



Image: Council staff member at Belmore Basin, Wollongong.

Wollongong City Council

Resourcing Strategy 2025-2035

Adopted 30 June 2025



*Image: Aboriginal Smoking Ceremony
North Wollongong Beach 2022.*

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which our city is built, Dharawal Country. We recognise and appreciate their deep connection to this land, waters and the greater community. We pay respect to Elders past, present and those emerging and extend our respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who call this city home. We recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the first people to live in the area. We respect their living cultures and recognise the positive contribution their voices, traditions and histories make to the city.

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Wollongong is Sustainable Connected Vibrant Inclusive

We are a sustainable and climate resilient city

We have well planned, connected, and liveable places

We foster a diverse economy, and we value innovation, culture, and creativity

We have a healthy, respectful, and inclusive community

Resourcing Strategy 2025-2035

Supporting Our Wollongong Our Future 2035 and Delivery Program 2025-2029

Purpose

The *Resourcing Strategy 2025-2035* is Wollongong City Council's framework for ensuring resources are effectively planned, aligned, and deployed to meet the aspirations of the community. It connects Council's financial, workforce, asset, and technological resources with the priorities outlined in the *Our Wollongong Our Future 2035 Community Strategic Plan*, supporting the delivery of the *Delivery Program 2025-2029* and the *Operational Plan 2025-2026*.

Council's *Delivery Program 2025-2029* and the *Operational Plan 2025-2026* responds to the Wollongong community's vision and goals and outlines the services that Council has capacity to deliver. It is a result of rigorous planning and prioritisation and aims to provide high-quality, sustainable services that meet community expectations now and into the future.

This Strategy ensures that Council is enabled to translate community aspirations into actionable outcomes. It informs decision-making and the prioritisation of resource allocation, services, infrastructure and programs, as part of our approach to [organisational sustainability](#). It reflects Council's commitment to long-term financial sustainability, organisational capacity and community driven service delivery.

Role

The Resourcing Strategy serves as the critical link between the community's long-term aspirations and Council's operational responsibilities. While the Community Strategic Plan articulates Wollongong's long-term vision, this Strategy supports Council's commitments to the community to ensure they are:

Realistic - reflecting available resources and achievable within the 10-year planning horizon.

Strategically Aligned - prioritised and resourced in line with the Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

Sustainable - focused on maintaining financial stability, building organisational capacity, delivering customer-focused services, and fostering innovation.

The Resourcing Strategy integrates four essential components:

Asset Management Strategy 2025-2035: Guides the sustainable management of Council's physical infrastructure, ensuring assets are maintained, renewed and developed in alignment with current and future community needs.

Long-Term Financial Plan 2025-2035: Provides the financial framework for balancing short-term needs with long-term sustainability, ensuring that Council remains financially resilient and capable of funding essential infrastructure and services.

Workforce Management Strategy 2025-2029: Ensures Council has the right people, skills and capabilities to meet the demands of a growing and diverse community, while fostering innovation, inclusion and leadership.

Digital Strategy 2025-2029: Leverages digital transformation and technology-driven innovation to optimise service delivery, improve operational efficiency and enable community engagement with Council.

The *Our Wollongong Our Future 2035 Community Strategic Plan* outlines an aspirational vision for Wollongong's future supported by four goals:

"On Dharawal Country, from the mountains to the sea, we value our natural environment, we respect each other, our past and future. We will be a sustainable, connected, vibrant, and innovative city, with a diverse economy."



Enabling Community Goals through Strategic Resourcing

The Resourcing Strategy directly supports the four community goals set out in the Community Strategic Plan by aligning Council's resources to enable effective service delivery, infrastructure development and a connected community.

Council's Role in Achieving the Community Vision

While the Community Strategic Plan represents a whole-of-community vision that requires shared responsibility across government, businesses, community organisations and individuals, the Resourcing Strategy focuses on areas where Council has a direct role to play. Through leadership, collaboration and strategic investment, Wollongong City Council ensures that the community's aspirations are translated into achievable outcomes.

By aligning resources strategically, Council enables the delivery of high-quality services, sustainable infrastructure and innovative solutions that enhance the city's resilience, inclusivity, and prosperity—making Wollongong a better place for everyone to live, work and play.

Aligning Resources for Effective Service Delivery

Rather than functioning in isolation, the four elements of the Resourcing Strategy work together in a cohesive, interconnected way. This enables Council to:

Optimise resource allocation by ensuring that financial, physical, human and technological resources are strategically deployed.

Support cross-functional collaboration across different service areas, improving efficiency and enhancing service delivery.

Strengthen Council's capacity to respond proactively to emerging challenges, such as climate resilience, technological innovation and urban growth.

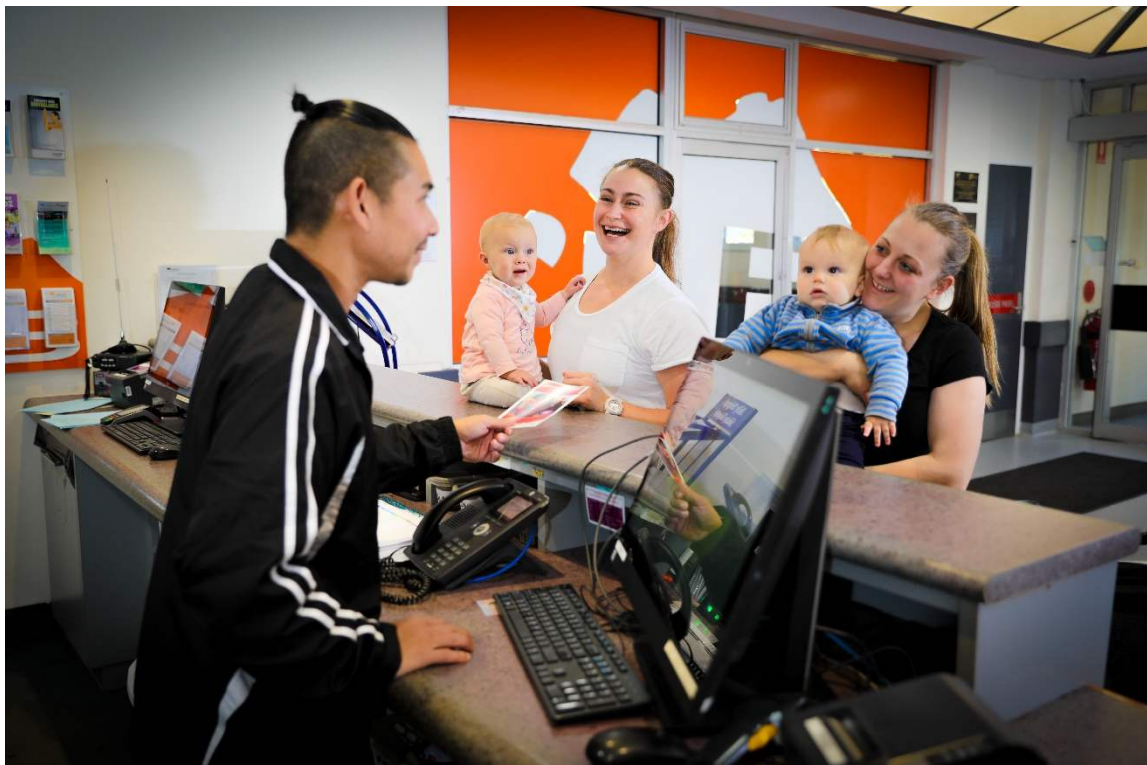


Image: Council staff member with customers at Beaton Park Leisure Centre, Wollongong.

Resourcing Strategy in action

The table below illustrates how different elements of the Resourcing Strategy integrate to support the Community Strategic Plan and the Delivery Program by using examples.

Resourcing Strategy	How	Supporting the Delivery Program	Community Strategic Plan Goals
Asset Management Strategy and Long-Term Financial Plan	The Asset Management Strategy and Plan identifies infrastructure renewal priorities. Long-Term Financial Plan ensures sustainable funding.	Deliver essential infrastructure across the city to support service delivery.	Goal 2: We have well planned, connected, and liveable places
Asset Management Strategy and Digital Strategy	The Asset Management Strategy identifies technology solutions, such as Internet of Things sensors for asset monitoring. Digital Strategy provides data analytics for proactive maintenance.	Enhance climate resilience through real-time stormwater system monitoring.	Goal 1: We are a sustainable and climate resilient city
Workforce Management Strategy and Digital Strategy	Workforce builds digital skills, supported by digital infrastructure enhancements.	Strengthen digital literacy and cybersecurity capabilities across Council operations.	Goal 4: We have a healthy, respectful, and inclusive community
Asset Management Strategy and Plans and Workforce Management Strategy	Asset Management Strategy outlines operational asset needs. Workforce Management Strategy ensures skilled teams are available for delivery.	Equip our people with the skills, knowledge, tools, and resources they need to maintain upgraded community infrastructure and optimise project management capabilities.	Goal 2: We have well planned, connected, and liveable places

Resourcing Strategy	How	Supporting the Delivery Program	Community Strategic Plan Goals
Long-Term Financial Plan and Digital Strategy	<p>Long-Term Financial Plan provides funding for technological innovation and renewal.</p> <p>Information Management and Technology implements digital transformation projects identified in the Strategy.</p>	Provide public Wi-Fi access across community hubs and public areas.	Goal 3: We foster a diverse economy, and we value innovation, culture, and creativity
Workforce Management Strategy and Long-Term Financial Plan	<p>Workforce Management Strategy identifies capability needs.</p> <p>Long-Term Financial Plan provides funding for staff development.</p>	Invest in professional development to strengthen workforce capability	Goal 4: We have a healthy, respectful, and, inclusive community



Image: Council staff member assisting a community member at Austinmer Beach.

Future opportunities for 2035

Building on the foundations established through the previous Community Strategic Plan, *Our Wollongong Our Future 2032* and insights from the State of Our City report, Council is positioned to address the following emerging opportunities and deliver meaningful outcomes for the community.

Leading in sustainability and climate resilience

- Expand investment in renewable energy, resource efficiency and green infrastructure.
- Strengthen climate adaptation measures through innovative infrastructure and urban greening programs.
- Partner and collaborate with external agencies and the community to drive sustainable outcomes.

Shaping well-planned, connected, and liveable places

- Deliver integrated transport systems, active transport networks and advocate for improved public transport options.
- Foster urban renewal and housing diversity initiatives to support population growth while balancing liveability.
- Improve accessibility and connectivity through smart infrastructure and inclusive urban design.

Fostering innovation, culture, and economic diversity

- Support local economic growth through creative industries, cultural and tourism investment and support local businesses where possible with Council procurement.
- Deliver smart cities initiatives to drive technological innovation and optimise service delivery.
- Encourage partnerships with research institutions and the local business community to promote innovation and economic resilience.

Promoting a healthy, respectful, and inclusive community

- Strengthen community engagement and participation through inclusive consultation processes.
- Deliver social infrastructure and wellbeing initiatives to support vulnerable populations.
- Enhance digital accessibility and promote equitable access to information and services.

Resourcing our future

This Resourcing Strategy equips Council to harness these opportunities by ensuring resources are aligned, integrated and adaptable. Through strategic financial planning, workforce planning, infrastructure investment and technological innovation, Council remains committed to creating a sustainable, connected and inclusive future that reflects the aspirations of our diverse community.

An ongoing focus on [organisational sustainability](#) will ensure Council remains financially resilient, agile, and able to continue delivering high-quality services to the community as Wollongong grows.

Monitoring, Reporting, and Continuous Improvement

Monitoring and Reporting Framework

Council is committed to transparent governance, accountability and continuous alignment with community aspirations and goals. The *Resourcing Strategy 2025-2035* supports this commitment by embedding clear monitoring and reporting mechanisms that ensure progress is tracked, resources are used effectively, and strategic goals are achieved.

This framework aligns with the requirements of the *Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework* and the *Local Government Act 1993*, providing structured oversight of Council's performance in delivering on the *Our Wollongong Our Future 2035 Community Strategic Plan* and *Delivery Program 2025-2029*.

Council's monitoring and reporting processes include:

Quarterly Review Statements

Track the progress of Delivery Program commitments, assess resource allocation effectiveness, and highlight achievements or areas requiring adjustment.

Annual Report

Provides a comprehensive review of Council's performance, including financial outcomes, operational achievements and progress toward long-term strategic objectives.

State of Our City Report

Evaluates long-term progress against the community's vision and objectives, providing insights into social, economic, environmental, and governance outcomes.



Commitment to Continuous Improvement

Council recognises that effective resource management is an evolving process, requiring ongoing reflection, adaptation and innovation. [Organisational sustainability](#) is central to this approach – ensuring that Council remains [financially responsible](#), [operationally resilient](#), and able to deliver valued services now and into the future. This commitment ensures that the organisation remains agile, capable of responding to emerging trends and aligned with community needs.

A key driver of continuous improvement is the [Service Optimisation Program](#), developed in consultation with stakeholders across Council. This structured framework assesses whether services are being delivered effectively, efficiently and in alignment with community expectations and affordability. The program focuses on:

Balancing community needs with financial sustainability by assessing service levels against affordability for both Council and the community.

Enhancing customer experience by identifying opportunities to improve service delivery and engagement in a way that is adaptable and supports [organisational sustainability](#).

Optimising operational efficiency by reviewing processes, resource use and [organisational sustainability](#) practices to ensure long-term service viability.

The program follows a comprehensive review process that includes planning, discovery, analysis and implementation, ensuring evidence-based recommendations drive meaningful change. Recent reviews, such as the [customer experience with accessing information related to Development Assessment](#), have led to actionable improvements in customer service, communication and operational effectiveness.

Beyond the [Service Optimisation Program](#), Council's [continuous improvement](#) efforts also focus on:

Adaptability: Proactively adjusting plans and priorities to respond to technological advancements, societal changes and emerging opportunities.

Capacity Building: Investing in workforce development, technological innovation and [organisational sustainability](#) to drive long-term stability, service resilience, and strategic agility.

Community Engagement: Strengthening collaboration with residents, ensuring services and initiatives reflect evolving community expectations.



Image: Central Business District, North Wollongong.

Wollongong City Council

Long Term Financial Plan 2025-2035

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Introduction

Wollongong City Council is committed to the principles of organisational sustainability, including financial sustainability and good financial management. Council will wisely use ratepayers' money, together with other funding available, to provide prioritised services in a fiscally responsible manner. To Council, financial sustainability means we can provide quality planned and ongoing services, including the infrastructure that is used in providing those services to the community, without having to consider unplanned increases to rates or disruptive reductions in service levels. Good financial management requires the understanding of the short and long term financial implications of decisions - now, in the past and into the future. It also requires consideration of the potential influences outside of Council's control that may impact on our finances.

The Long Term Financial Plan is a component of the Resourcing Strategy 2025-2035 that provides the financial projections for the next 10 years based on the direction proposed and decisions of Council. It details the planning assumptions that underlie these projections, the key indicators that are used to measure performance and discusses areas of risk.

It is a living document intended to support decision making and provide a guide for future action. It is continually updated to reflect both internal decisions and external impacts.

The Plan and corresponding financial forecasts are built within the parameters of Council's Financial Sustainability Policy. The Financial Sustainability Policy provides direction and context for decision making in the allocation, management and use of Council's limited financial resources. It sets the parameters within which Council provides financial stability, affordability, focus, efficiency, or value for money, over the short, medium and longer terms. The key performance indicators outlined in the Financial Sustainability Policy set clear targets to support continuous measurement of financial sustainability.

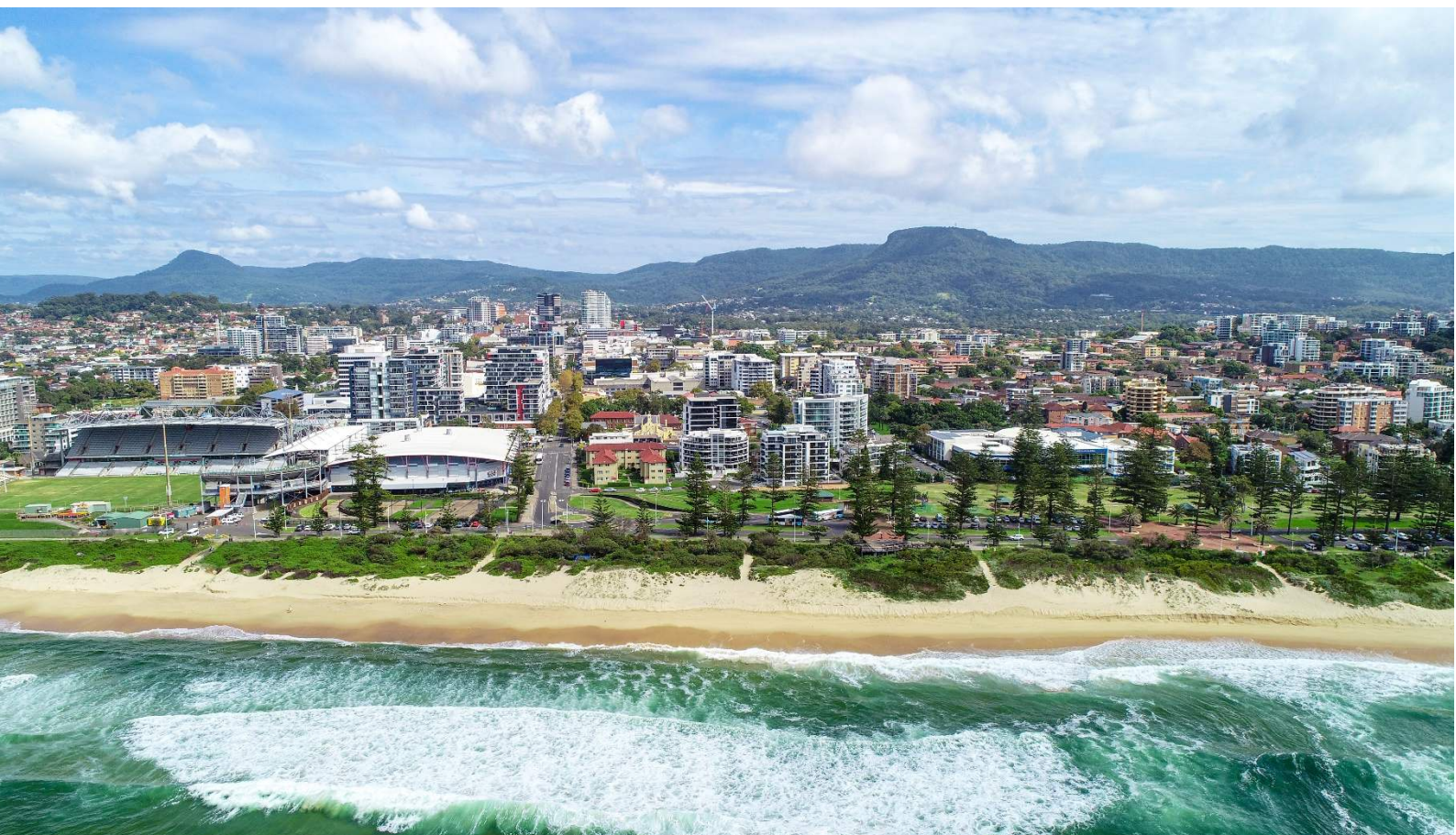


Image: City Beach, Wollongong.

Financial Sustainability Policy

The Financial Sustainability Policy (previously the Financial Strategy) was first developed in 2008 and has had several revisions, particularly to the targets for key indicators. The changes in these targets have been modified over time to reflect Council's financial position, maturity and evolution. The first major revision was made in 2014 when, following an extensive community consultation process, the 'Securing Our Future' plan was adopted by Council creating the blueprint for the steps in the journey towards financial sustainability. It is important to remember the 'Securing Our Future' targets were aimed at providing sustainability at the current service levels, by allowing sufficient funding to carry out existing services at existing levels and replace assets with equivalents as required over time.

In April 2017, having reached a reasonably sustainable position, Council adopted a revised Financial Strategy that fine-tuned targets to continue to provide direction and context for decision making in a sustainable way. Further refinement was made in 2021.

In the period from December 2021 to late 2024, there was a period of substantial economic volatility, particularly accelerated inflation, that impacted Council's cost of service and the valuation and replacement cost of Council's assets. Council has taken many measures to combat these difficult external drivers and has been able to maintain its current services at existing or improved service levels through that period and the COVID-19 period immediately preceding. At the same time, the valuation of assets and the resultant depreciation (accounting expression for the consumption of assets over time) has created financial results that show a substantial negative Operating Result [pre capital] that potentially reflects a long term financial shortfall.

Due to the significant asset holdings and long lived assets controlled by Council, its financial sustainability is heavily impacted by how these assets are managed over their life. Council has to date applied broad financial asset management indicators through our Financial Policy over time, including:

- Operating Result [pre capital], and
- Funds Available from Operations equal to Depreciation

With the development of the revised Asset Management Strategy (AMS) and Asset Management Plan (AMP) there is opportunity to reinvent our financial asset management measures in a way that provides improved outcomes, greater understanding and a more mature response to a critical organisational sustainability issue.

The review of the Asset Management Strategy and the Asset Management Plans has identified many improvements in asset management practices and assumptions and has provided a clearer set of financial targets and timeframes that will allow this refined approach to the understanding of, and response to, our financial sustainability. This is particularly evidenced through a clearer understanding of Council's asset replacement requirements over the medium term (10 years), and revised lifecycle management practices for some asset classes (Buildings, Stormwater, Bridges, Footpaths & Cycleways) based on new approaches to maintenance and replacement. While some of these measures still require audit review before being finalised, it is anticipated that through these changes Council's annual depreciation will be reduced by around \$13M.

