policy	102	102	(0)	0	0	0	0	0	
Planning Controls for South Wollongong	0	0	0	103	103	0	105	0	
Built Form Testing DCP Ch B4 Development in Business Zones	150	150	0	103	103	0	0	0	
Thirroul Village - Character and Heritage Study	0	0	0	75	75	0	77	0	
West Dapto Vision Implementation - Infrastructure and Develo	25	25	0	26	26	0	0	0	
<b>Stormwater Services</b>	<b>715</b>	<b>715</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>(0)</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>350</b>	
Floodplain Management Studies	0	0	0	100	100	0	120	350	
Review of Towradgi Creek FRMS	24	24	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Review of Hewitts Creek FRMS	27	27	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Flood Risk Management Studies Best Practice	81	81	0	60	60	(0)	(0)	(0)	
Review of Allans Creek FRMS	78	78	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Review of Fairy Cabbage Creeks FRMS	90	90	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Review of Collins Creek FRMS	25	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Review of Wollongong City FRMS	106	106	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Review of Brooks Creek FRMS	156	156	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Review of Minnegang Creek FRMS	128	128	(0)	50	50	0	50	0	
<b>Environmental Services</b>	<b>521</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>628</b>	<b>979</b>	<b>(351)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
Climate Change Risk Assessment & Adaptation Plan	9	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Coastal Management Program for the Open Coast	471	120	351	470	821	(351)	0	0	
Prepare Subsequent Climate Change Mitigation Plan	20	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Climate Change Adaptation Plan - Assessment of Heat Impact	21	21	(0)	0	0	0	0	0	
Develop design guidelines for green roofs, green walls and f	0	0	0	158	158	0	0	0	
<b>Natural Area Management</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>28</b>	
Vegetation Management Plans for High Priority Natural Areas	32	32	0	33	33	0	34	28	
<b>Transport Services</b>	<b>531</b>	<b>574</b>	<b>(42)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>0</b>	
Accessible Car Parking and Bus Stops audit	22	22	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Access and Movement Strategy Review	175	175	0	0	0	0	0	0	
City Centre Parking Surveys - EMS Report	16	16	0	0	0	0	73	0	
Integrated Transport Strategy	106	106	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Bellambi Foreshore Precinct Plan	12	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Lake Illawarra Shared Path Masterplan	110	110	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Towradgi Creek Shared Path Feasibility Investigations	0	42	(42)	0	0	0	0	0	
Pedestrian Bridge Thurston Av - Feasibility Study	30	30	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Implement Keiraville Gwynneville Access & Movement Strategy	61	61	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<b>Community Facilities</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
Social Infrastructure Planning Framework	100	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<b>Cultural Services</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>0</b>	
West Dapto Vision Implementation - Cultural Strategy & Plan	0	0	0	0	0	0	52	0	

## Appendix 1 – Supporting Documents Report (Cont'd)

Supporting Documents - Planning Studies & Investigations								
Service & Project	2023-2024	2023-2024	Variance	2024-2025	2024-2025	Variance	2025-2026	2026-2027
	Current Budget S'000s	Proposed Budget S'000s		Current Budget S'000s	Proposed Budget S'000s		Proposed Budget S'000s	Proposed Budget S'000s
<b>Aquatic Services</b>	26	26	0	100	100	0	0	0
Community Recreation & Aquatic Centre Concept								
Plan West Dapt	26	26	0	0	0	0	0	0
Surf Club Strategy	0	0	0	100	100	0	0	0
<b>Botanic Garden and Annexes</b>	0	0	0	60	60	0	196	0
Mt Keira Summit Park Interpretation Design Guide	0	0	0	0	0	0	50	0
Botanic Gardens Design Investigation for Asset Improvement	0	0	0	60	60	0	146	0
<b>Parks and Sportsfields</b>	596	596	0	61	61	0	0	32
Belambi Foreshore Precinct Plan	112	112	0	61	61	0	0	0
Fred Finch Park - Landscape Masterplan	35	35	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hill 60 Tunnels Reopening- Detailed Concept Plans	147	147	0	0	0	0	0	0
Feasibility Study Synthetic Football Pitch in Planning Area	88	88	0	0	0	0	0	0
Stuart Park Masterplan	98	98	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fred Finch Park Lighting Feasibility	40	40	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lang Park Masterplan	77	77	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Governance and Administration</b>	0	500	(500)	0	0	0	0	0
Asset Management Planning	0	500	(500)	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Property Services</b>	26	26	0	103	103	0	0	0
Bulli Showground Masterplan	26	26	0	0	0	0	0	0
Draft Bulli Showground Masterplan - Feasibility Assessment a	0	0	0	103	103	0	0	0
<b>Total Expenditure *</b>	<b>3,174</b>	<b>3,326</b>	<b>(152)</b>	<b>1,680</b>	<b>2,071</b>	<b>(391)</b>	<b>1,192</b>	<b>927</b>