Importantly from a financial sustainability perspective, the Asset Management Strategy now outlines how Council will ensure that our assets, that support the delivery of the services and functions Council delivers (Delivery Program and Operational Plan), are to be managed so that they are fit for purpose. This includes the replacement of assets as they are required based on the following assumptions:

- The replacement cost of an asset will need to be funded from Council's General Revenue, and/or grants, donations and proceeds from the sale of existing assets.
- The replacement cost of an asset may exceed the Current Renewal Cost held in our financial data due to changes in compliance requirements or agreed standards.
- The Asset Management Plan will identify where a level of upgrade is essential for some of our assets - the cost of this upgrade is included in the estimated 'Replacement Cost'.
- Upgrades and Expansion to assets above those essential requirements would require additional funding (above sustainability) and would be managed through the Integrated Planning process.

The concept of Replacement Cost, which includes agreed systematic uplifts to assets at time of replacement (such as compliance and agreed standards), has not previously been accounted for in Council's Policy, as the depreciation proxy previously used only measured the current estimated cost of renewal on a like for like basis. Additionally, the current Accounting Standards apply a prospective approach to calculating an assets remaining depreciation. This application of accounting standards impacts the annual depreciation. If an asset life is changed (increased or decreased) the remaining asset value is depreciated over the assets remaining life, resulting in numbers that do not reflect the estimated annual replacement lifecycle cost of an asset (estimated cost/life). It is for these reasons that depreciation is not considered the best measure of funds required for asset replacement where more accurate information is available.

Council's Financial Sustainability Policy has been updated in line with, and aligned to, the Asset Management Strategy and Plan. This Long Term Financial Plan has been developed and reported in line with the revised Financial Sustainability Policy. The most significant financial principles of Council's Financial Sustainability Policy and their targets are outlined below. A full copy of the Financial Sustainability Policy can be accessed along with other Integrated Planning documents on Council's website.

Challenges

Council and the community have created a stable and sustainable financial environment in the short to medium term that should allow Council to provide its existing levels of service without significant change to future income requirements. In the future, Wollongong City Council will continue to face challenges that require strong financial leadership and creative solutions applied to matching its community's aspirations to its capacity and desire. The key challenges faced include:

- 1 Better understanding the community's needs, wants, desires and priorities for services and service levels and matching that to the organisation's and community's capacity to sustainably fund the provision of agreed services.
- 2 Providing capacity to meet contemporary and increasing expectations from all areas including community, service users and government.
- 3 Ensuring future decisions provide affordable long term solutions that are within the financial capacity of our community.
- 4 Delivering organisational change to improve efficiency and quality of service.
- 5 Financial risks associated with significant growth and development of new infrastructure and services in the West Dapto area.
- 6 Managing any future demands associated with climate change.

The following aims and parameters are designed to assist Council in achieving financial stability, affordability, focus and efficiency.

Total Funds Result

Council's annual allocations to operational and capital budgets will generally not exceed anticipated cash inflows.

Short term affordability requires the annual budget be affordable and cash to be managed to ensure that payments can be made as required. By holding a level of available funds, and planning for near breakeven funds results, this sustainable financial position can be maintained. The total funds result is inclusive of financing cash flow and movements in Restricted Assets.

Asset Management Replacement

Council will plan to achieve a Funds Available for Asset Replacement at least equal to the estimated cost of replacing assets due for renewal.

Funds Available from Operations is a Wollongong City Council result that measures the amount of funds available after all of Council's operating expenditure is met. These funds are generally available for capital expenditure or held as Available Funds. Unlike the Operating Result, it does not include non-cash transactions.

Funds Available for Asset Replacement is a subset of the Funds Available from Operations that are not required to be moved to Restricted Assets and are not made available for new assets or increases to the Available Funds balance. Generally, these decisions would be made after the asset replacement requirements are achieved.

Council's intent from a sustainability perspective is to prioritise Funds Available for Asset Replacement to at least provide sufficient funds to replace assets as they fall due over the planning cycle. The replacement of existing assets should be at the agreed current standard, determined through the Asset Management Plans. Through the planning process, Council may also determine a level of Funds Available from Operations that will be allocated to the provision of Expanded or Upgraded assets and/or New assets.

Available Funds

Council will aim to maintain Available Funds (the unallocated portion of revenues) between 3.5% and 5.5% of operational revenue [pre capital].

Available funds are funds that Council has earned but not allocated to specific expenditure in the past or future. They are held as Council's savings and are used to act as a buffer against unanticipated future costs or can be used to provide capability to take advantage of opportunities that may arise.

Where the Available Funds level is above maximum requirements, additional funds will be transferred to the Strategic Projects Restricted Asset with any allocation of funds to be considered through the Strategic Planning process.

Where the Available Funds balance falls below the targeted minimum level in a period, the onus through planning is to ensure adequate adjustment is made to restore the balance through future programs, within an acceptable timeframe.

Long Term Asset Renewal Funding Ratio

Council will monitor the long term asset renewal requirements and plan for potential issues outside of the current planning cycle.

Council's Asset Management Strategy includes the measurement of the Long Term Asset Renewal Funding Ratio, which is a measure of the total renewal value of all existing assets

divided by their estimated useful lives (i.e., an annualised replacement cost) compared against Funds Available from Operations. Council recognises that estimated renewal values and

Capital Expenditure

In determining the approval of budget for new, expanded, or upgraded assets, Council will ensure that the whole of life cost is considered and is able to be sustainably accommodated within future forecasts.

Capital expenditure decisions need to be fully informed by understanding the impacts on future results. For example, a building cannot be considered as a one-off cost, it will have operational costs for electricity, water and consumables and will normally involve services that will require operational budgets, including employee costs. The building will then need to be maintained and eventually renewed and/or be disposed of. Consideration of these costs and any potential revenue must be part of the initial evaluation and approval process and be recognised in future estimates to aid future planning.

Borrowing

Council will actively consider borrowings through its Resource Strategy and Capital Budget as a source to finance timing mismatches between cash availability and expenditure requirements and to provide for intergenerational equity where determined applicable.

Borrowings will be considered for investment in assets acquired to provide additional service or service level, to finance investments, or to provide for timing mismatches in asset replacement funding.

Internal borrowing will be applied first where funds are available and it is determined to be more economical.

Interest on internal borrowings will be costed where borrowing is applicable to Income Activities, to reflect the opportunity cost and will be applied in business cases to reflect the actual return on investment.

Borrowing terms will preferably be structured to match, but not exceed, asset life where there is appropriate product in the market to do so.

This Policy focuses on ensuring that Council continually sets a financial plan that ensures financial sustainability. Consideration of the Council services and the resources, including assets, required to provide those services must be affordable, that is, they must be within existing capacity, funded by increased capacity through efficiencies or based on a willingness of the community to provide additional revenue to fund increased service. Borrowings do not generate income and don't allow Council to acquire things we couldn't otherwise afford. They do provide for timing mismatches between cash and expenditure with an interest cost and they do allow Council to provide assets for future community use without impacting on past or present communities (intergenerational equity). They also allow for investment in assets that provide future positive returns.

Consideration of borrowings will be based on the needs or community demand for services and the projected capacity to pay for those services, or the willingness to raise additional revenue for them. Actual borrowings will be based on liquidity requirements and not specific assets or investments.

West Dapto Development

Increased annual rates created from subdivision in West Dapto will be applied to meet West Dapto operational costs and the net Funds Available from Operations from the area will be restricted.

In the transition to full development of the area, the West Dapto restricted asset will be made available to meet infrastructure and planning requirements in the area where required.

West Dapto is the last significant 'green fields' development in Wollongong. It will have significant financial impacts over time. It is anticipated that there will be substantial developer contributions and capital expenditure. The management of the Development Contributions Plan has inherent risks due to estimating, scoping and timing variables. Rates and other revenues will usually precede operational demand and assets built will require little renewal or maintenance for seven to 15 years creating a perception of improved financial performance. Experience in developing councils has shown the negative long term impacts that the delayed expense pattern has if additional rate revenue is built into other recurrent operations.

It is considered important that this longer term view of additional revenue is given and appropriate long term provisions are made from the commencement of the development.

Operational Services

Council's Delivery Program and Operational Plans will be used to:

- *determine core and value add services,*
- *identify, deliver and report on business improvement initiatives, and*
- *set actions to improve service levels, costs and delivery methods.*

Alignment of Council services with Our Wollongong Our Future 2035 Community Strategic Plan will continue to play an important part in determining the future needs and operations of the organisation. Assuring that the right things are done in the most efficient way and being able to measure that performance should provide a sound platform for communicating and planning to meet agreed community expectations.

Grant Funding

Council will actively pursue grant funding and other contributions to assist in the delivery of core services.

Priority for grants should be directed to actions and projects that are included in Council's Community Strategic Plan, Delivery Program, Operational Plan or supporting documents. Continued effort in obtaining and improving Council's success in targeted grant funding is vital to future enhancement and progression of objectives.

Service Optimisation

Council will develop a program of service optimisation reviews.

The fundamental premise behind the Service Optimisation Program is to assess if Council is delivering the right things in the best way, by considering the following principles:

- How well do we balance service levels and community desire against affordability for Council and our community/customers
- Are we delivering a good customer experience?
- Are our services operating efficiently and effectively to deliver better value?

Service Reviews

Council will maintain an ongoing review of its services that seeks to better define service requirements, refine delivery methods and balance service aims against affordability for both the Council and our customers.

It is intended that all services be reviewed continually and/or a cyclical basis over time. During each review of service, the service budget should be zero based in line with the agreed service levels.

Council will deliver procurement savings through improved strategic procurement and collaboration with other authorities and agencies.

Current Financial Situation

As we approach this planning cycle, Council's reported financial position continues to show negative Operating Results [pre capital] into the foreseeable future. It has been articulated over time that this result has primarily been the result of significant cost inflation that has increased the valuation of Council's assets and caused an increase in depreciation recognised in the Operating Result. Council's asset revaluation since 1 July 2021 has resulted in calculated asset values increasing by approximately 53% which resulted in increased depreciation of around \$37M per annum. These asset valuations and depreciation were based on Council's existing asset management practices and accounting requirements. Prior to that time, Council had been able to report actual and forecast surplus results.

Since 2022, Council has continued to forecast and report negative Operating Results [pre capital], although had stated that the asset valuation and depreciation impacts would not impact the planned Delivery Program over the reporting period, however, rising costs and future asset renewals would need to be addressed in the medium to longer term to ensure continued financial sustainability.

Over the past year, Council has invested in a detailed review and update of Council's Asset Management Strategy and Plan, which has resulted in the development of new asset management practices and assumptions to take into the future. Some of the changes forecast to be implemented have been incorporated into the Long Term Financial Plan, resulting in improvements to the underlying financial results.

This improved forecast has been particularly driven by changes in anticipated asset lives due to reassessment of the management of some asset classes over their lifecycle. The change of lives will result in lower overall depreciation rates, although for the buildings class the reassessment has resulted in an increased rate of depreciation, as follows:

Table 1

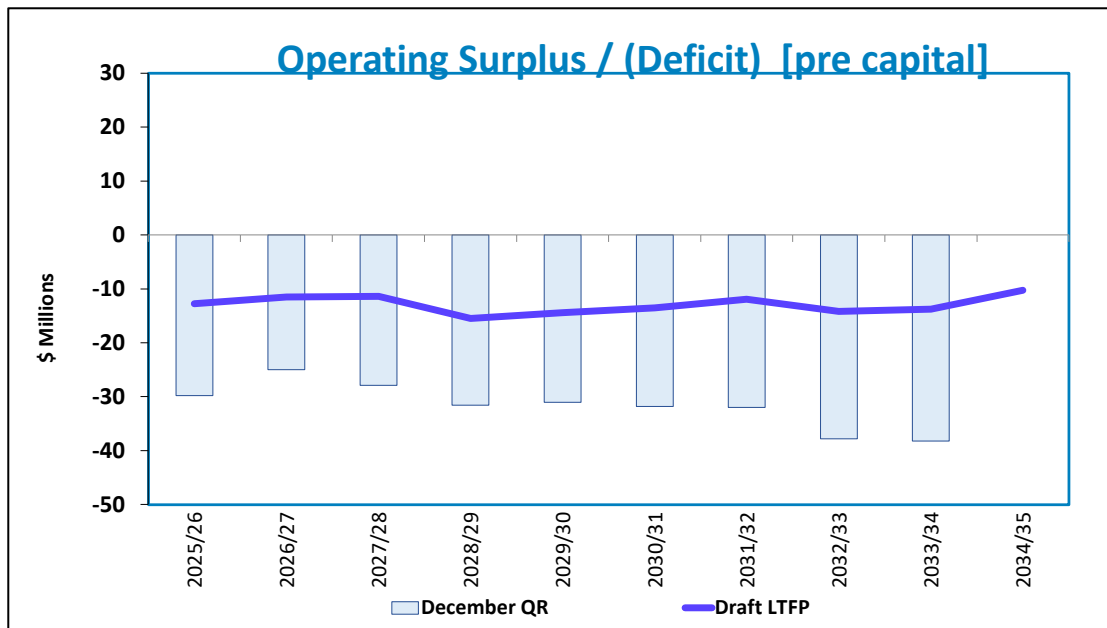
Depreciation - Asset Lives Impact

Asset Class	2025/2026 Depreciation Forecast \$'000s	2025/2026 Proposed Depreciation Forecast \$'000s	Variance \$'000s
Buildings	20,760	22,323	(1,563)
Stormwater	20,794	9,218	11,576
Pathways (Footpaths & Cycleways)	6,052	3,341	2,712
Bridges	2,449	1,793	656
Total	50,056	36,675	13,381

These adjustments have been applied to future forecasts but require audit review before being finalised and reported in the Financial Statements. It should be noted that the changes to accounting for depreciation will be prospective from 30 June 2025, so will not have a material impact on the 2024-2025 Annual Statements.

In addition to the asset forecast improvements, the Operating Result [pre capital] has been improved by revised forecasting for revenue related to the Waste Facility and Domestic Waste. Net Income improvements in these areas relate to longer term asset replacement requirements and pricing respectively and have been transferred to Restricted Assets for future expenditure. The revised Operating Results [pre capital] compared to the December Quarterly Review results are as follows:

Diagram 1



While the Operating Result [pre capital] remains a key Financial Statement and Quarterly Budget Review result, it will not be considered a Key Financial Indicator for planning and reporting purposes moving forward due to the way in which depreciation and some income is measured, which doesn't accurately reflect the annual replacement cost of Council's assets or necessarily Council's capacity. It is important to note that the Operating Result [pre capital] includes non-cash expenses such as depreciation. While forecasts show a deficit, it does not reflect Council's actual cash position or ability to fund services and replace infrastructure. The Financial Sustainability Policy proposed, includes medium (10 years) and long term measures to replace measures that reflected depreciation as a proxy for asset replacement requirements.

As stated in prior years financial plans, the current Plan is proving sufficient funds to maintain financial sustainability through the current reporting period and now, through the work done in reviewing Council's Asset Management Strategy, is able to more accurately forecast that Council can continue to provide existing and agreed services into the future, including the replacement of assets that fall due during the 10 year period of the Long Term Financial Plan. The Financial Plan and new Asset Management Strategy will, however, acknowledge that the current estimates show that the Long Term Asset Renewal Ratio, which approximates the annualised renewal cost of all of Council's over the next 300 plus years, indicates that the annual revenues would not be sufficient to fund all replacements over time. Council's Financial Sustainability Policy recognises Council's role to monitor this over time and respond to potential funding issues outside the current planning cycle. In doing so, Council recognises that estimated renewal values and estimated useful lives for long lived assets have a reasonable degree of variation and/or uncertainty. While this gap is being reported now, there are long lead times and many variables that may change before such gaps are realised including further changes to current asset needs, management practices and/or assumptions.

While the new Plan, based on the revised Financial Sustainability Policy methodology and measures provides for stability and affordability based on existing services and assumptions, there continues to be substantial challenges due to the State Government controlled Rate Peg not matching cost escalation, variable economic conditions, cost shifting and a clear demand for more than just sustainability. Our community engagement continues to provide clear evidence of the desire for increased service and improved levels of service across several Council operations.

To maintain organisational sustainability and continue to develop new and enhanced services, actions will be required in future years to create additional capacity in the short term and potentially fund longer term shortfalls. There are three options available to create capacity for new or enhanced services:

- Improve efficiency through better operations that reduce the cost of services – including reducing the lifecycle cost or improving the utilisation of assets used in the delivery of services.
- Decrease delivery of some services or service levels that are not required or prioritised by our community.
- Increase revenue from rates, fees, investments, rental and other property returns, grants and contributions.

It is important to note that Council will focus on increasing capacity outside of increasing rates or reducing service levels.



Image: Austinmer Rock Pools.

Key Financial Sustainability Indicator Forecasts

The financial forecasts included in this Plan are based on estimated costs for Council's continued delivery of existing services and planned variations. Underlying the financial estimates for services are assumptions and indices relating to costs and revenues.

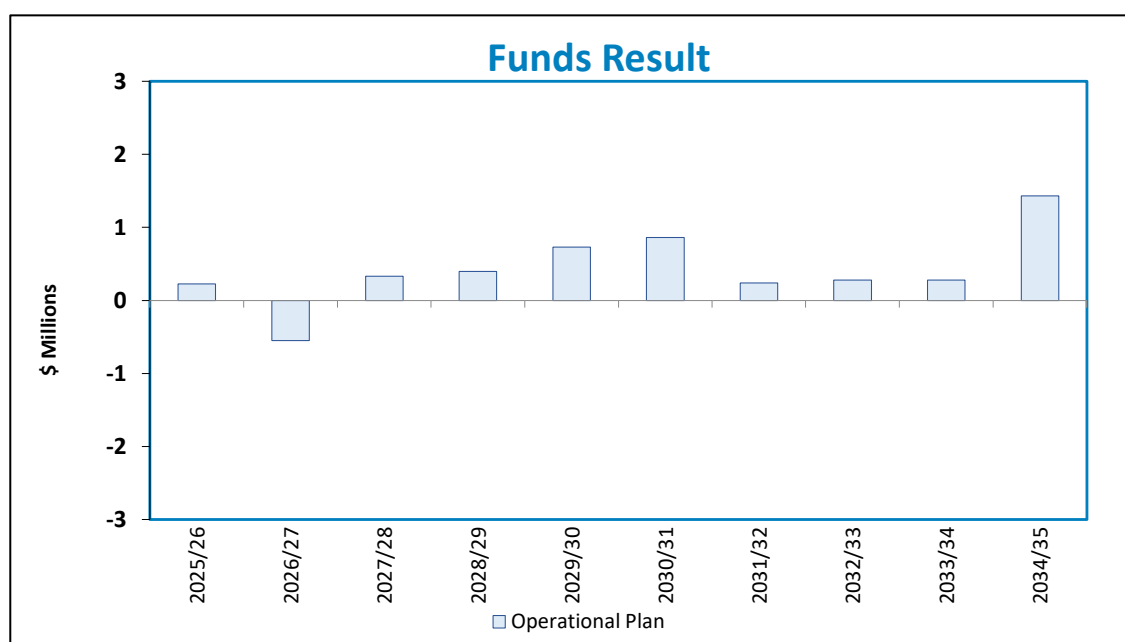
The following financial estimates should be read in the context of the potential risk around the underlying indices and the impact of pricing increases above the estimates that may occur.

Total Funds Result

The Total Funds Result provides an indication that the forecast budgets for the 10 year period are affordable, and that cash can be managed to ensure that payments can be made as required. By holding a level of Available Funds and planning for near breakeven funds results, Council can maintain this position into the future so long as it also maintains its assets to ensure they are fit for purpose. The total funds result is inclusive of financing cash flow and movements in Restricted Assets.

Diagram 2 shows the forecast Total Funds Result for the next 10 years. Council's Financial Sustainability Policy targets a break even or better result in each year although it will be possible to manage results across the reporting period. Currently, Council is forecasting a positive result across the 10 years, although has two years where the funding is currently slightly negative. The flexibility available in the Available Funds range, Diagram 3 below, shows the quantum of these variations fall within the targets available.

Diagram 2



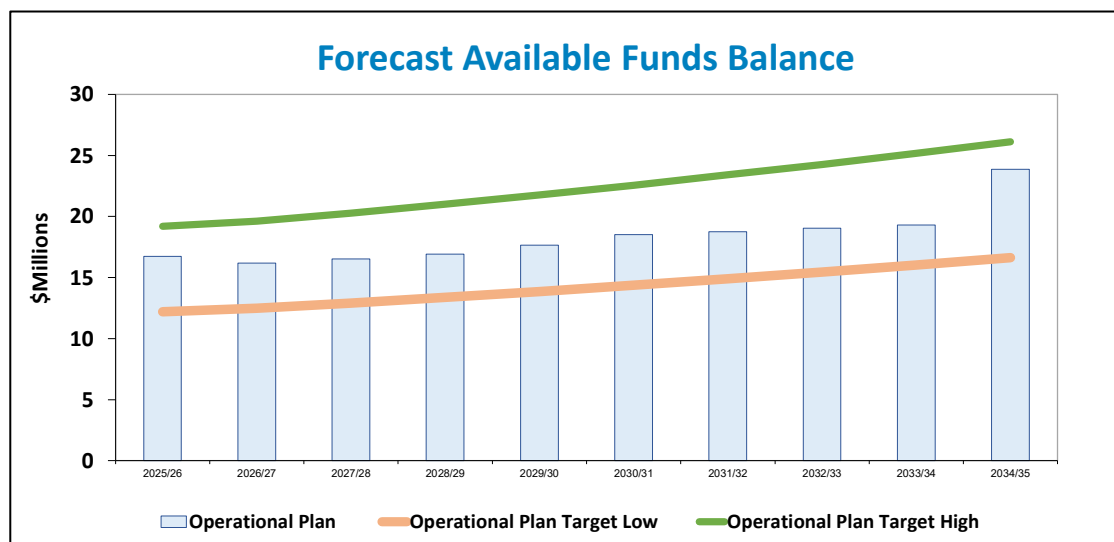
Available Funds

Available Funds are the uncommitted funds that Council has earned but not committed. These funds 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. The annual Total Funds result creates the annual positive or negative variation to this amount. Council's Financial Sustainability Policy has a target to achieve and maintain an Available Funds position between 3.5% and 5.5% of operational revenue [pre capital].