\*Expenditure shown above is for full project cost. A number of projects are supported from external grant funds or internal restrictions

## Appendix 2 – Detailed Capital Project Reports by Asset Class

<b>Wollongong City Council</b> <b>December 2023 Quarterly Review</b> <b>Capital Project Report</b>							
Asset Class Programme	\$'000 Current Budget		\$'000 Proposed Budget		YTD Expenditure	\$'000 Variation	
	Expenditure	Other Funding	Expenditure	Other Funding		Expenditure	Other Funding
Traffic Facilities	2,299	(1,272)	1,925	(898)	503	(374)	374
Public Transport Facilities	563	(273)	563	(273)	704	0	(0)
Roadworks	13,555	(4,427)	13,710	(4,582)	10,223	155	(155)
Bridges, Boardwalks and Jetties	1,867	(1,197)	1,839	(1,169)	1,733	(28)	28
<b>TOTAL Roads And Related Assets</b>	<b>18,284</b>	<b>(7,169)</b>	<b>18,037</b>	<b>(6,922)</b>	<b>13,164</b>	<b>(247)</b>	<b>247</b>
West Dapto Infrastructure Expansion	8,660	(8,560)	7,268	(7,195)	1,923	(1,392)	1,365
<b>TOTAL West Dapto</b>	<b>8,660</b>	<b>(8,560)</b>	<b>7,268</b>	<b>(7,195)</b>	<b>1,923</b>	<b>(1,392)</b>	<b>1,365</b>
Footpaths	4,302	(2,545)	4,563	(2,805)	3,416	260	(260)
Cycle/Shared Paths	6,225	(1,460)	6,689	(1,924)	3,140	464	(464)
Commercial Centre Upgrades - Footpaths and Cycleways	2,097	(152)	2,237	(292)	1,736	140	(140)
<b>TOTAL Footpaths And Cycleways</b>	<b>12,625</b>	<b>(4,157)</b>	<b>13,489</b>	<b>(5,021)</b>	<b>8,292</b>	<b>864</b>	<b>(864)</b>
Carpark Construction/Formalising	250	0	60	0	30	(190)	0
Carpark Reconstruction or Upgrading	655	0	845	0	98	190	0
<b>TOTAL Carparks</b>	<b>905</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>905</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>(0)</b>	<b>0</b>
Floodplain Management	3,578	(2,989)	3,583	(2,994)	2,990	5	(5)
Stormwater Management	5,929	(894)	5,429	(394)	2,753	(500)	500
Stormwater Treatment Devices	60	0	60	0	8	(0)	0
<b>TOTAL Stormwater And Floodplain Management</b>	<b>9,566</b>	<b>(3,883)</b>	<b>9,072</b>	<b>(3,388)</b>	<b>5,751</b>	<b>(495)</b>	<b>495</b>
Cultural Centres (IPAC, Gallery, Townhall)	80	0	80	0	260	(0)	0
Administration Buildings	530	0	600	(100)	199	70	(100)
Community Buildings	8,055	(1,750)	8,085	(1,750)	4,050	30	(0)
Public Facilities (Shelters, Toilets etc.)	95	0	125	(30)	2	30	(30)
<b>TOTAL Buildings</b>	<b>8,760</b>	<b>(1,750)</b>	<b>8,890</b>	<b>(1,880)</b>	<b>4,512</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>(130)</b>
Tourist Park - Upgrades and Renewal	565	0	315	0	77	(250)	0
Crematorium/Cemetery - Upgrades and Renewal	285	0	535	0	75	250	0