The long term financial projections that support the Resourcing Strategy 2025-2035 indicate that the target range for Available Funds is between \$12.3M and \$16.8M (lower range) and between \$19.4M and \$26.3M (upper range) over the life of the Long Term Financial Plan.

Forecasts indicate that Council would be able to remain within the target based on current estimates and assumptions.

Diagram 3



Asset Management Replacement Ratio

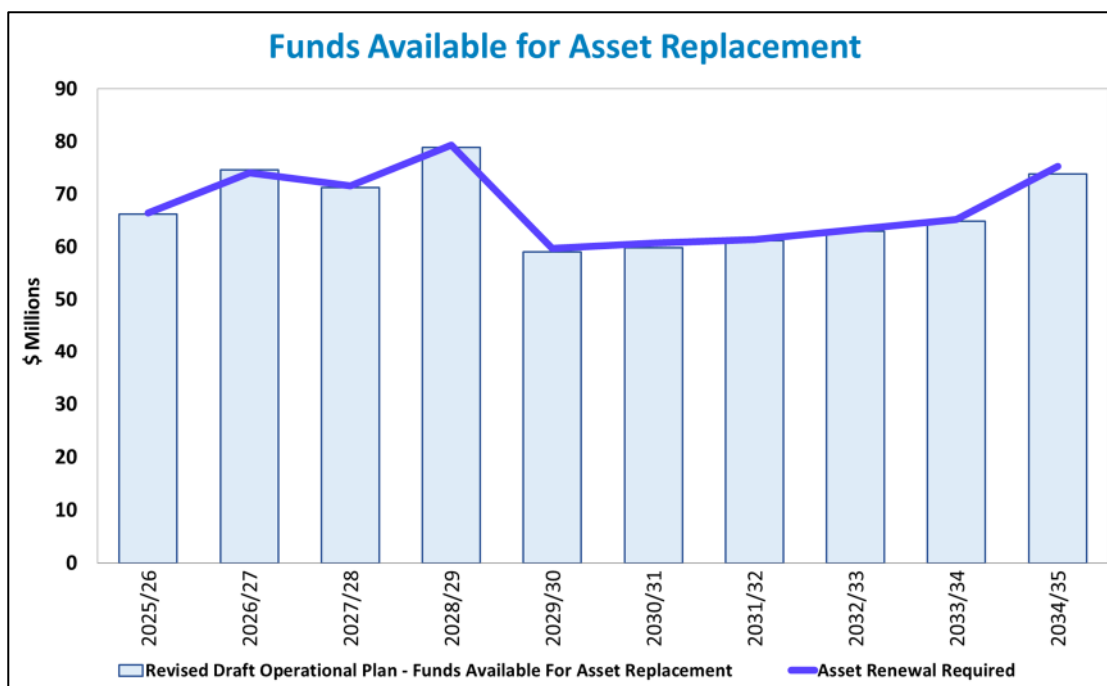
The Asset Management Replacement Ratio measures the estimated cost of required asset replacement over the period and indicates the level to which funds are available from operations to complete these works. Council's Financial Sustainability Policy prioritises the requirement to at least provide sufficient funds to replace assets as they fall due. The Asset Management Strategy and Plans are used to determine the amount required for asset replacement. So long as Council is producing sufficient revenue to cover its operating costs and have remaining funds available, that coupled with proceeds from asset sales and Restricted Assets can fund the required asset replacements, the ratio would be one to one. Should Council not meet this funding requirement, it would not be able to replace assets as required which would not meet the sustainability requirements.

Funds Available from Operations that are not required to be applied to asset replacement in the current year would be allocated to improve Available Funds to provide new, enhanced, or upgraded assets, or be restricted to meet future requirements.

The requirement for replacement of existing assets at agreed standards has been assessed through the Asset Management Strategy and Plans.

Diagram 4 shows the forecast Asset Management Replacement Ratio at 1:1 across the planning cycle.

Diagram 4



Long Term Asset Renewal Funding Ratio

While Council's medium term organisational sustainability is measured by the Asset Management Replacement Ratio, this measure does not include a longer term view that reflects the whole of life replacement cost of all Council assets. This longer term view is important to Council as we have a very large portfolio of assets that are very long lived and renewal requirements can vary significantly year to year and decade to decade. Some high value assets are now being estimated to have 300 year plus lives, meaning replacements requirements could be many years into the future.

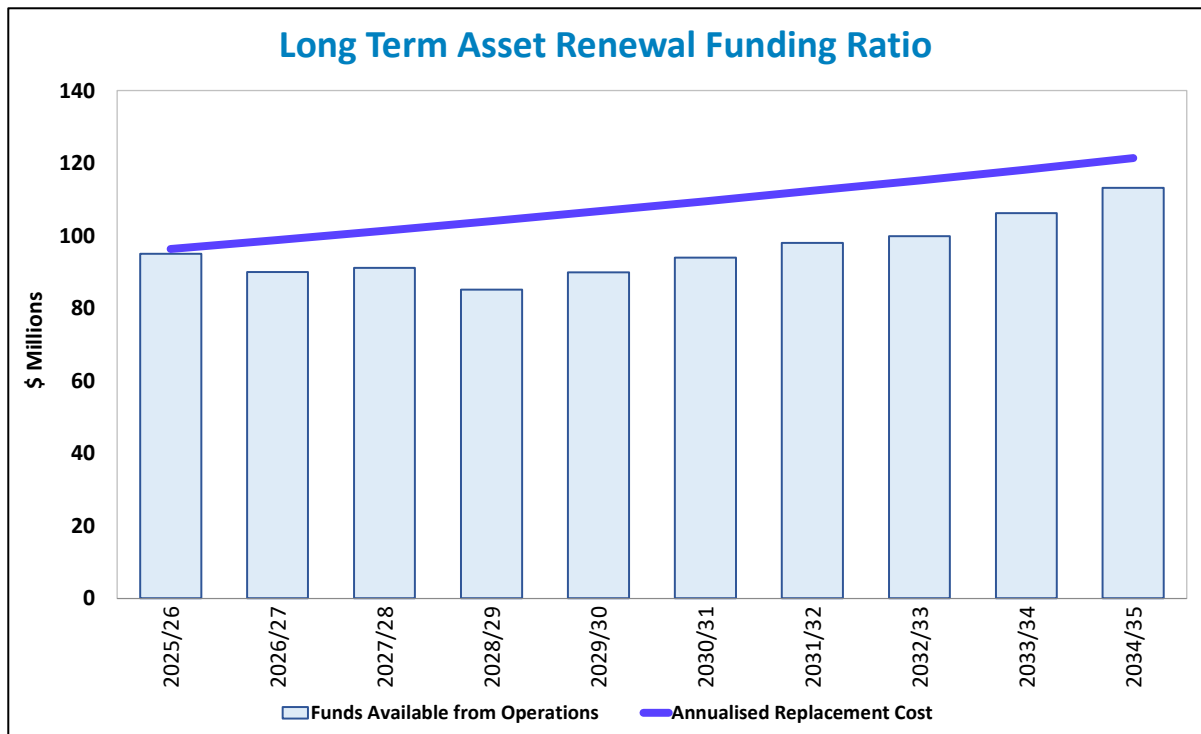
Council's Asset Management Strategy includes a measurement of the Long Term Asset Renewal Funding Ratio, which is a measure of the total renewal value of all existing assets divided by their estimated useful lives (ie, an annualised replacement cost) compared against Funds Available from Operations.

Diagram 5 shows the forecast Long Term Asset Renewal Ratio across the Long Term Financial Plan, which indicates that Council's current level of Operating income, grant revenue for existing assets and asset sales would not be sufficient to replace every asset over the life of the existing assets. Council recognises that over time it will need to continue to assess asset conditions and deterioration, review asset management techniques and costs, review service requirements, consider alternate technologies or service delivery methods and potentially consider alternate funding sources or revenue increases to address any future shortfall.

Council will take a longer term view to managing such gaps. The medium term measures that reflect capacity to replace assets over the 10 years will provide early warning of any periods that require variation allowing time for any change required to be made sustainably.

It is important to note that the variations shown in the graph are not intended to show individual year variations per se but rather show that as the annualised value of total assets are likely to increase at a rate higher than the Funds Available from Operations and that this long term indicator may experience an increased gap. It is also noted that the first year of the Plan has a higher Funds Available from Operations than the longer term trend.

Diagram 5



Long Term Financial Plan - Forecast

The objective of Council's Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP) is to provide Council's decision makers and the community with information that outlines the financial balance between aspirations of the Community Strategic Plan and Delivery Program and Council capacity. It also identifies future financial opportunities or challenges. The forecasts highlight the financial implications of Council's estimated funding available and proposed activities to which the funding will be applied.

Like all forecasts, this Financial Plan is based on a range of assumptions that are detailed throughout the document and, more particularly, in the assumptions section of this Plan.

As assumptions and realities change throughout the delivery period, these forecasts will be updated through quarterly and annual reviews to provide up to date information. Council's 10 year financial forecasts are reviewed on an ongoing basis so that information is made available continuously. Specific updates and reporting against the forecast are made on a quarterly basis in conjunction with Council's quarterly reviews.

Resourcing Allocations Proposed

The 10 year financial forecast includes a continuation of existing and, in some cases, of enhanced service and levels of service as outlined in the Delivery Program 2025-2029. Estimates for expenses and income in future years have been applied based on existing service levels unless a decision has been made, or a proposal is in place, to vary this level. In setting this Plan there are proposals included to provide increased service and assets used in providing services in several key service areas over a period of time.

The most substantial service enhancement in this Plan is through the construction of the Southern Suburbs and Helensburgh Library and Community Centres; the increased operations costs for which will be funded from rates growth. Proposals for improvements and enhancements are included in the Plan for the following areas:

Table 2

Service Enhancements

	2025/2026	2026/2027	2027/2028	2028/2029
	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast
	\$'000s	\$'000s	\$'000s	\$'000s
Enhanced Library & Community Services	824	841	850	868
Place Based City Presentation	278	285	293	300
Total Service Enhancements	1,102	1,126	1,142	1,168

Projects funded from Strategic Projects Restricted Asset

During this and prior planning cycles a range of capital and non-recurrent projects have also been included that will be funded from the Strategic Projects internally Restricted Asset. These funds have been restricted from prior year revenues that have resulted from improved operations or savings against budget. The following table shows the value of the Strategic Projects Restricted Asset to be applied to projects over the next four years. There is in some cases other funding applied to these projects.

Table 3

Funded from Strategic Projects Restricted Asset

	2025/2026 Budget \$'000s	2026/2027 Forecast \$'000s	2027/2028 Forecast \$'000s	2028/2029 Forecast \$'000s
Capital Projects				
Southern Suburbs Library & Community Centre	5,669	9,500	-	-
Helensburgh Library & Community Centre	-	2,500	500	-
Traffic Facilities	-	-	960	-
North Wollongong Beach, Seawall Renewal Stage 2	2,434	-	-	-
King George V Park Picnic Shelter	240	-	-	-
Footpaths - New	-	70	-	-
Mount Kembla Mountain Biking Amenities	20	500	-	-
Balgownie Mountain Biking Amenities	20	500	-	-
Balgownie Mountain Biking access Civil works	10	250	-	-
Kembla Heights Village Car Park, corner Harry Graham Drive	5	-	-	-
Total	8,398	13,320	1,460	-
Studies and Supporting Documents				
West Dapto Review WaterCycle Masterplan	75	-	-	-
Lake Illawarra Shared Path Masterplan	110	-	-	-
Mt Keira Summit Park Interpretation Design Guide	50	-	-	-
Botanic Gardens Design Investigation for Asset Improvement	146	60	-	-
Feasibility Study Synthetic Football Pitch in Northern Suburbs	47	-	-	-
Implement Keiraville Gwynneville Access & Movement Strategy	29	-	-	-
Draft Bulli Showground Masterplan - Feasibility Assessment and Community Consultation	124	-	-	-
Thirroul Village - Character and Heritage Study	-	-	-	152
Asset Management Planning	26	-	-	-
Social Infrastructure Planning Framework - Bong Bong Town Centre Library and Community Centre Feasibility	-	50	-	-
Accessible Car Parking and Bus Stops audit	22	-	-	-
Landscape development plan for West Dapto - for riparian corridors	12	-	-	-
Towradgi Creek Shared Path Feasibility Investigations	36	-	-	-
Total	678	110	-	152
Other Non-Recurrent Projects				
Wollongong Biennial Acquisitive Sculpture Award	-	140	-	140
Civic Christmas Carol Event Funding	57	-	-	-
Animal Care & Impounding Services Strategy	173	-	-	-
Open Street Event Support	150	150	150	-
Innovation App Competition	40	-	-	-
Relocation of Amy Monument	40	-	-	-
Safer Routes to Schools (Signs and Ligns)	100	-	-	-
Total	559	290	150	140
Annual Total	9,635	13,720	1,610	292
Cumulative Total	9,635	23,355	24,965	25,257

In addition to funds allocated to service and asset enhancements, Council retains funds as Internally Restricted Assets that it may apply through future variations to its plan and budget. There is a detailed listing, explanation and forecast movement in Restricted Assets provided in the assumptions section of this Plan.

One important restricted asset relating to Council's future decision making during the life of this Plan is the Strategic Projects – Uncommitted Restricted Asset which remains available to assist in advancing existing or additional projects, usually in progress but not sufficiently developed to include in the program.

Council's strategic planning process has identified unfunded issues and/or projects that require consideration of investment to respond to its Community Strategic Plan Goals, Strategies and Actions. These actions are in their early stages of development and will require research and investigation prior to consideration of funding and inclusion in a Delivery Program. Not all projects or works considered will necessarily lead to an action as it may be envisaged today. Council will continue to develop these and other issues within its Delivery Program and will further consider their introduction over time. The following provides an overview of issues currently at this stage of development:

- Disaster and Critical Incident Program
- Parking Strategy implications
- Community & Recreation facilities at West Dapto
- Grand Pacific Walk future stages
- Implications of Lake Illawarra
- Alternate waste technologies
- Further climate change measures
- Beaton Park Re-development
- Illawarra Sports and Entertainment Precinct
- Long Term Animal Impounding Operations
- Bellambi Foreshore
- Potential Property Development

Supporting Document Development Initiatives

The terminology 'Supporting Documents' is used at Wollongong City Council in reference to a range of documents that includes plans, strategies or studies that inform future direction and priorities. Council has many Supporting Document initiatives that have not yet been funded through the strategic planning process. The large volume of Supporting Documents provides clear, longer term intent and direction for Council in terms of what it would like to do and what it will endeavour to do with the resources that may be available. These Supporting Documents are important in planning future Council services and are used to identify and respond to opportunities for future external funding and/or an increase or redirection of own source funds available to Council.

The following table shows the Supporting Document development projects (and unallocated funding - Centralised Studies and Plans) included in the Long Term Financial Plan over the next four years.

Table 4

Supporting Documents - Planning Studies & Investigations				
	2025/2026	2026/2027	2027/2028	2028/2029
Service & Project	Budget	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast
	\$'000s	\$'000s	\$'000s	\$'000s
Corporate Strategy	276	517	245	477
Centralised Studies & Plans	276	517	245	387
Community Strategic Plan Review	-	-	-	90
Land Use Planning	372	-	-	152
West Dapto Review WaterCycle Masterplan	150	-	-	-
City Wide Local Environment Plan Review	29	-	-	-
Landscape development plan for West Dapto - for riparian corridors	13	-	-	-
Review Riparian Corridor Management Study & Policy	15	-	-	-
City Centre Surrounds Planning	80	-	-	-
Built Form Testing Development Control Plan Chapter B4				
Development in Business Zones	60	-	-	-
Thirroul Village - Character and Heritage Study	-	-	-	152
West Dapto Vision Implementation - Infrastructure and Development	25	-	-	-
Engagement, Communications and Events	60	-	-	-
Major Events Strategy	60	-	-	-
Floodplain Management and Stormwater Services	249	350	350	350
Floodplain Management Studies	120	350	350	350
Review of Hewitts Creek Flood Risk Management Study	89	-	-	-
Review of Brooks Creek Flood Risk Management Study	40	-	-	-
Environmental Services	214	-	-	-
Coastal Management Program for the Open Coast	136	-	-	-
Develop design guidelines for green roofs, green walls and facades	30	-	-	-
Assessment of Aboriginal Cultural Values & Assets	28	-	-	-
Coastal Wetland and Littoral Rainforest Mapping	20	-	-	-

Supporting Document Development Initiatives continued

Table 4 continued

Supporting Documents - Planning Studies & Investigations				
Service & Project	2025/2026 Budget \$'000s	2026/2027 Forecast \$'000s	2027/2028 Forecast \$'000s	2028/2029 Forecast \$'000s
Natural Area Management	74	26	27	28
Vegetation Management Plans for High Priority Natural Areas	32	26	27	28
Aboriginal cultural values in the Lake Illawarra Catchment	42	-	-	-
Transport Services	270	-	75	-
Accessible Car Parking and Bus Stops audit	22	-	-	-
City Centre Parking Surveys	73	-	75	-
Lake Illawarra Shared Path Masterplan	110	-	-	-
Towradgi Creek Shared Path Feasibility Investigations	36	-	-	-
Implement Keiraville Gwynneville Access & Movement Strategy	29	-	-	-
Community Facilities	-	50	60	-
Social Infrastructure Plan Framework - Bong Bong Town Centre Library and Community Centre Feasibility	-	50	-	-
City Centre Community Centre Vision and Options	-	-	60	-
Arts and Culture	52	-	150	-
West Dapto Vision Implementation - Cultural Strategy & Plan	52	-	-	-
Regional Museum Vision and Options	-	-	150	-
Aquatic Services	100	-	-	-
Beach Services and Surf Sports Strategy	60	-	-	-
Aquatics and Indoor Sport Strategy	40	-	-	-
Botanic Garden and Annexes	196	60	-	-
Mt Keira Summit Park Interpretation Design Guide	50	-	-	-
Botanic Gardens Design Investigation for Asset Improvement	146	60	-	-
Leisure Services	80	-	-	-
Beaton Park Re-development Feasibility	80	-	-	-
Parks and Sportsfields	416	32	108	-
Bellambi Foreshore Precinct Plan	143	-	-	-
Feasibility Study Synthetic Football Pitch in Planning Area	47	-	-	-
Draft Bulli Showground Masterplan - Feasibility Assessment and Community Consultation	124	-	-	-
MacCabe Park Masterplan + Feasibility Investigations	-	32	108	-
Lang Park Masterplan	52	-	-	-
Play Strategy	50	-	-	-
Financial Services	-	372	-	-
Supporting Docs - Projects in Progress	-	372	-	-
Governance and Administration	26	-	-	-
Asset Management Planning	26	-	-	-
Total Expenditure *	2,386	1,407	1,015	1,007
*Expenditure shown above is for full project cost. A number of projects are supported from external grant funds or internal restrictions				

Detailed Financials

Ten year detailed financial reports provided are based on the assumptions and indices outlined through this report and support the deliverables outlined in the Delivery Program and Resourcing Strategy.

These reports include:

- Income Statement
- Funding and Capital Budget Statement
- Statement of Financial Position
- Cash Flow Statement



Image: Children enjoying Nature Shake Event at Wollongong Botanic Garden.

Table 5

WOLLONGONG CITY COUNCIL

10 Year Financials

	2025/2026 Budget \$'000	2026/2027 Forecast \$'000	2027/2028 Forecast \$'000	2028/2029 Forecast \$'000	2029/2030 Forecast \$'000	2030/2031 Forecast \$'000	2031/2032 Forecast \$'000	2032/2033 Forecast \$'000	2033/2034 Forecast \$'000	2034/2035 Forecast \$'000
INCOME STATEMENT										
Income From Continuing Operations										
<i>Revenue:</i>										
Rates and Annual Charges	258,973	266,983	277,177	287,864	298,898	310,318	322,202	334,402	348,172	362,113
User Charges and Fees	40,870	40,859	41,861	43,362	44,599	45,873	47,191	48,544	49,950	51,589
Interest and Investment Revenues	6,240	6,440	6,872	6,778	6,950	7,207	7,992	8,743	9,024	9,054
Other Revenues	6,335	6,374	6,598	6,997	7,219	7,451	7,684	7,896	8,109	8,346
Other Income	7,553	7,877	8,136	8,383	8,578	8,834	9,098	9,370	9,626	9,914
Grants and Contributions - Operating	28,960	28,371	28,165	28,943	29,738	30,552	31,394	32,251	33,142	34,060
Grants & Contributions provided for Capital Purposes - New Assets	41,136	56,578	50,130	47,573	42,857	44,227	43,908	49,284	52,554	19,392
Grants & Contributions provided for Capital Purposes - Existing Assets	29,080	19,348	5,500	2,300	2,241	2,241	2,241	2,241	2,241	2,241
Total Income From Continuing Operations	419,147	432,829	424,439	432,201	441,081	456,704	471,710	492,731	512,818	496,709
Expenses From Continuing Operations										
Employee Costs	169,238	174,485	179,337	184,743	190,331	196,151	202,125	209,332	215,421	220,168
Borrowing Costs	1,028	1,036	1,069	1,111	1,164	1,230	1,300	1,366	1,434	1,512
Materials and Contracts	103,104	103,103	107,064	115,156	117,875	121,231	125,575	131,181	135,610	140,410
Other Expenses	26,217	24,518	24,642	25,406	26,232	27,083	27,962	28,875	29,813	30,655
Depreciation, Amortisation + Impairment	88,185	91,754	95,424	99,108	103,345	107,166	111,041	116,341	122,030	125,937
Internal Charges (labour)	(23,041)	(23,794)	(24,511)	(25,234)	(25,992)	(26,450)	(27,644)	(28,518)	(29,369)	(30,210)
Internal Charges (not labour)	(2,497)	(2,481)	(2,570)	(2,614)	(2,658)	(2,704)	(2,750)	(2,798)	(2,847)	(3,072)
Total Expenses From Continuing Operations	362,235	368,620	380,453	397,677	410,297	423,707	437,609	455,779	472,092	485,401
Operating Result from Continuing Operations	56,912	64,210	43,986	34,524	30,784	32,997	34,101	36,952	40,726	11,309
Operating Result [pre capital]	(13,304)	(11,716)	(11,645)	(15,349)	(14,315)	(13,471)	(12,048)	(14,573)	(14,069)	(10,324)

Table 6

WOLLONGONG CITY COUNCIL

10 Year Financials

	2025/2026 Budget \$'000	2026/2027 Forecast \$'000	2027/2028 Forecast \$'000	2028/2029 Forecast \$'000	2029/2030 Forecast \$'000	2030/2031 Forecast \$'000	2031/2032 Forecast \$'000	2032/2033 Forecast \$'000	2033/2034 Forecast \$'000	2034/2035 Forecast \$'000
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FUNDING STATEMENT

Surplus (Deficit) [Net Operating Result for the Year]	56,912	64,210	43,986	34,524	30,784	32,997	34,101	36,952	40,726	11,309
Add back :										
- Non-cash Operating Transactions	108,577	112,715	116,992	121,296	126,242	130,807	135,453	141,551	148,045	152,796
- Restricted cash used for operations	11,963	7,599	6,714	6,833	6,317	6,497	6,555	6,839	6,855	6,457
- Income transferred to Restricted Assets - Operating	(6,445)	(5,676)	(5,237)	(4,065)	(4,227)	(5,046)	(5,860)	(6,508)	(5,983)	(6,377)
- Income transferred to Restricted Assets - New Assets	(50,087)	(63,397)	(57,625)	(55,157)	(50,470)	(51,955)	(52,280)	(58,266)	(61,978)	(28,908)
- Payment of Right of Use Leases	(514)	(170)	(141)	(145)	(5)	(5)	(5)	(5)	(5)	(5)
- Payment of Accrued Leave Entitlements	(16,354)	(16,886)	(17,434)	(18,000)	(18,584)	(19,187)	(19,810)	(20,453)	(21,117)	(21,802)
Borrowings repaid	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Funds Available from Operations	104,052	98,396	87,255	85,286	90,057	94,109	98,155	100,110	106,544	113,469
Income transferred to Restricted Assets - Existing Assets	(9,080)	(8,135)	(8,655)	(9,063)	(9,893)	(10,170)	(10,506)	(10,938)	(12,636)	(13,020)
Restricted assets used for Asset Replacement	5,610	6,990	12,185	23,970	15,901	9,603	9,542	460	176	20,189
Proceeds from sale of assets	1,399	3,731	3,765	1,784	1,803	1,823	1,843	1,864	1,890	1,918
Available Funds Applied to New, Upgraded & Expanded Assets	(35,770)	(26,384)	(23,297)	(23,103)	(38,855)	(35,561)	(37,887)	(28,507)	(31,106)	(48,747)
Funds Available for Asset Replacement	66,211	74,598	71,253	78,874	59,013	59,804	61,146	62,988	64,869	73,808

CAPITAL BUDGET

Assets Acquired - Replacement	(66,437)	(74,049)	(71,583)	(79,270)	(59,746)	(60,666)	(61,387)	(63,264)	(65,149)	(75,240)
Assets Acquired - New, Upgraded & Expanded Assets	(72,728)	(75,002)	(52,242)	(45,556)	(82,742)	(81,648)	(91,163)	(71,246)	(76,985)	(84,241)
Payment from Tip Rehabilitation Provision	(250)	(4,940)	(11,160)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Contributed Assets	(5,871)	(14,585)	(14,129)	(22,467)	(16,561)	(18,921)	(12,994)	(16,654)	(20,903)	(15,892)
Funded From :-										
- Funds Available for Asset Replacement	66,211	74,598	71,253	78,874	59,013	59,804	61,146	62,988	64,869	73,808
- Available Funds Applied to New, Upgraded & Expanded Assets	35,770	26,384	23,297	23,103	38,855	35,561	37,887	28,507	31,106	48,747
- Internally Restricted Cash	8,898	13,820	8,760	400	6,183	6,305	6,428	6,554	6,683	1,678
- Borrowings	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
- Grants for New Assets	6,017	12,906	17,754	0	(0)	(0)	(0)	(0)	(0)	(0)
- Developer Contributions (previously S.94)	22,345	25,736	14,252	22,845	39,254	41,591	47,413	36,822	39,840	36,762
- Other Externally Restricted Cash	400	0	0	0	465	465	465	465	465	465
- Other Capital Contributions	5,871	14,585	14,129	22,467	16,013	18,373	12,445	16,105	20,354	15,344
TOTAL FUNDS SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)	226	(549)	330	396	733	863	241	277	280	1,431

Table 7

WOLLONGONG CITY COUNCIL

10 Year Financials

	2025/2026 Budget \$'000	2026/2027 Forecast \$'000	2027/2028 Forecast \$'000	2028/2029 Forecast \$'000	2029/2030 Forecast \$'000	2030/2031 Forecast \$'000	2031/2032 Forecast \$'000	2032/2033 Forecast \$'000	2033/2034 Forecast \$'000	2034/2035 Forecast \$'000
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION										
CURRENT ASSETS										
Cash and cash equivalents	188,501	183,529	183,257	176,988	160,389	146,987	134,422	142,214	147,903	121,992
Investments	20,945	20,392	20,362	19,665	17,821	16,332	14,936	15,802	16,434	13,555
Receivables	32,693	33,761	33,106	33,712	34,404	35,623	36,793	38,433	40,000	38,743
Inventories	6,523	6,523	6,523	6,523	6,523	6,523	6,523	6,523	6,523	6,523
Contract assets	10,770	10,770	10,770	10,770	10,770	10,770	10,770	10,770	10,770	10,770
Assets held for sale (previously non-current)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	3,680	3,735	3,810	3,886	3,964	4,043	4,124	4,206	4,291	4,376
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	263,112	258,711	257,828	251,545	233,872	220,278	207,569	217,949	225,920	195,960
NON-CURRENT ASSETS										
Investment property	5,509	5,720	5,935	6,155	6,379	6,608	6,842	7,081	7,320	7,564
Intangible assets	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Right of use assets	1,332	1,332	1,332	1,332	1,332	1,332	1,332	1,332	1,332	1,332
Infrastructure, property, plant and equipment	4,081,594	4,147,695	4,185,436	4,207,868	4,245,867	4,288,512	4,331,629	4,364,118	4,403,058	4,430,387
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	4,088,435	4,154,747	4,192,703	4,215,355	4,253,579	4,296,452	4,339,803	4,372,532	4,411,710	4,439,283
TOTAL ASSETS	4,351,547	4,413,458	4,450,532	4,466,899	4,487,451	4,516,731	4,547,372	4,590,480	4,637,630	4,635,243
CURRENT LIABILITIES										
Payables	32,601	33,176	34,241	35,791	36,927	38,134	39,385	41,020	42,488	43,686
Income received in advance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Provisions < 12 Months	19,327	19,617	20,009	20,409	20,818	21,234	21,659	22,092	22,534	22,984
Provisions > 12 Months	43,520	44,173	45,057	45,958	46,877	47,814	48,771	49,746	50,741	51,756
Contract liabilities	12,543	12,543	12,543	12,543	12,543	12,543	12,543	12,543	12,543	12,543
Interest bearing liabilities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lease liabilities	170	141	145	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	108,162	109,650	111,995	114,706	117,169	119,730	122,362	125,406	128,311	130,975
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES										
Interest bearing liabilities	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Lease liabilities	406	279	144	145	141	137	133	128	123	118
Provisions	39,813	36,152	27,031	6,162	(6,529)	(12,803)	(18,890)	(15,774)	(12,250)	(28,604)
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES	40,221	36,433	27,177	6,309	(6,387)	(12,665)	(18,756)	(15,644)	(12,125)	(28,485)
TOTAL LIABILITIES	148,382	146,084	139,172	121,014	110,782	107,065	103,606	109,762	116,186	102,490
NET ASSETS	4,203,164	4,267,374	4,311,360	4,345,885	4,376,668	4,409,665	4,443,766	4,480,718	4,521,444	4,532,753
EQUITY										
Accumulated surplus	(1,496,974)	(1,558,313)	(1,624,801)	(1,677,016)	(1,731,083)	(1,777,529)	(1,824,728)	(1,850,361)	(1,881,089)	(1,954,404)
Surplus (Deficit) for period	(56,912)	(64,210)	(43,986)	(34,524)	(30,784)	(32,997)	(34,101)	(36,952)	(40,726)	(11,309)
Revaluation reserves	(2,466,361)	(2,466,361)	(2,466,361)	(2,466,361)	(2,466,361)	(2,466,361)	(2,466,361)	(2,466,361)	(2,466,361)	(2,466,361)
Restricted assets	(182,918)	(178,491)	(176,213)	(167,983)	(148,441)	(132,779)	(118,577)	(127,045)	(133,268)	(100,679)
TOTAL EQUITY	(4,203,165)	(4,267,375)	(4,311,361)	(4,345,885)	(4,376,669)	(4,409,666)	(4,443,767)	(4,480,718)	(4,521,444)	(4,532,753)

Table 8

WOLLONGONG CITY COUNCIL

10 Year Financials

	2025/2026 Budget \$'000	2026/2027 Forecast \$'000	2027/2028 Forecast \$'000	2028/2029 Forecast \$'000	2029/2030 Forecast \$'000	2030/2031 Forecast \$'000	2031/2032 Forecast \$'000	2032/2033 Forecast \$'000	2033/2034 Forecast \$'000	2034/2035 LTM Budget \$'000
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STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES

Receipts

Rates and annual charges	254,195	265,916	277,831	287,259	298,205	309,099	321,032	332,762	346,605	363,370
User charges and fees	40,870	40,859	41,861	43,362	44,599	45,873	47,191	48,544	49,950	51,589
Investment and interest revenue received	6,240	6,440	6,872	6,778	6,950	7,207	7,992	8,743	9,024	9,054
Grants and contributions	93,306	89,712	69,666	56,349	58,275	58,099	64,549	67,122	67,034	39,800
Other operating receipts	13,633	13,985	14,445	15,084	15,495	15,977	16,467	16,945	17,412	17,931

Payments

Employee benefits and on-costs	(142,978)	(147,437)	(151,541)	(156,211)	(160,964)	(166,245)	(170,943)	(177,192)	(182,344)	(186,166)
Materials and contracts	(100,354)	(100,047)	(103,428)	(110,992)	(114,081)	(117,321)	(121,574)	(126,738)	(131,295)	(136,141)
Borrowing costs	(33)	(19)	(14)	(7)	(3)	(3)	(3)	(3)	(4)	(4)
Other	(26,217)	(24,518)	(24,642)	(25,406)	(26,232)	(27,083)	(27,962)	(28,875)	(29,813)	(30,655)
Other operating payments	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

NET CASH PROVIDED BY (OR USED IN) OPERATING ACTIVITIES

	138,662	144,892	131,050	116,216	122,245	125,604	136,750	141,309	146,568	128,778
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CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES

Receipts

Sale of Investment securities	(16)	552	30	697	1,844	1,489	1,396	(866)	(632)	2,879
Sale of infrastructure, property, plant and equipment	1,399	3,731	3,765	1,784	1,803	1,823	1,843	1,864	1,890	1,918

Payments

Purchase of infrastructure, property, plant and equipment	(139,415)	(153,991)	(134,985)	(124,826)	(142,488)	(142,314)	(152,550)	(134,511)	(142,134)	(159,480)
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NET CASH PROVIDED BY (OR USED IN) INVESTING ACTIVITIES

	(138,033)	(149,708)	(131,190)	(122,346)	(138,840)	(139,002)	(149,310)	(133,512)	(140,875)	(154,683)
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CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES

Receipts

Proceeds from borrowings and advances	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
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Payments

Repayments of borrowings and advances	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Repayment of lease finance liabilities	(485)	(155)	(132)	(139)	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	(5)	(5)

NET CASH PROVIDED BY (OR USED IN) FINANCING ACTIVITIES

	(485)	(155)	(132)	(139)	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	(5)	(5)
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NET INCREASE (DECREASE) IN CASH & CASH EQUIVALENTS HELD

	145	(4,971)	(272)	(6,269)	(16,599)	(13,402)	(12,565)	7,792	5,688	(25,911)
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Cash and cash equivalents - beginning of period	188,356	188,501	183,529	183,257	176,988	160,389	146,987	134,422	142,214	147,903
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CASH & CASH EQUIVALENTS AT EOY	188,501	183,529	183,257	176,988	160,389	146,987	134,422	142,214	147,903	121,992
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PLUS other investment securities	20,945	20,392	20,362	19,665	17,821	16,332	14,936	15,802	16,434	13,555
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TOTAL CASH & INVESTMENTS	209,445	203,922	203,619	196,653	178,210	163,319	149,358	158,016	164,336	135,547
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Table 9

WOLLONGONG CITY COUNCIL

10 Year Financials

	2025/2026 Budget \$'000	2026/2027 Forecast \$'000	2027/2028 Forecast \$'000	2028/2029 Forecast \$'000	2029/2030 Forecast \$'000	2030/2031 Forecast \$'000	2031/2032 Forecast \$'000	2032/2033 Forecast \$'000	2033/2034 Forecast \$'000	2034/2035 Forecast \$'000
GOAL 1 - We are a Sustainable and Climate Resilient City										
Botanic Garden and Annexes	(4,169)	(4,184)	(4,245)	(4,380)	(4,499)	(4,631)	(4,767)	(4,908)	(5,052)	(5,198)
Environmental Services	(2,577)	(2,456)	(2,530)	(2,607)	(2,685)	(2,767)	(2,849)	(2,961)	(3,022)	(3,108)
Floodplain Management and Stormwater Services	(11,600)	(11,969)	(12,373)	(12,732)	(13,139)	(13,560)	(14,006)	(14,505)	(14,666)	(15,138)
Natural Area Management	(4,523)	(4,421)	(4,461)	(4,560)	(4,664)	(4,774)	(4,917)	(5,020)	(5,115)	(5,246)
Waste Management	6,047	2,124	2,038	1,939	1,810	1,663	1,534	1,390	1,274	1,837
GOAL 2 - We have Well Planned, Connected, and Liveable Places										
Development Assessment and Certification	(6,017)	(6,238)	(6,444)	(6,664)	(6,878)	(7,101)	(7,330)	(7,553)	(7,796)	(8,034)
Emergency Management	(7,151)	(7,405)	(7,664)	(7,937)	(8,211)	(8,499)	(8,797)	(9,105)	(9,424)	(9,755)
Land Use Planning	(4,068)	(4,248)	(4,973)	(7,503)	(8,392)	(8,870)	(9,418)	(10,126)	(12,066)	(12,783)
Memorial Gardens and Cemeteries	(556)	(568)	(582)	(596)	(588)	(602)	(616)	(630)	(645)	(657)
Property Services	2,237	2,403	2,468	2,845	2,890	2,982	3,078	3,176	3,273	3,379
Regulatory Control	(4,005)	(3,977)	(4,045)	(4,173)	(4,301)	(4,435)	(4,572)	(4,742)	(4,891)	(5,037)
Transport Services	(48,024)	(49,207)	(50,415)	(51,971)	(53,736)	(55,706)	(56,994)	(58,958)	(60,863)	(62,633)
GOAL 3 - We Foster a Diverse Economy, and We Value Innovation, Culture, and Creativity										
City Centre Management	(2,364)	(2,313)	(2,551)	(2,599)	(2,210)	(2,269)	(2,332)	(2,421)	(2,485)	(2,549)
Arts and Culture	(8,625)	(8,701)	(8,941)	(9,212)	(9,271)	(9,665)	(9,686)	(10,099)	(10,224)	(10,515)
Engagement, Communications and Events	(4,564)	(4,387)	(4,447)	(4,435)	(4,573)	(4,710)	(4,875)	(5,015)	(5,170)	(5,310)
Economic Development	(2,899)	(2,929)	(3,009)	(3,090)	(3,174)	(3,258)	(3,346)	(3,437)	(3,530)	(3,636)
Tourist Parks	1,376	1,401	1,436	1,472	1,510	1,549	1,588	1,628	1,669	1,714
GOAL 4 - We have a Healthy, Respectful, and Inclusive Community										
Aged and Disability Services	(8)	(8)	0	0	0	0	0	0	52	(0)
Aquatic Services	(16,931)	(17,356)	(17,840)	(18,386)	(18,853)	(19,384)	(19,929)	(20,484)	(21,195)	(21,651)
Community Facilities	(5,731)	(5,950)	(6,080)	(6,234)	(6,483)	(6,668)	(6,719)	(6,912)	(7,136)	(7,338)
Community Programs	(4,957)	(2,131)	(2,196)	(2,263)	(2,331)	(2,400)	(2,473)	(2,547)	(2,623)	(2,699)
Corporate Strategy	(1,842)	(2,149)	(1,799)	(2,079)	(2,221)	(2,285)	(2,350)	(2,418)	(2,439)	(2,532)
Integrated Customer Service	(3,623)	(3,742)	(3,857)	(3,975)	(4,095)	(4,219)	(4,347)	(4,478)	(4,613)	(4,748)
Leisure Services	(1,534)	(1,509)	(1,552)	(1,606)	(1,642)	(1,689)	(1,737)	(1,787)	(1,838)	(1,888)
Libraries	(12,041)	(12,575)	(13,023)	(13,371)	(13,728)	(14,116)	(14,497)	(14,927)	(15,332)	(15,280)
Parks and Sportsfields	(27,178)	(27,364)	(28,039)	(28,665)	(29,307)	(29,959)	(31,470)	(32,188)	(32,899)	(33,600)
Public Health and Safety	(885)	(916)	(944)	(974)	(1,003)	(1,034)	(1,065)	(1,097)	(1,130)	(1,163)
Youth Services	(1,536)	(1,586)	(1,633)	(1,686)	(1,729)	(1,784)	(1,838)	(1,892)	(1,949)	(2,005)
Support Services										
Employee Services	(9,889)	(10,002)	(10,158)	(10,414)	(10,675)	(11,077)	(11,387)	(11,781)	(12,105)	(12,455)
Financial Services	220,111	227,657	234,614	241,418	249,210	258,955	267,886	276,800	286,110	297,589
Governance and Administration	(14,406)	(13,888)	(14,197)	(15,615)	(14,858)	(15,170)	(15,522)	(17,000)	(16,273)	(16,600)
Infrastructure Strategy & Support	(19,476)	(20,840)	(21,666)	(22,292)	(23,223)	(24,322)	(24,386)	(26,240)	(27,227)	(28,271)
Information Management & Technology	(11,968)	(12,357)	(12,616)	(13,088)	(13,359)	(13,777)	(14,024)	(14,457)	(14,862)	(15,148)
Internal Charges Service	71	73	79	86	93	108	117	121	124	131
Operating Result [pre capital]	(13,304)	(11,716)	(11,645)	(15,349)	(14,315)	(13,471)	(12,048)	(14,573)	(14,069)	(10,324)

Long Term Financial Plan Assumptions and Indices

Service Levels

The financial forecast includes revenue and expense estimates for the service levels outlined in the Delivery Program 2025-2029 with the detail of services provided outlined in the Service Plans. The estimates for expenses and income in future years have been applied based on existing service levels unless a decision has been made, or a plan is in place, to vary this level. Changes to existing services or levels of service progressed through the planning process are incorporated into forward estimates as deployment delivery strategies are confirmed. Council considers the allocation of resources to the improvement or enhancement of services based on community demand or to restraining the cost of Council services to its community. The Long Term Financial Plan includes the recurrent enhancement of service delivery in some areas that have been outlined earlier in this document.

Indexation

The financial forecasts supporting the Long Term Financial Plan are comprised of both recurrent and non-recurrent income and expenditure. The non-recurrent items have specified values and timing of delivery. Recurrent items may be subject to the application of indices or may be set based on known commitments for expenditure, such as loan repayments or may be adjusted for volume impacts or future pricing changes.