Leisure Centres & RVGC	50	0	50	0	44	0	0
<b>TOTAL Commercial Operations</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Play Facilities	2,898	(1,313)	2,898	(1,313)	1,404	(0)	(0)
Recreation Facilities	2,070	(1,820)	1,770	(1,520)	615	(300)	300
Sporting Facilities	17,637	(8,823)	18,172	(9,358)	5,304	535	(535)
<b>TOTAL Parks Gardens And Sportfields</b>	<b>22,605</b>	<b>(11,956)</b>	<b>22,840</b>	<b>(12,191)</b>	<b>7,323</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>(235)</b>
Beach Facilities	(0)	0	(0)	0	82	(0)	0
Rock/Tidal Pools	0	0	0	0	92	0	0
Treated Water Pools	120	(50)	470	(50)	124	350	0
<b>TOTAL Beaches And Pools</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>(50)</b>	<b>470</b>	<b>(50)</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>0</b>
Whytes Gully New Cells	9,105	(9,105)	9,105	(9,105)	558	(0)	0
<b>TOTAL Waste Facilities</b>	<b>9,105</b>	<b>(9,105)</b>	<b>9,105</b>	<b>(9,105)</b>	<b>558</b>	<b>(0)</b>	<b>0</b>
Motor Vehicles	1,800	(949)	1,800	(949)	521	(0)	0
<b>TOTAL Fleet</b>	<b>1,800</b>	<b>(949)</b>	<b>1,800</b>	<b>(949)</b>	<b>521</b>	<b>(0)</b>	<b>0</b>
Mobile Plant (trucks, backhoes etc.)	3,295	(779)	3,295	(779)	968	(0)	(0)
<b>TOTAL Plant And Equipment</b>	<b>3,295</b>	<b>(779)</b>	<b>3,295</b>	<b>(779)</b>	<b>968</b>	<b>(0)</b>	<b>(0)</b>
Information Technology	1,600	0	1,600	0	352	0	0
<b>TOTAL Information Technology</b>	<b>1,600</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,600</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Library Books	1,340	0	1,340	0	728	(0)	0
<b>TOTAL Library Books</b>	<b>1,340</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,340</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>728</b>	<b>(0)</b>	<b>0</b>
Art Gallery Acquisitions	100	0	100	0	36	0	0
<b>TOTAL Public Art</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Land Acquisitions	250	(250)	372	(372)	(6)	122	(122)
<b>TOTAL Land Acquisitions</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>(250)</b>	<b>372</b>	<b>(372)</b>	<b>(6)</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>(122)</b>
Capital Project Contingency	(852)	0	(1,175)	0	0	(323)	0
<b>TOTAL Non-Project Allocations</b>	<b>(852)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(1,175)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(323)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>99,063</b>	<b>(48,608)</b>	<b>98,307</b>	<b>(47,852)</b>	<b>44,743</b>	<b>(756)</b>	<b>756</b>

Budget variations being recommended include the following capital items:

<b>Variations - Capital</b>	<b>Net by Type \$ 000's</b>
<b>Traffic Facilities</b> Reallocate Section 7:12 Developer Contributions from existing project at Gipps Road, Gwynneville which requires less budget to adjacent project at the same location in the Cycle/Share paths program. Rephase TFNSW Funding for Princes Highway and Railway Street traffic lights upgrade project which is being constructed next FY due to delays in approvals from TFNSW. Rephase TFNSW Funding for Pioneer Rd Traffic Signals at Towradgi Road and Rothery Road and Princess Highway/Mount Brown Road Traffic signals due to delays in approvals. Introduce additional Section 7:12 Developer Contributions for existing project - Gipps Road; Vickery Street to Foley Street.	(374)
<b>Roadworks</b> Introduce LRCI Part 4 Phase A funding for Princes Highway - Northcliffe Drive to West Dapto Road project.	155
<b>Bridges, Boardwalks and Jetties</b>	(28)
<b>West Dapto Infrastructure Expansion</b> Rephase State Government Housing Acceleration Funding for West Dapto Road upgrade project due to delays in required land acquisitions. <b>Rephase Section 7:11 Developer Contributions for Marshall Mount Road and Connecting Roads Upgrade.</b> Rephase West Dapto Funding for Bong Bong Road - Station Street traffic lights. Reallocate funds from West Dapto Expansion Program to Capital Contingency.	(1,392)
<b>Footpaths</b> Introduce additional Strategic Projects funding for existing project- new footpaths in St John Avenue and Woodlawn Street, Mangerton. Introduce Strategic Project Restricted Asset funding for existing project - North Wollongong Beach Seawall renewal stage 1. Introduce additional Section 7:12 Developer Contributions for existing project - Stuart Park Accessibility Enhancement.	260
<b>Cycle/Shared Paths</b> <b>Reallocate (from Traffic Facilities Program) and introduce additional Section 7:12 Developer Contributions for existing project to construct a new shareway on Gipps Road at Gwynneville shops.</b> Introduce additional TfNSW Get Active funding for design of Grand Pacific Walk project at Austinmer. Introduce TFNSW Safer Cities – Her Way funding for Safety Upgrades to MacCabe Park, Dapto Square and Port Kembla.	464
<b>Commercial Centre Upgrades – Footpaths and Cycleways</b> Introduce TFNSW Safer Cities – Her Way funding for Safety Upgrades to MacCabe Park, Dapto Square and Port Kembla.	140
<b>Carparks</b> Reallocate funds from Carpark Construction/Formalising Program to Carparks Reconstruction or Upgrading Program.	0
<b>Stormwater &amp; Floodplain Management</b> Rephase Stormwater Levy funding for Wollongong High School Detention Basin Drainage due to delays in obtaining planning approvals from Department of Education (Wollongong High School).	(495)

<b>Variations - Capital</b>	<b>Net by Type \$ 000's</b>
<b>Administration Buildings</b> Introduce Strategic Project Reserve Funding for existing project for EV charging infrastructure at the administration building.	70
<b>Community Buildings</b>	30
<b>Public Facilities (Shelters, Toilets etc.)</b>	30
<b>Commercial Operations</b> Reallocate funds from Tourist Park - Upgrades and Renewal to Crematorium/ Cemetery - Upgrades and Renewal.	0
<b>Recreation Facilities</b> Rephase Strategic Project Reserve funding Illawarra Escarpment MTB-Supporting Infrastructure-Phase 1 for works at Mt Kembla and Balgownie. Introduce Local Roads & Community Infrastructure Program Round 4 funding for Accessible Viewing Area on Hill 60.	(300)
<b>Sporting Facilities</b> Adjust Football Legacy funding for existing project at Judy Masters Park, sportsfield drainage to match available funding. Introduction of Strategic Project Restricted Asset funding for existing project Rex Jackson Sports Field Lighting. <b>Introduce funding for King George V drainage/irrigation. Introduce Community Building Partnerships funding for Cawley Park Sportsground Irrigation.</b> Rephase Section 7:12 Developer Contributions for Lakelands oval drainage.	535
<b>Treated Water Pools</b> Reallocate funds from Contingency to Helensburgh Pool Upgrade for design works.	350
<b>Land Acquisitions</b> Introduce Housing Acceleration Fund funding and Section 7:12 Developer Contributions for Purchase of Land from Endeavour Energy on West Dapto Road, as per previous resolution of Council.	122
<b>Contingency</b> Reallocate budget to and from the Capital Budget Contingency to/from various capital programs detailed above.	(323)
<b>Variation</b>	<b>(756)</b>

### Glossary and Naming Conventions

Term	Definition or Explanation
<b>Current Budget</b>	Current Budget, as revised and adopted by Council.
<b>Original Budget</b>	Adopted Budget as at the adoption of the Operational Plan in June (adoption of Attachment 1 - Budget).
<b>Proposed Budget</b>	Revised budget proposed before Council at the current quarterly budget review. Once adopted by Council, this will become 'Current Budget'