The following table provides a summary of the indices that support the Long Term Financial Plan. These indices were derived from publications, including long term economic projections published by various banks and also NSW Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) recommendations for various utilities and rates pegging. Council will review its indices at least annually and analyse the impacts of these changes. Significant changes will be addressed as they become known.

Table 10

Indices			
	2025/2026 Budget	2026/2027 Forecast	2027/2028+ Forecast
Rate Increase	4.70%	3.00%	3.00%
Rate Increase - supplementary rate growth		0.40%	0.40%
Rate Increase - IPART population growth gap		0.30%	0.30%
Fees and Charges	4.70%	3.00%	3.00%
Interest Rate (90 day bill rate)	4.00%	4.00%	4.00%
Labour	3.75%	3.25%	3.00%
Superannuation Guarantee			
CPI General Increase	3.00%**	2.60%	2.60%
Utilities			
- Electricity	3.60%	3.60%	3.60%
- Street Lighting	3.60%	3.60%	3.60%
- Other Utilities	3.60%	3.60%	3.60%

** The annual CPI index has been applied to budget but not applied to individual Service budgets. It is proposed that budget savings be applied, and the estimated CPI increase be held for allocation or savings.

Rates

For the financial year 2025-2026, rate revenue projections are indexed by 4.7% in line with the IPART approved rate increase.

Rate increases in NSW have been determined by the State Government since 1977 through an approach known as 'rate pegging'. In 2011, the responsibility for determining the annual rate pegging increase was delegated to IPART. Councils are advised of the permissible increase annually.

The rate peg is composed of an increase for general costs and population growth. The general costs increase is calculated based on a weighted average of employee costs, asset costs and other costs as represented by forecasts for CPI, Local Government (State) Award plus Superannuation Guarantee and CPI plus a PPI premium. The rates forecast applies a similar methodology using the equivalent indices in the above table.

The rates forecasts include an assumption of increased rate income due to growth of 0.7%. This assumption relates to the existing city base for more minor subdivisions, infill and strata development and excludes West Dapto. This is based on historical trends and future expectations inclusive of a 0.3% population growth estimated to be provided through the IPART Rate Peg.

Additional rate revenue has also been built into the forecasts for expected development at West Dapto. These estimates have been aligned to a modelled staging of the release area. Growth in West Dapto will require significant new services supported by a substantial level of new infrastructure. The cost of services in this area is intended to be funded from the additional rate revenue as properties are developed. Council has decided to 'ring fence' net revenues from West Dapto so it may be used in supporting infrastructure development and providing these services into the future.

Fees & Charges

Fees & Charges have generally been indexed in line with the general cost component of the rates increase or CPI where these are of a statutory nature.

Interest on Investment

Council's anticipated cash holdings are drawn from the forecast revenues and expenditures and anticipated internal and external restricted cash balances and will fluctuate over the life of the Long Term Financial Plan. Council is required to restrict any interest attributed to developer contributions, domestic waste management and some grants.

Investment returns are based on anticipated cash holdings and forecast 90 day bill rates with an additional margin to reflect current investment strategies.

A baseline return on investments has been included in the Long Term Financial Plan. Any additional returns above the baseline will be treated as short term capacity within the Strategic Planning process and be allocated on a non-recurrent basis in accordance with the Financial Sustainability Policy.

Grants and Contributions

Grants and contributions provide a significant source of revenue for Council. These can be of a capital or operational nature and may be provided for general or specific purposes.

Operational Grants

Operational grant income for 2025-2026 is estimated at \$16.2M and represents approximately 4.6% of operational revenue. The major general purpose or untied grant is the Financial Assistance Grant.

The Financial Assistance Grant is funded by the Federal Government and distributed to councils through the States and although it is comprised of two components, general purpose and roads component, it is an unconditional grant. Distribution criteria include population changes, changes in standard costs, disability measures, the lengths of local roads and bridges and changes in property values.

The current formula for distribution of the Financial Assistance Grant has been changing and is expected to change again moving forward. The change is based on policy to better advantage councils in the greatest relative need in NSW. The impact of this change is that Wollongong would not experience the expected real growth in its funding and may experience an actual decrease in funding over time. The Grants Commission is not able to forecast future grants although have advised their direction and its potential negative impact on Wollongong City Council.

While a decision has not been made on a change to the allocation methodology that would allow reductions in future grants, it is considered prudent to budget for zero increases for the general purpose component for at least three years of this Plan while the methodology and its impacts are better determined.

Operational grant forecasts include annual funding from Federal and State sources for social support programs. Council has been delivering these services to the community for over 20 years and, in the last five years, those services have been operating at cost neutral to Council. The Federal Government has commenced a reform of Aged and Disability Services impacting how these services may be delivered in the future and what Council's role may be. The program for Social Support Services is currently funded until June 2027. Council's long term financial projections include the continuation of the Social Support Services until 30 June 2027.

It should be noted the current service model recovers all operational costs associated with this service delivery from external funding including accommodation costs, administrative support, use of IT facilities, etc. In the event Council no longer provides this service, there may be a negative impact if the operational costs attributed to this cannot be recovered from other sources or be removed.

Capital Grants and Contributions

The Long Term Financial Plan also includes an estimate for unconfirmed capital grants and contributions that are expected to be received in future years. This capital income comes mainly from developer contributions or grants from other tiers of government. Grant income is tied to specific works while developer contributions are related to individual Contribution Plans and are based on historical receipts for city wide and estimated land lot production and release for West Dapto. Any changes in the quantum or timing in the availability of these grants and contributions will have a direct impact on the Infrastructure Delivery Program. Impacts may include changes in timing of projects pending as alternate sources of funding or substitution of Council funding which may result in delays in non-funded projects. Projects heavily reliant on external funding include West Dapto.

Employee Costs

Operational Employee Costs represent 47.0% of Council's operating expenses and include the payment of salary and wages, overtime, casual labour, labour on costs such as annual leave, superannuation, workers' compensation, long service leave, associated costs such as training, protective clothing and fringe benefits tax. The Long Term Financial Plan projections are based on the position complement required to deliver current service levels. Additional labour costs related to specific non-recurrent projects (where identified) are also included. Most staff are employed under a negotiated Enterprise Agreement that is subject to renewal every three years, with the next renewal period being 1 July 2027.

The cost of employees working on capital projects is allocated to specific projects as work is undertaken. These costs are reflected in the Income Statement under the heading of Employee Costs and are offset by an estimate of the annual employee allocation expected to be made to capital works reflected as Internal Charges (labour) in the Income Statement. This includes design, survey, project management and supervision and construction staff.

Labour costs have been indexed by the labour cost index while associated costs have generally been indexed by CPI. The labour cost index reflects expected overall increases in labour costs and is based on several factors including the Local Government (State) Award, the current employee Enterprise Agreement, information from external forecasting bodies and staff movements. Any material deviation from this assumption will have a significant impact on forecasts due to the overall quantum of this expense category.

Superannuation expenditure forecasts are determined by fund membership and expected wage increases. Most Council employees belong either to a defined benefits scheme, which ceased taking new members in 1991 or an accumulation scheme. Defined benefits scheme expenses are tied to employee contributions while the accumulation scheme contributions are calculated at the current Superannuation Guarantee Levy. Employee cost forecasts include the impact of an increase to the Superannuation Guarantee levy which commenced in 2021-2022 with a series of annual increases of 0.5% bringing the total levy to 12% by July 2025.

Borrowings

Loan borrowings are based on an indicative 10 year Treasury bond rate plus 1.5% margin for benchmarking purposes only. When specific loans are required, they are sourced through a competitive process with financial institutions to ensure best possible rates. Details of specific borrowing costs are as follows:

- Waste Facility Remediation

Although not a loan or debt in the ordinary sense, Council is required under its accounting standards to recognise the value of its waste facilities inclusive of remediation works required. The anticipated cost of the remediation is added to the value of the waste facility asset and also held as a provision (liability) against the asset. Both sides of this transaction are held at Net Present Value (NPV). As the NPV increases over time, the increase in provision is transacted through the Income and Expense Statement as borrowing costs.

Council has not forecast any external borrowing over the period, although may review that as future projects and opportunities are considered. Council may use internal borrowings to complete some Waste Management works that may require funds in excess of the Internal Waste Restricted Asset. These funds would be repaid as required by the Financial Sustainability Policy from future Waste operations.

Utility Cost

Projected increases for utility costs are generally based on IPART publications where applicable, other than for electricity which also includes recognition of specific negotiated contracts in place for street lighting and Council Buildings, Facilities Sites and Small Sites. Street lighting is subject to separate contracts for infrastructure and electricity. Council secured contracts for electricity and street lighting consumption pricing for a period of 10 years commencing 1 January 2023. Small sites contracts were finalised subsequently and are linked to IPART pricing.

Waste Facility

Waste facility costs are impacted by a range of external factors including increased industry regulation, State Government environmental levies and environmental standards. Waste facilities operations are significantly impacted by requirements to pay an Environmental Levy on waste going to land fill and on any externally sourced cover materials used to manage waste. The levy cost for 2025-2026 is anticipated to be \$174.20 per tonne and is expected to increase by CPI each year. Current operational expenditure forecasts and fee structures propose that Council will be able to source an amount of cover materials onsite to reduce the overall cost of this levy.

Domestic Waste Management Services

Under the Local Government Act, Council must not apply income from an ordinary rate towards the cost of providing Domestic Waste Management Services. Income obtained from charges for Domestic Waste Management Services must be calculated and not exceed the reasonable cost to Council in providing those services. The charge calculated for 2025-2026 and beyond is based on the full recovery of the service, including appropriate charges for the Domestic Waste tipping fees at Whyte's Gully. The Waste Facility tipping charge includes pricing for future capital costs associated with management of the facility, long term site remediation and environmental levies for landfill.

The future charges could also be impacted by the changes to the long term cost of the landfill and recycling activities.

Enhanced Community Centre and Library Services

Financial forecasts include a preliminary estimate for the potential impact on operational costs associated with proposed new library and community facilities at Warrawong and Helensburgh. As these projects progress, the level of additional costs may need to be reviewed.

West Dapto Development

The development at West Dapto in Wollongong's south-east will be the largest stand-alone growth for this city. The development commenced in 2011-2012 and is expected to add in the vicinity of 19,800 new dwellings and increase the local government area population by 57,400 over a 40 to 60 year period. The development has extensive infrastructure requirements and poses some challenges due to geographic and environmental factors, as well as uncertain development patterns and timing due to disaggregated land ownership.

Council has invested significant resources in planning for the construction of infrastructure and analysing potential financial impacts. The Long Term Financial Plan is based on the most recent plans and data; however, these projections may need to be modified over time as the underlying assumptions that support these change.

Revenue

The main income streams from this development will be from developer contributions and rates.

Developer contributions are based on pricing contained in the Draft West Dapto Section 7.11 Developer Contributions Plan that was reviewed by IPART in the 2024-2025 financial year and expected lot release timing. The developer contributions shown in the Long Term Financial Model are based on this Plan and are reflected in the Capital Grants & Contributions part of the Income Statement. These contributions will be held as restricted cash and are planned to be used to support the capital program and loan repayments.

Rates income estimates are aligned to estimated staging of the release area. It is expected the rate revenue increase will precede operational demand and assets built will require little renewal or maintenance in the initial years of the Long Term Financial Plan, creating an improved cash position through increased Funds Available from Operations. Experience in developing councils has shown the long term negative impacts that the delayed expense pattern has if additional rate revenue is built into other non-related recurrent operations. Under the Financial Sustainability Policy, this income will be restricted and only allocated to operational expenditure as the area develops. The annual revenue in the early stages of development will be made available to meet infrastructure or planning requirements in the area or be applied to meet existing infrastructure renewal requirements and repayments of loans for the West Dapto Access Strategy.

Capital Programs

Some aspects of the West Dapto Release Area have been progressed to a stage where they have been introduced into Council's forward capital program as specific projects. These include the Cleveland Road upgrade (\$35M), West Dapto Road Stage 2-4 (\$28M), Darkes Town Centre Sporting and Community Hub (\$20M), West Dapto Road Stage 1A (\$4M) and a number of other relatively smaller projects. These works are to be funded from Section 7.11 Developer Contributions, West Dapto Community Facilities Restricted Asset and grant funds.

In addition to these specific projects, forward projections also include capital budgets at an aggregated level that will become specific projects as the scope and design for these are further developed. The Long Term Financial Plan includes an assumption these projects, where possible, will be funded from accumulated developer contribution funds, net restricted additional rate revenue cash holdings and any remaining loan balances in the first instance.

Contributed Assets

Financial projections for the West Dapto release area recognise a level of infrastructure requirements will be provided by developers. This includes works “in kind” where the developer will complete elements of infrastructure contained in the West Dapto Developer Contribution Plan in lieu of contributions, as well as contributed assets normally associated with new subdivisions. The value of these assets is reflected in the financial projections as capital income and contributed assets based on expected timing of receipt of these. Future depreciation, operating and maintenance cost for these have been included in forecast operational expenses.

Operational Expenses

The Long Term Financial Plan includes depreciation, operating and maintenance costs associated with services that will be required by the new population in that area such as community, library and open space facilities. These estimates are based on planned asset construction and cost of providing these services to our existing population. As the development progresses, revenue from the area will be used to fund the maintenance and operation of new assets and services as part of Council's overall budget. Operational costs also include additional staff costs for the introduction of a dedicated West Dapto development team and expected cost for the delivery of services as the population grows.

Service delivery costs are currently held centrally and will be distributed to relevant service delivery areas when timing and requirements can be better defined.



Image: Karrara Bridge at Fowlers Road to Fairwater Drive, West Dapto.

Restricted Assets

The level of available or untied cash is expressed as cash and investment holdings after allowance for restricted assets. Assets, generally cash, may be externally or internally restricted. External restrictions are usually imposed by an external or legislative requirement that funds be spent for a specific purpose. This may include unspent grant funds provided to Council for the delivery of a particular project or service, funds collected as developer contributions or surpluses achieved in the delivery of domestic waste. In some of these instances, Council is also required to restrict investment earnings that are generated by these cash holdings. Internal restrictions are funds Council has determined will be used for a specific future purpose such as the future replacement of waste facilities. Internal restrictions are reviewed periodically and any additions or changes require Council resolution.

Strategic Projects Restricted Asset has been classed into cash that has been allocated to specific projects within the budget and Long Term Financial Plan or commitments that have not been included in the budget and Uncommitted Restricted Asset. The balance of \$1.0M in Strategic Projects Restricted Asset reflects commitments for projects that have not been sufficiently progressed to determine specific timing of delivery. Unallocated Strategic Projects restricted cash, based on current financial projections is available for future projects.

It should also be noted that current projections indicate that internally restricted cash for the replacement of Waste Facilities is indicating that this will be 'overdrawn' by approximately \$50M during the life of the current Financial Plan. This is due to the timing of construction of replacement facilities compared to how this cash is collected and set aside. The calculation of the waste facility gate fees includes a component for replacement and renewal of these facilities that is annualised over the projected life of the facility and is held as restricted cash as collected. Construction does not occur in a linear manner. Internal borrowings will be facilitated with internal interest allocated against the restricted asset during periods of debt to offset the lost income to general operations.

Table 11

10 YEAR RESTRICTED ASSETS SUMMARY

PURPOSE OF RESTRICTED ASSET	Opening 1/07/25	2025/2026 Budget \$'000			2026/2027 Forecast \$'000			2027/2028 Forecast \$'000			2028/2029 Forecast \$'000			2029/2030 Forecast \$'000		
		Transfer In	Out	Balance 30/06/26	Transfer In	Out	Balance 30/06/27	Transfer In	Out	Balance 30/06/28	Transfer In	Out	Balance 30/06/29	Transfer In	Out	Balance 30/06/30
Internally Restricted Assets																
Strategic Projects	27,953		9,635	18,318		13,720	4,598		1,610	2,988		292	2,696		8	2,688
Strategic Projects (unallocated)	3,167			3,167			3,167			3,167			3,167			3,167
Property Investment Fund	5,325	166	399	5,091	152	343	4,901	138	355	4,683	108	368	4,424	95	381	4,138
MacCabe Park Development	2,190	150		2,340	150		2,490	150		2,640	150		2,790	150		2,940
City Parking Strategy	1,446	770	545	1,672	795	432	2,035	822	507	2,351	850	423	2,778	879	97	3,560
Sports Priority Program	240	266	428	77	266	400	(57)	324	400	(133)	321	400	(213)	316	400	(296)
Natural Areas Fund	173			173			173			173			173			173
West Dapto Rates (additional)	15,000	4,407	773	18,634	5,050	776	22,908	5,756	795	27,870	4,891	813	31,947	5,625	6,588	30,985
West Dapto Community Facilities	31,875		100	31,775		100	31,675		6,900	24,775			24,775			24,775
Lake Illawarra Estuary Management Fund	487	165	156	496	165	114	548	165	114	599	165	117	647	165	120	691
Darcy Wentworth Park	18			18			18			18			18			18
Waste Disposal Facilities	3,950	6,289	5,675	4,564	4,638	7,056	2,146	4,278	12,252	(5,829)	4,323	24,039	(25,544)	4,519	15,971	(36,995)
Total Internal Restricted Assets	91,824	12,212	17,711	86,326	11,216	22,941	74,601	11,633	22,933	63,302	10,808	26,452	47,658	11,749	23,565	35,843
Externally Restricted Assets																
Developer Contributions	61,995	13,041	22,895	52,140	30,135	26,223	56,052	28,479	14,752	69,780	28,694	23,331	75,143	29,834	39,752	65,225
Planning Agreements	4,413	17,342		21,755			21,755			21,755			21,755			21,755
Grants	9,498	39,675	36,934	12,238	36,619	33,893	14,964	18,874	24,339	9,500	4,542	3,405	10,637	4,539	2,824	12,352
Loan Repayment	904	(21)		883	(23)		861	(144)		717	(39)		678	(39)		639
Domestic Waste Management	5,844	2,753		8,596	198		8,795	199		8,993	178		9,171	178		9,350
Contributed Assets	()	5,871	5,871	()	14,585	14,585	()	14,129	14,129	()	22,467	22,467	()	16,561	16,561	()
External Service Charges to Restricted Assets	69			69			69			69			69			69
Other Contributions	7,230	313	302	7,242	316	272	7,285	320	72	7,532	317	74	7,775	322	76	8,021
Special Rates Levies - City Centre + Mall	961	1,311	1,386	886	1,350	1,430	806	1,391	1,458	739	1,432	1,511	660	1,475	1,553	583
Housing Affordability Program	3,350	209	2,894	664	151		815	151		965	132		1,097	132		1,229
Local Infrastructure Renewal Scheme	86	61		147	63		210	16		226	66		292	67		359
Stormwater Management	904	1,926	2,191	639	1,946	1,640	945	1,967	1,611	1,302	1,989	1,575	1,715	2,011	2,042	1,685
Total External Restricted Assets	95,253	82,480	72,474	105,259	85,339	78,043	112,556	65,383	56,362	121,578	59,777	52,363	128,992	55,081	62,808	121,266
Grand Total	187,078	94,692	90,185	191,585	96,556	100,983	187,158	77,016	79,294	184,880	70,585	78,815	176,650	66,831	86,373	157,108

Table 11

10 YEAR RESTRICTED ASSETS SUMMARY

PURPOSE OF RESTRICTED ASSET	2030/2031 Forecast			2031/2032 Forecast			2032/2033 Forecast			2033/2034 Forecast			2034/2035 Forecast		
	\$'000		Balance 30/06/31	\$'000		Balance 30/06/32	\$'000		Balance 30/06/33	\$'000		Balance 30/06/34	\$'000		Balance 30/06/35
	Transfer In	Out		Transfer In	Out		Transfer In	Out		Transfer In	Out		Transfer In	Out	
Internally Restricted Assets															
Strategic Projects		148	2,541		8	2,533		180	2,353		8	2,345		1,258	1,088
Strategic Projects (unallocated)			3,167			3,167			3,167			3,167			3,167
Property Investment Fund	81	395	3,824	67	409	3,482	53	424	3,111	38	439	2,710	38	453	2,295
MacCabe Park Development	150		3,090	150		3,240	150		3,390	150		3,540	150		3,690
City Parking Strategy	908	20	4,448	938	99	5,287	970	20	6,237	1,049	101	7,185	1,084	20	8,250
Sports Priority Program	393	400	(303)	456	400	(247)	407	400	(240)	407	400	(234)	175	400	(459)
Natural Areas Fund			173			173			173			173			173
West Dapto Rates (additional)	6,383	6,729	30,638	7,203	6,879	30,962	8,074	7,033	32,004	8,930	7,190	33,743	9,849	965	42,628
West Dapto Community Facilities			24,775			24,775			24,775			24,775			24,775
Lake Illawarra Estuary Management Fund	165	124	732	165	127	770	165	131	804	165	135	834	165	139	861
Darcy Wentworth Park			18			18			18			18			18
Waste Disposal Facilities	4,716	9,674	(41,954)	4,912	9,614	(46,656)	5,108	534	(42,082)	5,304	252	(37,030)	5,304	20,266	(51,992)
Total Internal Restricted Assets	12,796	17,490	31,149	13,892	17,537	27,504	14,926	8,721	33,710	16,042	8,525	41,227	16,764	23,499	34,492
Externally Restricted Assets															
Developer Contributions	28,879	42,103	52,001	35,049	47,942	39,108	37,293	37,368	39,033	36,370	40,399	35,004	8,219	37,339	5,885
Planning Agreements			21,755			21,755			21,755			21,755			21,755
Grants	4,596	2,853	14,095	4,655	2,872	15,879	4,717	2,901	17,695	4,780	2,910	19,565	4,834	2,942	21,458
Loan Repayment	(39)		600	(39)		561	(39)		522	(39)		483			483
Domestic Waste Management	179		9,528	179		9,708	180		9,888	180		10,068	183		10,251
Contributed Assets	18,921	18,921	()	12,994	12,994	()	16,654	16,654	()	20,903	20,903	()	15,892	15,892	()
External Service Charges to Restricted Assets			69			69			69			69			69
Other Contributions	325	77	8,269	331	79	8,521	329	81	8,770	336	83	9,022	339	85	9,276
Special Rates Levies - City Centre + Mall	1,520	1,586	516	1,565	1,617	464	1,612	1,649	427	1,660	1,682	406	1,710	1,262	855
Housing Affordability Program	132		1,361	132		1,493	132		1,624	132		1,756	132		1,888
Local Infrastructure Renewal Scheme	68		427	69		495	69		565	70		635	46		681
Stormwater Management	2,034	2,044	1,676	2,059	2,048	1,686	2,080	2,112	1,655	2,403	2,113	1,945	2,427	2,116	2,255
Total External Restricted Assets	56,616	67,585	110,296	56,995	67,552	99,739	63,027	60,764	102,002	66,796	68,090	100,708	33,782	59,635	74,855
Grand Total	69,412	85,074	141,445	70,887	85,088	127,244	77,953	69,485	135,712	82,838	76,615	141,935	50,546	83,135	109,346

Sensitivity Analysis

The breadth of external influences on Council's operations means the relationship between long term estimates for income and expenses and eventualities may vary markedly. Long term financial plans are not designed to predict the actual costs of the future with accuracy but need to be capable of providing a base upon which decisions can be made and changing environments can be assessed.

Council's Long Term Financial Plan is based on a vast number of assumptions, indices and parameters, which remain under constant watch to improve knowledge of future impacts. While indices are important in understanding future costs, it is the relationship between the changes in cost and the changes in revenues that impact KPIs the most. For example, if CPI increases by a percentage higher than anticipated and IPART take this into account in the rate rise, the impact on the bottom line may be low. From a sensitivity perspective, it is more important to analyse which indicators may move apart and impact the bottom line.

Sensitivity Analysis 1

From Wollongong City Council's perspective, the greatest risk is related to the relationship between the largest cost item (Employee Costs) and the largest revenue item (Rates).

The net impact of these indices on the bottom line for the first four years is shown below:

Table 12

Net Cost of Indexation - Employee Costs vs Rates (Proposed Budget)

	2025/2026 Forecast \$'000s	2026/2027 Forecast \$'000s	2027/2028 Forecast \$'000s	2028/2029 Forecast \$'000s
Total Employee Costs	169,238	174,485	179,337	184,743
Total Rates Revenue	(208,097)	(216,636)	(225,443)	(234,581)
Net Revenue	(38,859)	(42,151)	(46,106)	(49,838)

This relationship has created an increase in the net revenue result each year. The risk to Council is that employee cost increases exceed the rates increase by a margin greater than the forecast going forward. Employee costs are a reflection of employee wages and establishment numbers and, as such, adjustments are able to be made to numbers if the individual rates exceed expectation but this is difficult to achieve without impacting services.

As an indication of risk associated with variation in indexation, for example, should employee costs increase by 4.25% instead of the assumed 3.75% (increase of 0.5%) the net revenue variation would be adversely affected as shown below:

Table 13

Net Cost of Indexation - Employee Costs vs Rates (0.5% per annum increase to labour indices)

	2025/2026 Forecast \$'000s	2026/2027 Forecast \$'000s	2027/2028 Forecast \$'000s	2028/2029 Forecast \$'000s
Total Employee Costs	170,054	176,431	182,606	188,997
Total Rates Revenue	(208,097)	(216,636)	(225,443)	(234,581)
Net Revenue	(38,043)	(40,205)	(42,837)	(45,584)
Variance - deterioration	816	1,946	3,269	4,254

The analysis shown in the table indicates Council's sensitivity to small changes in the indexation of wages. The 0.5% variation in one year that is not offset by similar indexation in revenue (rates) will reduce the bottom line by approximately \$0.8M. This information can be extrapolated to show that if just 0.5% variation was incurred over the four year period the cumulative impact would be a deterioration of approximately \$4.3M.

Sensitivity Analysis 2

Council's underlying long term financial challenge is heavily linked to the need to renew its extensive level of infrastructure assets used in providing services to the community. The financial results reflect the consumption of assets through depreciation as an expense in each year. The depreciation expense is an annualised cost calculated by dividing the replacement cost of the asset by the number of years it is expected to be used before replacement (useful life).

Council is required to ensure that the value of its assets reflect their fair value at each reporting period, with the revaluation of asset classes occurring at least every five years. Revaluations based on current cost of renewal and environmental aspects can significantly impact the depreciation due to changes in asset values and lives.

Asset revaluations carried out since 2022 have led to a substantial increase in depreciation. The revaluations were based on evidence, based on information available at the time. While these valuations and the resultant depreciation has been accounted for in Council's estimates, it is considered that further assessment of optimisation strategies and improved data maturity may have a positive impact on the future renewal requirements and future accounting estimates for depreciation.

To illustrate this sensitivity, a broad variation to the assumptions will be analysed. For this sensitivity analysis, it is assumed infrastructure asset values will increase by 20%. The increase in asset values equates to an increase in depreciation forecasts as shown below:

Table 14

Depreciation	2025/2026	2026/2027	2027/2028	2028/2029
	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast
	\$'000s	\$'000s	\$'000s	\$'000s
Existing Asset Base	88,185	91,754	95,424	99,108
Increase in values by 20%	105,822	110,104	114,509	118,930
Variance - deterioration	(17,637)	(18,351)	(19,085)	(19,822)

The outcome of this analysis shows that the deterioration effected by a change to asset values is significant. While Council has expended substantial effort in improving asset information and assessment over a period of time, variation such as this remains a possible outcome as new information is brought to hand.

Other Risks and Limitations

Overall, the financial forecasts have been designed to represent a reasonably tight set of numbers which will require restraint and constraint through strong management and flexibility to ensure targets are reached.

The current financial information has a number of recognised limitations requiring adjustment over a period of time:

West Dapto Development

This is the most significant standalone development that has occurred in the Wollongong Local Government Area. Forecast in the Long Term Financial Plan is based on modelling for the development of the area that has been undertaken by a dedicated project group. As with any forecasts, there are risks that the assumptions used will not necessarily reflect the actual progress. Numerous external factors have potential to impact these forecasts including changes in economic conditions, decisions by developers on timing of their projects, ability to deliver planned infrastructure for expected price and timeframe in an area that has some geographic and environmental constraints. There will continue to be ongoing review of assumptions and analysis with modifications to financial forecasts as there is greater certainty in relation to service and assets planned for the area.

Lake Illawarra

The Coastal Management Plan (CMP) for Lake Illawarra was gazetted in late 2020. The CMP sets out actions to be undertaken over the next 10 years to protect and enhance the health of the lake. The total cost to undertake all actions is approximately \$35.3M. The CMP nominates an indicative funding arrangement shared between Wollongong City Council, Shellharbour City Council and various State Government agencies. The development of future Delivery Plans will need to consider allocations towards unfunded actions in the CMP.

Contributed Assets

While the Long Term Financial Plan includes the recognition of and potential impact on future operational costs of contributed assets for the West Dapto Release area, Council's estimates do not currently provide fully for potential assets that may be contributed or donated to Council over time more broadly across the city.

Rehabilitation Greenhouse Park

Greenhouse Park is a former landfill site that is adjacent to an ecologically sensitive area. The site was rehabilitated and transformed into an Eco Park over a long period of time. The site is subject to ongoing reviews for compliance with current environmental standards that may result in further rehabilitation works in the future.

Climate Change

Local Government is on the frontline facing the impact of climate change on communities. The Federal Government has indicated that councils have a role in early planning to identify and prepare for the risk from climate change and help protect the wellbeing of communities, local economies and the built and natural environment, and to contribute to a low pollution future. In addition to a planning role, councils also own or directly manage a range of assets that potentially will be impacted by climate change. Increased emphasis on climate change related activities may require a redirection of funding. Activities in this regard will be guided by Climate Change Mitigation Plans (current and future) and the Climate Change Adaptation Plan.

Developer Contribution Income (excluding West Dapto)

Developer Contribution income projections are based on the adopted plan and anticipated timing of receipts. Economic conditions may have a significant impact on projected income. There are a range of projects included in the Delivery Program dependent on funding from this source. The timing and capacity to deliver these will need to be monitored in the context of ability to achieve income projections.

Asset Management – Valuation and Asset Lives

Council's Statement of Financial Position shows the extent of assets managed by Council for the community. The written down value (WDV) for Property, Plant and Equipment of \$4.1B represents the value of the assets after they have been depreciated since purchase or construction. These assets have a current replacement cost (CRC) at 1 July 2024 in of \$7.0B. These assets represent the community wealth created over time. Council's stewardship role requires that those assets required for future service delivery be maintained for future generations at best value to the community.

The consumption of these assets is represented by depreciation, which is based on expected asset lives, condition assessments and valuations. While the maturity of this information is improving, many of the assumptions are unproven due to the nature of this exercise. For example, it is difficult to estimate asset lives in relatively new cities such as Wollongong where there may not be historical data available or comparability with other cities due to differing environmental factors and construction approaches.

Asset revaluations carried out since 2022 have led to a substantial increase in depreciation. The revaluations were based on evidence based information available at the time. While these valuations and the resultant depreciation has been accounted for in Council's estimates, it is considered that further assessment of optimisation strategies and improved data maturity may have a positive impact on the future renewal requirements and future accounting estimates for depreciation.

In addition, changing technologies may impact on renewal and maintenance costs.

Property Sales and Investment

While Council is actively pursuing the sale of some properties, a decision has been made not to forecast sale dates or values due to uncertainty in delivery. As property sales become more certain they will be introduced into the budget along with consideration of application of these funds for advancing existing projects or investing in new assets at that time.

Conclusion

Wollongong City Council's *Long Term Financial Plan 2025-2035* provides a clear, evidence-based framework for making responsible, sustainable financial decisions over the next decade. It reflects the organisation's commitment to organisational sustainability, asset management, and service delivery in a dynamic and evolving environment.

The forecasts presented in this Plan demonstrate that Council is financially sustainable over the medium term, provided current policy settings, assumptions, funding models and investment approaches are reasonably maintained. Council's focus on Total Funds Result, Available Funds, and alignment with asset lifecycle needs provides a more accurate and resilient approach to financial performance and planning.

This Plan forms a core component of Council's Resourcing Strategy under the Integrated Planning and Reporting framework. It underpins the Delivery Program 2025-2029 and supports the achievement of the strategic objectives outlined in the *Our Wollongong Our Future 2035 Community Strategic Plan*.

Council will continue to monitor financial risks, review assumptions and adjust forecasts through its annual planning cycle and quarterly reviews to ensure this Long Term Financial Plan remains a robust and living document.

Wollongong is Sustainable Connected Vibrant Inclusive

We are a sustainable and climate resilient city

We have well planned, connected, and liveable places

We foster a diverse economy, and we value innovation, culture, and creativity

We have a healthy, respectful, and inclusive community



Image: Continental Pools, Wollongong.

Wollongong City Council

Asset Management Strategy 2025-2035



Image: Council crews carrying out road works at Farmborough Heights.

Wollongong is Sustainable Connected Vibrant Inclusive

We are a sustainable and climate resilient city

We have well planned, connected, and liveable places

We foster a diverse economy, and we value innovation, culture, and creativity

We have a healthy, respectful, and inclusive community

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Introduction

Purpose and scope

This Asset Management Strategy provides strategic direction for managing Wollongong City Council's (Council) diverse asset portfolio. It outlines how Council will ensure our assets support the sustainable delivery of community priorities and aspirations, as defined in the Community Strategic Plan, and those services and functions Council is responsible for as presented in the Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

Having a direct link to the Financial Sustainability Policy, the Asset Management Strategy provides a framework to assist Council prioritise the use of community money and other funding wisely on asset investment. It provides direction and context for decision making and allocation of financial resources across the lifecycle of assets. It provides a ten-year plan based on principles to extract the most sustainable life from investment in assets.

The Strategy emphasises sustainability, resilience and value-for-money outcomes in managing assets throughout their lifecycle. It serves as a guide for decision-making, ensuring Council resources are effectively prioritised and deployed to support the Delivery Program. Sustainable asset management involves strategically maintaining assets to maximise the asset's useful life.

Council focuses on managing its assets in ways that are financially sustainable and maximise economic value to the community. The Strategy aims to maintain current service levels that our assets deliver into the future, considering demand increase due to growth, without creating significant rate or price increases. To ensure assets can be maintained and replaced, the following assumptions are made:

- Asset replacement is funded from Council's General Revenue, although receipt of grant revenue is considered where appropriate.
- Asset Replacement Cost is equal to determined Asset Gross Replacement Cost, unless asset replacement specification is enhanced through the Asset Management Plan to extend the life of the new asset beyond the replaced asset, resulting in the same annualised economic benefit or service level.
- Asset renewals, including expansion and upgrade, as described in the Asset Management Plan, are funded using Funds Available from Operations, plus revenue from grants.
- Assets determined to be 'run to fail' and not to be replaced are identified and removed from future funding estimates.
- Assets replaced by other entities, in part or full, are identified and removed from future funding estimates.

Council manages over \$7.0B of assets on behalf of the community to support the delivery of its services. Over the life of the 4-year delivery program, we are looking to invest \$584M into capital works in addition to \$289M into operations and maintenance expenses on infrastructure. As an organisation, we need to apply a systematic approach to manage this portfolio of infrastructure assets to make sure that we provide these assets in a safe, sustainable and efficient way.

The relationship between services and assets is outlined in the Asset Management Plan.

Alignment and integration with Community Strategic Plan and Delivery Program and Operational Plan

The Asset Management Strategy is a key component of Council's Resourcing Strategy under the NSW Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework. It supports the achievement of Wollongong's long-term goals by linking asset management planning with financial sustainability, workforce capacity and information management systems. Our Asset Management Strategy is closely linked to our Financial Sustainability Policy objectives to provide financial stability, affordability, focused delivery and value for money.

The Asset Management Strategy integrates with the Resourcing Strategy components, ensuring a cohesive approach to delivering on Wollongong's Community Strategic Plan and Delivery Program:

Long Term Financial Plan: Ensures funding for the lifecycle management of assets, balancing service levels, renewal priorities and long-term financial sustainability.

Workforce Management Strategy: Supports the development of skills and capabilities required to manage and maintain critical infrastructure effectively.

Digital Strategy: Leverages digital tools for real-time asset monitoring, predictive maintenance, and enhanced decision-making.

Supporting the Our Wollongong Our Future 2035 Community Strategic Plan

This Strategy contributes to achieving the Community Strategic Plan vision:

"On Dharawal Country, from the mountains to the sea, we value our natural environment, we respect each other, our past and future. We will be a sustainable, connected, vibrant, and innovative city, with a diverse economy."

Through alignment of asset management practices with the Community Strategic Plan, the Strategy ensures that Council assets deliver maximum benefit to the community and can support the delivery of valued services identified in the Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

Asset Management in Context

Overview of Wollongong's assets

Council manages a diverse and extensive portfolio of assets, including infrastructure, community facilities, open spaces and environmental assets. These assets support essential services and enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors. Key asset classes include:

- Roads and transport networks
- Water, stormwater, and drainage infrastructure
- Parks, reserves, and recreational facilities
- Buildings and facilities, including libraries and community centres
- Environmental assets such as coastal and escarpment areas
- Aquatic assets including ocean rock pools, chlorinated pools and heated pools.

Critical assets

Critical assets are those essential to public safety, economic stability, or the delivery of vital community services. This includes infrastructure that mitigates risks from natural disasters, ensures water and waste management and supports transport and accessibility across the Local Government Area. Council's critical assets are prioritised for maintenance, renewal and resilience planning to ensure they continue to operate under all foreseeable conditions.

Community expectations engagement outcomes

Community engagement has highlighted the importance of maintaining high-quality infrastructure and ensuring equitable access to community assets. Residents value sustainability, connectivity and resilience in the management of these assets. Key feedback includes:

- Improved maintenance of transport and stormwater networks to enhance accessibility and mitigate flooding
- Increased delivery of path infrastructure around schools and town and village centres
- Expansion of green spaces and recreational facilities to support community wellbeing
- Climate-resilient infrastructure to safeguard against increasing environmental risks.

Challenges and opportunities

Council and the community have created a stable and sustainable financial environment in the short to medium term that should allow Council to provide its existing levels of service without significant change to future income requirements. In the future, Wollongong City Council will continue to face challenges that require strong financial leadership and creative solutions applied to matching its community's aspirations to its capacity and desire. The key challenges and opportunities relating to asset management include:

- **Challenges:** Ageing infrastructure, climate change adaptation and mitigation, rapid urban growth and funding constraints to provide capacity, delivering organisational change to improve efficiency and service quality.
- **Opportunities:** Leveraging new technologies, partnerships and innovative funding models to improve efficiency and service delivery, greater collaboration to better understand community priorities for services and service levels.

Technology

Innovative technologies and data systems will enhance asset management practices:

- Implementing preventative and predictive maintenance through advanced monitoring systems.
- Expanding Land Information Systems to improve spatial analysis and asset mapping.
- Exploring smart city initiatives to optimise infrastructure performance and energy efficiency.

Changes and advancement in technology can reshape the way in which we deliver services, manage assets, gather information and interact with the community. Our Information Technology roadmap is part of the internal drivers that sets our plan into the future. Complementing and informing the roadmap are the opportunities created in the external market as technology develops. Council continues to review the potential application of technology to create efficiency, improve customer service, manage cyber risk and security of information, provide access to new areas of service and enhance employee experience. Council has developed partnerships with Shellharbour, Kiama and Shoalhaven Councils, University of Wollongong and Lendlease to explore smart technology to improve water management through building and testing data analytics.

Advancements may change the way we use technology. The current scope of drone use is to capture images for publications; however, drones have a much broader application to be considered. They can provide improvements in the way we monitor foreshore areas, complete inspections of difficult to reach and hazardous locations (bridge soffit, roof tops, dense bush areas, open drains and large culverts etc), complete topographic survey, completed thermal imaging for leakage detection and many other applications.

Council is leveraging artificial intelligence to monitor the condition of our road and footpath network and identify surface defects. Mounted cameras on Waste compactor trucks are being utilised to capture images of the road surface as they drive the network. The captured images are reviewed with applications that utilise machine learning algorithms (like facial recognition) to identify defects in the road and automatically issue instructions for repairs with priority based on road classification, size and severity. Council will investigate how to apply the technology to advanced asset management practices and other asset class types.

Council is capturing utility and energy consumption data related to assets to better understand where efficiency upgrades will lead to the most significant financial and sustainable benefits. Council is using the captured data to guide business decisions and asset management strategies, plus monitor the benefits of past projects.

Strategic integration

Contribution to strategic goals

Aligning with the Community Strategic Plan, the Asset Management Strategy ensures that Council's infrastructure:

- Is adequately resourced to meet current and future demands.
- Supports innovative and efficient service delivery.
- Enhances resilience to external pressures, such as climate change adaptation and mitigation, population growth and the increasing rate of legislative reform.
- The provision and management of assets requires significant financial investment to meet the required levels of service. This strategy is closely linked to our long-term financial plan, workforce plan and information and technology strategy to ensure we have the funding, people and technology over a short and medium term to deliver services that are affordable and efficient.

Asset Management Plan

The draft Asset Management Plan (AMP) covers all existing assets under the control of Council, including contributed assets associated with development. Assets that are replaced on behalf of Council, and where Council does not contribute to the cost of replacement (eg, Rural Fire Service assets), are excluded from this Strategy and the draft AMP. The document is a forward focused plan spanning a 10-year horizon and includes:

- Identification of assets that are critical to Council's operations including a risk management strategy for identified assets.
- Specific actions required to improve Council's asset management maturity and capability, projected resource requirements and timeframes.
- Plans and service standards for all assets.
- Long term projections for asset maintenance, rehabilitation and replacement including forecast costs to inform the Long-Term Financial Plan.
- A list of relevant Commonwealth and State legislation for managing assets is provided within each asset plan.

Key principles of Asset Management

Wollongong City Council's asset management approach is guided by core principles that ensure sustainable, efficient and community-focused outcomes.

Whole of life asset management

Council adopts a whole-of-life approach to managing its assets. This includes planning for their acquisition, operation, maintenance, renewal and disposal (if required). Considering and appropriately budgeting lifecycle costs and benefits for existing and new assets ensures optimal value is delivered to the community while minimising the risks of service disruptions.

The asset lifecycle describes the stages from the decision to provide an asset to the point the asset reaches the end of its service life. Whilst lifecycles may vary slightly between types of assets, there are five broad stages.

Whole of life asset management continued

1. **Planning** describes the tasks associated with investigating the required asset solution to support the service and includes:

Master planning

Feasibility and business plan

Concept development

Project scoping

Functional assessment and condition monitoring

Renewal, expansion or repurpose

2. **Delivery** includes commissioning the asset into service such as:

Site investigations - survey, geotechnical

Design development

Approvals – statutory

Construction/procurement

3. **Operation** – Once an asset is delivered, it moves into the operation phase. These activities provide the service and keep the asset in operation include:

Staffing of facility

Utility costs

Cleaning

Pest control

Street sweeping

Security

Information Technology Support

Waste management

Insurance

Compliance (certification costs)

Fair value adjustments

Whole of life asset management continued

- 4. Maintenance** - the maintenance stage commences upon completion of the delivery stage. This describes actions that keep the asset in an acceptable condition and increase the likelihood of the asset achieving the expected useful service life and level of service, such as:

Repairing potholes in roads

Footpath repairs

Protective surface coatings

Servicing

Gutter cleaning

Airconditioning filter cleaning and servicing

Replacement of a pressure pump

5. End of Life

Demolition and disposal

Sale of asset - e.g., vehicles

Make-good costs once the asset is removed.

Critical asset prioritisation

Critical assets are those that underpin essential community services, such as stormwater systems, transport networks and emergency response facilities. These assets are prioritised based on their significance to public safety, economic stability and service delivery. Strategic risk management frameworks are applied to ensure critical assets remain functional under adverse conditions, including natural disasters and climate impacts.

Critical assets are identified through rigorous assessment frameworks that evaluate their role in service delivery, risk exposure and community reliance. These assets are then defined as critical assets with a summary provided below:

Table 1 - critical asset prioritisation

Service	Criticality	Critical Assets	Strategic Risk Actions
Emergency Management	Ability to respond to emergency events. Sufficient facilities to operate the required service.	Emergency management plant and equipment Emergency management facilities	Update Maintenance programs for facilities, plant and equipment required for emergency preparedness, response and recovery assets. Determine critical components for emergency preparedness, response and recovery assets.
Natural Area Management	Maintain adequate buffer from bushfire hazards.	Fire trails Asset protection zones	Update scheduled inspection and maintenance programs for critical fire trails and Asset Protection Zones (APZ) to account for natural disasters and changing weather patterns.
Stormwater and Floodplain Services	Dam safety	Prescribed dams	Maintain compliance, monitoring, maintenance and reporting program for prescribed dams. Develop a plan to implement identified high priority improvement works relating to prescribed dams. Review options to reduce the hazards relating to dam storage. Review the plans for basin infrastructure in West Dapto to determine the risk of triggering additional prescribed dams. Incorporate dam safety training into Corporate Training schedule and Community Resilience Plan.
Waste (Services) Management	Public health	Waste collection plant and equipment	Develop Asset Management Plan including outputs and financial impacts from the waste collection service plan for waste management to realise the optimum whole of life costs.

Service	Criticality	Critical Assets	Strategic Risk Actions
		Waste facility assets (landfill, plant and equipment)	Develop Asset Management Plan including detailed valuation, outputs and financial impacts from the waste collection service plan for waste management to realise the optimum whole of life costs. Maintain the asset protection zones at Whytes Gully.
Aquatic Services	Ability to respond in a timely manner with the required resources	Rescue and recovery plant, fleet and equipment First aid equipment	Develop Maintenance programs for rescue and recovery plant, fleet and equipment.
Transport Services	Provide connection for adjoining critical services Provide access for critical transportation corridors	Old Princes Highway (as identified in the Local Emergency Management Plan) Other roads to be identified as an improvement action	Identify roads that have been impacted by storm induced erosion and monitor following storm events. In addition to the critical road assets identified by the Local Emergency Management Committee, undertake a review to identify roads that provide direct access to emergency services and other critical services to determine the appropriate criticality ratings.
Employee Services	Statutory compliance and mandatory SafeWork notifications	Information Management and Technology resources	Review and update the Information Management Asset Register to align with other assets. Maintain a recovery plan for critical systems.
Governance and Administration	Council meeting	Information Management and Technology resources	Ongoing investment in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data management and governance processes
Information Management and Technology	Active cyber security measures	Information Management and Technology resources	Continue to invest in cyber security through proactive and timely remediation of identified cyber security control weaknesses. Maintain a recovery plan for critical systems.
Information Management and Technology	Maintaining access to critical systems	Information Management and Technology resources	Ongoing investment in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data management and governance processes Recovery plans Test plans undertaken on a regular basis.

Levels of asset service

Levels of service are a set of criteria that outlines social, environmental, economic and governance outcomes and targets that we aim to deliver in managing assets. Each asset plan within the Asset Management Plan includes a performance section that outlines information relating to levels of Service. Council groups levels of service into Customer Levels of Service and Technical Levels of Service (LoS). Customer LoS relate to outcomes, objectives and measures of customer interactions with the asset. Technical LoS are more related to the direct actions, activities and compliance requirements that can inform operational, maintenance and capital investment plans.

LoS related to direct services are typically addressed in supporting documents and service plans. Supporting documents may identify increased or changes to LoS that impact on the current and future provision of assets. Until such time as asset related LoS in Supporting Documents are funded through the Delivery Program and Operational Plan, they remain aspirational.

Sustainability and resilience

If we consider sustainability as maintaining service levels without compromising future generations and avoiding depletion of resources over time, the principle has wide ranging applications across community, financial and environmental considerations. Sustainability is a core value for council and is a part of our organisational culture.

Council is committed to embedding sustainability and resilience principles across its asset management practices. Several supporting documents focus on key areas to improve our sustainability outcomes across financial, social and environmental impact. The Asset Management Plan considers actions to respond to these specific challenges.

The development of measures and targets help to track performance in achieving these objectives. Council's infrastructure, plant and fleet contribute significantly to its scope 1 and 2 emissions. The strategic decarbonisation of these assets is essential to meet adopted emissions reduction targets. Additionally, Council recognises that its assets are increasingly at risk from the impacts of climate change and building resilience is a key focus in both upgrades and future planning to address these challenges.

Guided by the principles in Council's Climate Change Mitigation Plan and Climate Change Adaptation Plan, infrastructure investments and asset management practices prioritise minimising environmental impact, reducing emissions and enhancing resilience. This is achieved through sustainable design, the use of renewable energy and innovative practices and technologies that promote long-term sustainability and adaptability of these assets.

Resilience is planning for and providing assets that can better withstand the external pressures and recover from extreme events. Whether it be implementing strategies to improve the recovery of turf sport fields from the pressures of the playing season, to designing coastal infrastructure to factor in the forces of storm surges and rising sea level, our actions will look at stability and reliability of our asset networks. Our service planning will monitor and forecast external pressures on services to influence our planning for assets.

Community-driven planning

The community's needs and aspirations form the foundation of Council's asset management decisions. Extensive engagement with stakeholders ensures that infrastructure investments align with the values of residents and address pressing priorities such as accessibility, equity, and connectivity.

Data-driven decision-making

Robust Asset Management Information Systems are employed to collect, analyse and monitor asset data in real time. These systems facilitate proactive maintenance, efficient resource allocation and data-informed investment strategies. Integrating Land Information Systems and financial data enhances the precision of long-term planning.

Continuous improvement and best practice

Council is committed to the continuous improvement of its asset management capabilities. Practices are regularly evaluated against international standards, including ISO 55000, to ensure alignment with global best practices. New technologies and methodologies are incorporated to meet evolving community needs and challenges effectively.

The Asset Management Plan includes a comprehensive core improvement plan to ensure compliance changing legislation and will strengthen continuous improvement.

Current state of asset management

Asset portfolio overview

Wollongong City Council's asset portfolio supports a wide range of services and community needs. The assets under Council's stewardship are valued at over \$7B and include:

- **Transport Infrastructure:** Roads, cycleways, footpaths and bridges that connect communities and facilitate mobility.
- **Water and Stormwater Systems:** Essential infrastructure for flood mitigation, water quality management and environmental protection.
- **Parks and Open Spaces:** Recreational areas, playgrounds, sports fields and green spaces that contribute to community health and wellbeing.
- **Buildings and Facilities:** Libraries, community centres and operational depots that support Council's services and community activities.
- **Aquatic facilities:** chlorinated pools, ocean rock pools, heated pools and supporting infrastructure such as pumps, filtration, pipes, heating systems and other equipment.

As of 30 June 2024, our Wollongong community had a total asset portfolio with a gross replacement value of \$7.0B.

Infrastructure, Plant & Fleet, and Office and Other Assets constitute \$6.0B of the total asset portfolio and are represented in the graphs below. Most of this asset value (99%) is Infrastructure, with the remaining 1% split evenly between Plant & Fleet, Office and other assets.

Figure 1 below illustrates the dissection of asset values by infrastructure and non-infrastructure assets. Note that assets within land, heritage and work in progress are excluded from the below.

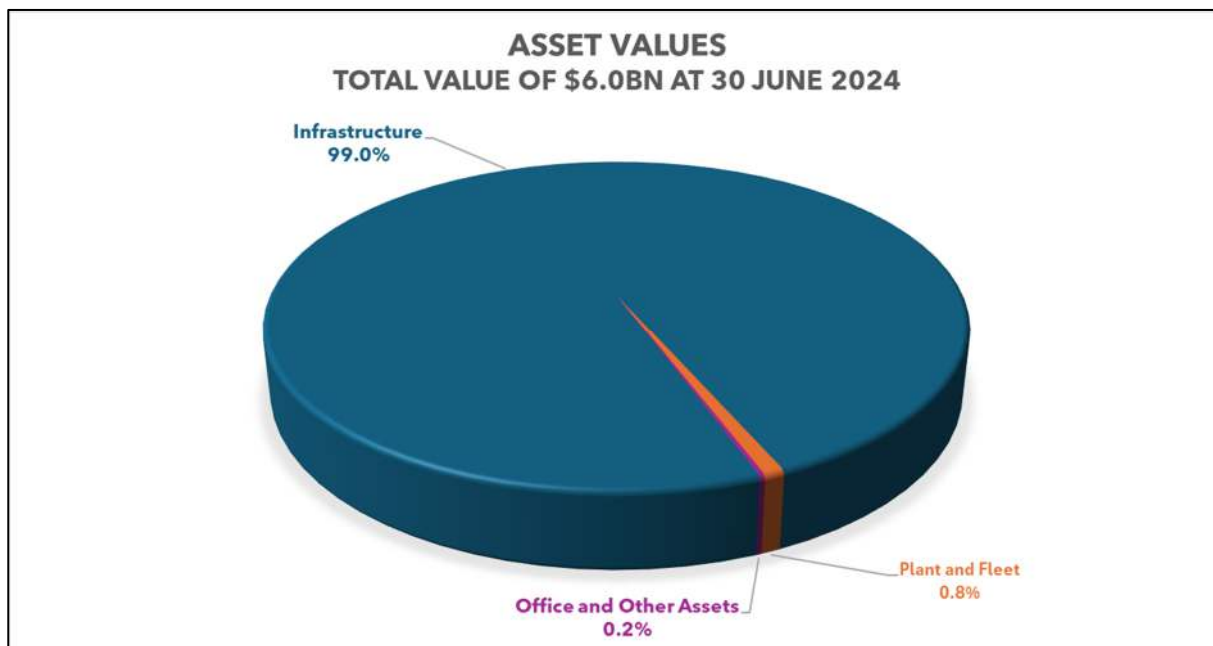


Figure 1: Infrastructure asset value - 30 June 2024

A breakdown of the infrastructure asset values are shown in figure 2 below

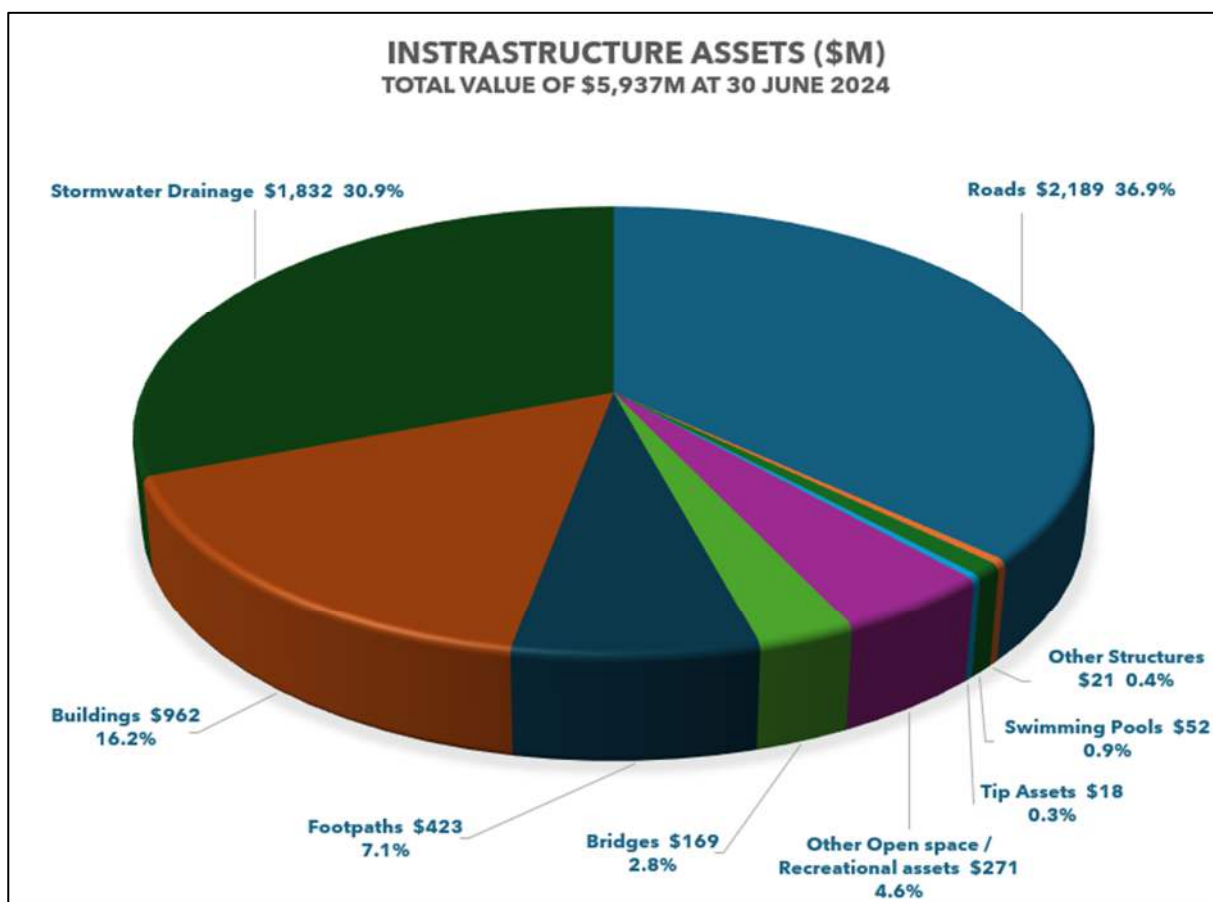


Figure 2: Breakdown of infrastructure asset values by asset class - 30 June 2024

Between 2021 and 2024 financial years, Council's asset portfolio has grown by an average of 15% per annum when comparing Gross Replacement Cost (GRC). At the end of 2021, the aggregate asset GRC was \$4.6B, compared to \$7.0B in 2024. This growth was primarily due to

annual asset revaluations, delivery of capital projects and contributed assets from the West Dapto development.

Asset maintenance

An important indicator of sustainability is our ability to invest and complete the required maintenance to prevent the early decline of assets. The two parts of this indicator are directly linked to the Long-Term Financial Plan and the Workforce Management Strategy. The first part, our ability and financial capacity to invest in the required proactive maintenance for an asset. The second part is whether we have the right people and processes in place to undertake and deliver the required maintenance works.

Council use an estimate of required maintenance as an input into lifecycle costing for assets, together with the capital costs, planned renewals and operational costs. Maintenance is described as an activity required to keep the asset in service and to ensure it reaches the predicted useful life. It includes replacement of general wear and tear items, pothole patching, localised footpath repairs, etc. Maintenance does not extend the useful life of the asset beyond the previously predicted useful life – that would be considered renewal works.



Image: Footpath construction at Bulli Beach.

Estimated required maintenance

The methodology for determining the required maintenance has been variable in prior years. To improve the reliability of this indicator, and as indicated in the AMPs improvement plan, Council will work on establishing proactive maintenance programs and service levels across the range of asset classes. This will enable a more accurate estimate of the required maintenance for assets. For this Plan, Council has assessed required activities on maintenance based on internal and external factors to develop an estimate of required maintenance. This was then benchmarked against similar councils to ensure our estimated required annual maintenance is reasonable. This output has been used to calculate a percentage of the gross asset replacement cost across each asset class using 2023 asset data. This calculated estimated required maintenance will then be indexed annually plus a consideration for asset growth.

The data demonstrates Council's capacity to invest and complete the required infrastructure maintenance. There are some variations in specific asset groups between the estimated required maintenance and the actual expenditure. It is not recommended to alter budget allocations to reflect the estimated required maintenance at this point but rather focus on the improvement action of developing and preparing cost estimates for proactive activities and adjust the percentage based with more accurate estimates.

The forecast estimates using the benchmarked rates are provided below:

Table 2: Estimate required maintenance by asset class

Asset type	Required Maintenance		Actual Maintenance 2022-23	Total Maintenance over life as a % of GRC
	%	\$'000		
Buildings			10,729	
Building Structure	2%	9,247		125%
IPS Building Components	2%	4,766		91%
Open Spaces		-	17,169	
Open Space Areas	8.00%	201		136%
Open Space Areas Land Formation	8.00%	230		120%
Open Space Infrastructure		-		
Beach Access	8.00%	77		280%
Lighting	8.00%	489		174%
Memorials	8.00%	18		400%
Minor Infrastructure (signs, gates, fences, etc)	8.00%	1,785		173%
Outdoor Exercise	8.00%	63		89%
Outdoor Furniture	0.10%	12		2%
Playground	8.00%	1,707		143%
Pool Specific	5.33%	4,068		221%
Shelters	0.65%	79	144	23%
Skate Park	8.00%	278		279%
Sports Areas and Equipment	8.00%	2,080		364%
Utilities	8.00%	2,573		272%
Stormwater	0.42%	7,100	3,812	39%
Transport		-		

Asset type	Required Maintenance		Actual Maintenance 2022-23	Total Maintenance over life as a % of GRC
	%	\$'000		
Bridges	0.50%	757	1,230	37%
Car Parks	0.50%	239		33%
Pathways	0.78%	3,059	2,890	62%
Retaining Walls	0.60%	386		38%
Roads		-	16,766	
Bus Shelters	0.65%	37	144	14%
Guardrails	0.60%	94		31%
Road Segment		-		
Kerb and Gutter	0.44%	1,979		35%
Road Base	0.88%	3,484		67%
Road Earthworks	0.00%	-		0%
Road Seal	0.88%	1,916		37%
Road Subbase	0.00%	-		
Street Furniture	0.10%	20		3%
Transport facilities	0.60%	594		44%
Grand Total		47,341	52,884	

As noted above, the improvement plan within the Asset Management Plan's look to establish comprehensive scheduled maintenance plans to align overall maintenance spend with data noted in the previous table.

Asset management data maturity

A range of information is collected and stored in Council's asset management system to support asset management planning. Further information is covered in the Asset Management Plans. It is important to understand the reliability of the data that underpins many of the assumptions and modelling in the Plans.

A confidence grading rating has been applied using the model as outlined in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Data Confidence Grading System

Confidence Grade	Description
Very High	Data based on sound records, procedures, investigations and analysis, documented properly and agreed as the best method of assessment. Dataset is complete and estimated to be accurate $\pm 2\%$. Observed condition rating and remaining useful life assessment completed within five years on over 70% of the network. Comprehensive revaluation completed within two years and inventory high or very high
High	Data based on sound records, procedures, investigations and analysis, documented properly but has minor shortcomings, for example some of the data is old, some documentation is missing and/or reliance is placed on unconfirmed reports or some extrapolation. Dataset is complete and estimated to be accurate $\pm 10\%$. Observed condition rating and remaining useful life assessment completed within five years on 50-70% of the network. Revaluation completed within three years

Confidence Grade	Description
Medium	Data based on sound records, procedures, investigations and analysis which is incomplete or unsupported, or extrapolated from a limited sample. Dataset is substantially complete but up to 50% is extrapolated data and accuracy estimated \pm 25%. Observed condition rating and remaining useful life assessment completed within five years on 30-50% of the network. Comprehensive revaluation completed over three years ago.
Low	Data is based on unconfirmed verbal reports and/or cursory inspections and analysis. Dataset may not be fully complete and most data is estimated or extrapolated. Accuracy \pm 40%. Observed condition rating and remaining useful life assessment completed within five years on 10-30% of the network. Comprehensive revaluation completed over three years ago and inventory is medium of lower.
Very Low	No or very little data held. Observed condition rating and remaining useful life assessment completed within five years on less than 10% of network.

Table 4 identifies the confidence levels associated with each asset class based on current datasets against asset classed from information collected.

Table 4: Asset Information Confidence Grading Matrix

Asset Class	Inventory	Age	Remaining Useful Life	Gross Replacement Cost	Condition	Validation method
Artwork	High	High	High	Very high	Medium	Visual verification and stock take complete 2024.
Plant, fleet and Equipment	Medium	High	High	High	High	Stocktake.
Buildings	Very high	Medium	High	Very high	High	Desktop review of land parcels, followed by visual inspection of each asset. Completed in 2024.
Stormwater	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	Low	The inventory has been generated based on historic information, flood study data and visual verification. Condition inspection of underground assets is undertaken by camera inspection of samples of the network due to cost constraints.
Marine structures	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	This category of assets is included in the improvement plan to reclassify assets and develop a plan.
Playgrounds	High	High	Medium	Medium	Low	Annual visual inspection.

Asset Class	Inventory	Age	Remaining Useful Life	Gross Replacement Cost	Condition	Validation method
Open space	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Low	Open space asset is planned for revaluation within two years. Data validation will be undertaken in conjunction with the revaluation.
Pools	Medium	High	Low	Low	Medium	Pool assets are planned for revaluation within two years. Data validation will be undertaken in conjunction with the revaluation. Inventory is rated as medium as the assets are currently consolidated per site rather than identified per component.
Bridges	Very high	High	High	High	High	Level 2 inspection completed of network in 2021.
Traffic facilities	High	High	Low	High	Low	Visual and desktop verification completed.
Street furniture, bus shelters and guardrails	High	High	High	High	Very high	Bus shelter and guardrails visual verification completed. Street furniture on-going.
Roads	Very High	Medium	High	High	Very high	Full network assessment undertaken, video capture and machine rated condition.
Pathways	High	High	High	High	Medium	Full network inspection scheduled within an 18-month period.
Waste Assets	Low	High	Low	Low	Low	Full network inspection scheduled within an 18-month period.
Library resources	High	High	High	High	High	Stock monitored through collection system.
Information management and technology	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	Medium	Asset register and connected devices monitored electronically.
Other assets						To be defined.
Non-Depreciable Assets (Land)	High	N/A	N/A	High	N/A	Land information register.

Additional information on the data points noted above are discussed in more detail within the draft Asset Management Plans.

Asset condition and performance

Recent condition assessments provide a clear picture of Wollongong's infrastructure:

- **Condition Ratings:** Approximately 76% of Council assets are in good to excellent condition, reflecting consistent investment in maintenance and upgrades.
- **Areas Requiring Attention:** Key challenges include addressing ageing road infrastructure and enhancing the resilience of stormwater systems to cope with increasing urbanisation and climate impacts.

Many assets have a relatively long service life and we expect to have profile that shows a range of conditions across the network. The consequence of failure and impact on service delivery for different asset types will drive our strategy for intervention and renewal. We plan interventions and renewals at an optimal time for assets that have a higher impact on service delivery, such as roads, stormwater and buildings. Climate change and natural disasters can impact the condition of assets. One event can result in the rapid deterioration of, and in some cases, failure of assets. In these instances, we typically consider options for improvements to improve the resilience of infrastructure networks to future events.

Future challenges and opportunities

Challenges:

- Natural disasters - Infrastructure Australia¹ predicts the annual cost to infrastructure from natural disasters in New South Wales will triple (in real 2019-2020 dollars) between 2020-2021 and 2061. Council's infrastructure renewal program may be delayed due to the:
 - prioritisation of work on infrastructure damaged from natural disasters
 - increased cost of repairing, or replacing, and/or increasing resilience infrastructure impacted by natural disasters
- increased demand for services driven by population growth

Opportunities:

- Leveraging digital technology for predictive maintenance,
- Forming partnerships with other levels of government to co-invest in infrastructure,
- Exploring innovative funding mechanisms to bridge resource gaps,
- Increases to asset useful lives due to improved preventative maintenance programs, renewal treatments and improved asset condition data.

¹ Infrastructure Australia, 2021. *A Pathway to Infrastructure Resilience Advisory Paper 1: Opportunities for systemic change*

Strategic actions and priorities

This section outlines the strategic initiatives that Wollongong City Council will pursue to ensure the sustainable management of its assets. These actions align with the objectives of the Community Strategic Plan, Delivery Program and Resourcing Strategy.

Forecast asset renewal

Council's approach to asset renewal is informed by a data-driven understanding of asset performance, condition, impacts of climate adaptation and mitigation and community priorities. Over the next 10 years, Council has identified a forecast renewal expenditure, including upgrade and expansion works, of \$736M to ensure key infrastructure remains safe, functional and fit for purpose. Based on current funding and asset renewal forecasts within the Long-Term Financial Plan, it appears Council has sufficient financial capacity to meet renewal requirements over the next 10 years.

- **Priority areas:** Transport infrastructure, stormwater systems, and community facilities are prioritised for renewal based on criticality and risk.
- **Condition-based renewals:** Assets rated in poor or very poor condition are targeted for immediate renewal or replacement to mitigate safety risks and service disruptions.
- **Funding alignment:** Renewal programs are integrated with the Long-Term Financial Plan to balance financial sustainability with community needs.

Planned upgrades and expansion

In response to population growth and emerging community needs, Council will undertake targeted asset upgrades and expansions including:

- Enhancing pathways (footpaths, shared paths and cycleways) to improve accessibility and promote active transport.
- Expanding stormwater and floodplain infrastructure to address high-priority areas.
- West Dapto Road expansion.
- Cleveland Road expansion.
- West Dapto Orbital planning and design.
- Southern Suburbs Community Centre and Library.
- Helensburgh Community Centre and Library.
- Helensburgh Pool.
- Upgrading public transport, community and recreational facilities to improve equity and accessibility.
- Port Kembla Community Centre upgrade.
- Stuart Park Amenities upgrade.
- Beaton Park Redevelopment.
- Traffic facilities.

The following table provide a consolidated summary of the total investment per year into renewal, upgrade, expansion and new works on assets. It is a total combined view of both non-infrastructure and infrastructure assets

Table 5 - Capital Investment \$'000											
Item	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029	2029-2030	2030-2031	2031-2032	2032-2033	2033-2034	2034-2035
Plant and Equipment	7,995	4,618	4,795	4,227	7,144	5,871	5,946	5,723	6,101	6,202	6,305
Library collection and resources	1,374	1,404	1,438	1,468	1,503	1,467	1,502	1,537	1,573	1,610	1,647
Information management and technology	1,340	1,400	900	1,050	933	1,308	1,308	1,308	1,308	1,308	1,308
Artworks, Antiquities and Memorials	104	107	110	113	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Land	250	250	-	-	-	120	120	120	120	120	120
Subtotal - non-infrastructure	11,062	7,778	7,243	6,857	9,681	8,866	8,976	8,788	9,202	9,340	9,481
Roads	26,047	45,725	51,940	39,257	35,584	61,836	64,295	70,240	59,775	62,922	53,589
Bridges	895	3,435	3,010	3,400	1,625	2,825	980	527	502	580	5,625
Transport facilities	3,248	3,020	3,805	1,660	700	1,500	1,550	1,565	1,600	1,525	1,600
Street furniture, bus shelters, and guardrail	93	535	435	625	625	475	425	1,150	375	1,150	325
Pathways	9,505	6,359	11,815	11,100	9,150	9,850	9,850	9,850	9,850	9,850	9,850
Stormwater and floodplain management	9,942	9,211	5,030	6,400	7,200	5,575	5,575	5,575	5,575	5,575	5,575
Playgrounds	1,057	1,195	1,450	1,450	1,450	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500
Open spaces	8,735	5,005	9,546	1,982	1,920	1,957	1,439	1,486	1,534	1,595	2,908
Pool structures	1,350	5,500	-	500	6,010	2,893	2,908	2,923	2,939	2,959	2,980
Buildings	15,430	41,865	47,805	43,120	14,120	15,838	15,759	15,668	15,693	15,693	15,693

Table 5 - Capital Investment \$'000											
Item	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029	2029-2030	2030-2031	2031-2032	2032-2033	2033-2034	2034-2035
Waste	12,975	5,610	6,990	12,185	23,970	15,901	9,603	9,542	460	176	20,189
Subtotal - Infrastructure	89,277	127,460	141,826	121,678	102,354	120,149	113,883	120,025	99,802	103,525	119,833
Non-Project Allocations	5,656	4,177	4,923	6,449	12,791	13,473	19,455	23,737	25,506	29,269	30,166
Total	105,995	139,415	153,991	134,985	124,826	142,488	142,314	152,550	134,511	142,134	159,480

The following table provide a consolidated summary of the total investment per year into renewal, upgrade, expansion, and new works on assets. It is a total combined view of both non-infrastructure and infrastructure assets.

Table 6 - Capital Investment \$'000 - Capital Expense Type											
	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029	2029-2030	2030-2031	2031-2032	2032-2033	2033-2034	2034-2035
Renewal works¹	51,536	61,751	41,327	45,384	57,595	54,228	52,086	52,179	51,945	52,962	59,061
Upgrade works¹	13,075	14,902	32,266	23,567	16,600	18,876	12,178	12,117	2,935	2,651	22,664
Expansion works	4,380	42,062	55,460	36,630	350	36,260	38,227	42,983	34,611	37,129	29,612
New acquisition works	23,679	16,524	20,015	22,955	37,490	19,251	19,968	21,134	19,114	19,723	17,577
Voluntary Purchase Scheme	-	-	-	-	-	400	400	400	400	400	400
Capital Projects	5,656	4,177	4,923	6,449	12,791	13,473	19,455	23,737	25,506	29,269	30,166
Totals	105,995	139,415	153,991	134,985	124,826	142,488	142,314	152,550	134,511	142,134	159,480

¹Figures shown for renewal and upgrades are presented in today's dollars and are not indexed.

Climate resilience initiatives

Council is committed to building resilient infrastructure that can withstand the impacts of climate change:

- Incorporating green infrastructure solutions, such as vegetated swales and rain gardens, into urban stormwater systems.
- Designing transport infrastructure with climate adaptability in mind, including heat-resilient materials and flood-tolerant designs.
- Increasing tree canopy cover and green spaces to reduce urban heat island effects.

Asset Management improvement initiatives

Corporate Initiatives

These actions apply organisation-wide, ensuring a consistent and strategic approach to asset management.

Data Quality and Systems Integration

Implement a single, consolidated asset register to streamline data management

Enhance integration between asset management systems and financial planning tools to support evidence-based decision-making

Capacity Building

Provide specialised training for staff in advanced asset management methodologies

Build organisational capacity to adopt innovative practices, such as predictive maintenance and lifecycle cost modelling

Community Engagement

Foster deeper community involvement in prioritising asset improvements through consultation and surveys

Sustainability

Embed climate adaptation strategies into all asset planning and design processes

Develop renewable energy solutions for Council-operated facilities

Asset-class specific improvement actions

Each asset class has unique challenges and opportunities. Specific improvement actions include:

Transport Assets

Develop a prioritised road rehabilitation and resurfacing program to address deteriorating infrastructure

Expand footpath and cycleway networks to support active and sustainable transport options

Improve signage and lighting to enhance road safety

Stormwater and Drainage

Conduct a comprehensive audit of stormwater infrastructure to identify areas at risk of flooding

Conduct a comprehensive audit of stormwater infrastructure ownership responsibilities and support with educational materials

Invest in nature-based solutions, such as wetlands and vegetated swales, to improve water quality and flood resilience

Buildings and Facilities

Retrofit ageing community centres and libraries to meet modern accessibility standards

Expand multi-use facilities to accommodate increased community demand

Incorporate renewable energy solutions, such as solar panels and battery storage

Parks and Open Spaces

Increase tree canopy coverage in urban parks to mitigate heat island effects

Upgrade playgrounds and recreational spaces with inclusive design principles

Enhance the resilience of natural areas through revegetation and weed management programs

Coastal and Environmental Assets

Strengthen coastal protection structures to address rising sea levels and storm surges

Expand conservation areas to protect biodiversity and natural ecosystems

Monitor and mitigate erosion along key beaches and coastal zones

Implementation approach

Council will implement these actions through a structured program, which includes:

Short-Term Priorities: Addressing critical asset risks and immediate community needs.

Medium-Term Goals: Upgrading high-use facilities and expanding transport infrastructure.

Long-Term Vision: Achieving full integration of sustainability principles and contemporary technologies.

Monitoring and reporting

Council will regularly report on progress, with updates integrated into reporting processes such as Quarterly Review Statements and the Annual Report (including audited financial statements). Performance metrics will assess the effectiveness of actions, focusing on community satisfaction, service reliability and cost efficiency.

Maturity assessment

A maturity assessment provides a baseline for Council's current asset management capabilities and identifies key areas for enhancement. This assessment aligns with the ISO 55000 framework and industry best practices, focusing on the following key elements:

Strategic Alignment:

- Current: Asset management practices are integrated into the Resourcing Strategy and Community Strategic Plan.
- Improvement Goal: Deepen alignment across all asset classes with strategic objectives, especially sustainability and resilience.

Data and Systems:

- Current: Asset management data is captured in centralised systems, but gaps exist in condition reporting for certain asset classes.
- Improvement Goal: Achieve complete, accurate and real-time asset data reporting.

Governance and Accountability:

- Current: Clear roles and responsibilities are established at strategic and operational levels.
- Improvement Goal: Strengthen oversight mechanisms through enhanced performance reporting and risk management frameworks.

Lifecycle Management:

- Current: Lifecycle costing is applied selectively across asset categories.
- Improvement Goal: Embed lifecycle cost analysis universally in decision-making processes.

Community Engagement:

- Current: Community feedback is incorporated into strategic planning but less so into specific asset class priorities.
- Improvement Goal: Enhance engagement processes for asset-specific planning and prioritisation.

Improvement roadmap based on maturity assessment

Based on the maturity assessment, Council has prioritised the following actions to advance its asset management maturity:

Data Integration: Establish advanced predictive analytics for asset performance.

Capacity Building: Develop staff training programs on emerging technologies and sustainability principles.

Expanded Reporting: Implement KPIs that track lifecycle performance, community satisfaction, and environmental impact.

Governance and accountability

Governance and accountability frameworks underpin Wollongong City Council's asset management practices. These frameworks ensure transparency, compliance and alignment with strategic objectives.

Roles and responsibilities

Council: Sets the strategic direction for asset management, approves funding allocations and monitors progress against strategic goals.

Executive Leadership Team: Oversees the implementation of asset management strategies and ensures alignment with organisational objectives.

Operational Teams: Conduct day-to-day asset management activities, including maintenance, inspections and data collection.

Risk management and compliance

Council integrates risk management into all aspects of asset management to safeguard public safety and infrastructure resilience.

Critical Asset Risk Assessments: Identifies risks associated with critical assets and implements mitigation strategies.

Compliance with Standards: Ensures adherence to legislative requirements, including the Local Government Act 1993 and NSW Integrated Planning and Reporting Guidelines.

Contingency Planning: Develops robust emergency response plans for infrastructure disruptions caused by extreme weather events or other hazards.

Individual Asset Management Plans include detailed sections on specific approaches to managing risks related to each asset class.

Performance monitoring and reporting

Council is committed to transparent reporting on asset management outcomes:

- Regularly reviewing and reporting on asset condition and performance.
- Publishing annual updates on renewal, maintenance and capital works progress via the Annual Report.
- Using performance metrics aligned with community satisfaction and service level benchmarks to assess success.

Implementation approach

The success of this Asset Management Strategy depends on effective implementation. Wollongong City Council has established a structured approach to ensure that the actions and priorities outlined in this document are achieved within the planning horizon.

Integration with key plans:

- Actions outlined in the Strategy are embedded within the Long-Term Financial Plan, Delivery Program and Operational Plan.
- Alignment with the Workforce Management Strategy and IMT Digital Strategy ensures the availability of skills and resources necessary for implementation.

Phased Delivery:

- **Short-Term (1-3 years):** Focus on addressing critical risks, improving data systems and implementing immediate upgrades for high-priority assets.
- **Medium-Term (4-7 years):** Expand on sustainability initiatives, lifecycle costing implementation and infrastructure renewal for priority areas.
- **Long-Term (8-10 years):** Achieve full integration of climate resilience, digital transformation and future-ready infrastructure.

Collaborative Partnerships

- Work with the NSW and Commonwealth Government, community groups, and suppliers to complete key infrastructure projects.
- Leverage grant funding opportunities to enhance financial sustainability that aligned with key projects in Council's Infrastructure Delivery Program.

Monitoring and continuous improvement

Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of this Strategy are critical to its success. Council will:

Annual Reporting:

- Include progress updates in Council's Annual Report and Operational Plan reviews.

Performance Metrics:

- Use Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to measure the effectiveness of asset management practices, such as:
 - Community satisfaction scores.
 - Asset condition ratings.
 - Cost-effectiveness of maintenance and renewal programs.

Review Cycle:

- Conduct a comprehensive review of the Asset Management Strategy every four years, in line with the Community Strategic Plan and Delivery Program cycle, to ensure its relevance and responsiveness to emerging challenges.

Implementation and review

Measuring the financial performance of infrastructure assets is crucial for effective management, maintenance and long-term decision-making. The importance of capturing and tracking infrastructure assets performance can be seen from several perspectives:

1. Accurate measurement of infrastructure assets enables correct valuation, which is essential for financial reporting, budgeting and decision-making.
2. Measuring whole of life costs assists in evaluating investment effectiveness and sustainability.
3. Assists in prioritising proactive maintenance activities, ensuring optimal asset performance.
4. Accurate measurement of infrastructure assets enables effective utilisation, reducing waste and optimising resources.
5. Informs capital planning, ensuring alignment with organisational goals and objectives.
6. Enables evaluation of sustainability performance, supporting environmental and social responsibility initiatives.

Council use several indicators in relation to infrastructure asset management and includes asset classes identified in the report on infrastructure assets only. The indicators are described in more detail below:

Indicator 1: Long-term Asset Renewal Funding Ratio

$$\frac{\text{Funds Available for Asset Replacement}}{\text{Annualised Asset Renewal Cost}}$$

Target: 1:1 or 100%

This measure provides information about the longer-term average cost requirement for renewals that removes cyclical peaks and troughs. It is important that future costs are considered early to avoid renewal cost shocks in future periods.

Indicator 2: Asset Management Renewal Funding Ratio

$$\frac{\text{Assets Due for Replacement}}{\text{Funds Available for Asset Replacement}}$$

Target: 1:1 or 100%

This measure informs increase in carried forward backlog. It assesses whether or not the capital program is managing asset replacement in a timely manner. Assets not renewed in current period will form part of the following years backlog.

Indicator 3: New & Enhanced Asset Lifecycle Ratio

$$\frac{\text{Annualised Asset Lifecycle Cost of New \& Enhanced Assets}}{\text{Annualised Asset Lifecycle Budget for New \& Enhanced Assets}}$$

Target: 1:1 or 100%

This measure informs operational performance of assets capitalised in the current year against allocated asset operational growth funding for same period.

Indicator 4 – Scheduled Maintenance Performance Ratio

$$\frac{\text{Scheduled Maintenance}}{\text{Budgeted Maintenance}}$$

Target: greater than 80%

This ratio measures performance of scheduled maintenance. Managing scheduled maintenance at 80% of total maintenance spend can reduce upfront costs by avoiding investments in preventive programs.

Indicator 5 – Maintenance Backlog Ratio

Target: \$nil

This measure tracks any maintenance backlogs over time and assessed at asset class level.

Indicator 6 – Renewal backlog Ratio

Target: \$nil

This measure tracks asset renewal backlog over time and assessed at asset class level.

Glossary of Terms

Key terms and definitions used in this Strategy, including:

Critical Assets: Assets essential to community safety, service delivery, or economic stability.

Lifecycle Costing: A method to evaluate the total cost of ownership of an asset over its entire lifespan.

Sustainability: The practice of meeting current needs without compromising future generations' ability to meet their own needs.

Expansion Works: Expenditure that extends the capacity of an existing asset to provide benefits to new users at the same standard as is provided to existing beneficiaries.

New asset: A new asset that provides service that does not currently exist. This should not be confused with the provision of a new asset that replaces an existing asset, such as replacing a section of stormwater pipe. This is considered a renewal as there was an asset providing the service previously.

Renewal Works: Expenditure on an existing asset or on replacing an existing asset that returns the service capability of the asset to its original capability. May include the replacement with a modern equivalent asset – e.g., replacing the roof on a building with similar roofing materials.

Upgrade works: Expenditure that enhances an existing asset to provide a higher level of service or extends the life beyond that which it had originally. This includes expenditure provision of a replacement asset at a higher level of service, that part of the cost that relates to upgrade.



Image: Pedestrians crossing at Hill 60, Port Kembla.

Wollongong is Sustainable Connected Vibrant Inclusive

We are a sustainable and climate resilient city

We have well planned, connected, and liveable places

We foster a diverse economy, and we value innovation, culture, and creativity

We have a healthy, respectful, and inclusive community



Image: Council staff working at Crown Street, Wollongong.

Wollongong City Council

Workforce Management Strategy 2025-2029

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Image: Council staff at Administration Building, Wollongong.

Introduction

Wollongong City Council is dedicated to being a leading local government that enhances our city's quality of life, environment and community engagement. Through effective leadership, community involvement and a steadfast commitment to service, Council strives to support a vibrant, engaging and connected city. Our people are our greatest asset. Without their dedication, skills and expertise, we cannot deliver the essential services, infrastructure and initiatives that our community relies on.

This Workforce Management Strategy outlines how Council will support, enable and develop our people over the next four years to ensure we remain agile, future-ready and equipped to achieve our strategic objectives.

This Strategy has been designed to address both current and anticipated workforce challenges by identifying opportunities to enhance the capacity and capability of our people. It focuses on ensuring Council has a capable, enabled workforce who are engaged through alignment and accountability whilst maintaining a healthy and safe environment.

This Strategy is built around four interconnected strategic focus areas, designed to address key workforce drivers of change and ensure long-term workforce sustainability and support the community's vision and goals through the following focus areas:



**Inclusive and
Engaged**



**Aligned and
Accountable**



**Capable and
Enabled**



**Healthy
and Safe**

This Strategy also supports workforce transformation by strengthening flexibility, internal mobility and succession planning to build workforce agility. It focuses on enhancing employee experiences to attract, retain and develop a high-performing, purpose-driven workforce while optimising processes and systems to improve service efficiency, accountability and performance. Additionally, the Strategy reinforces a culture of innovation and leadership by investing in training, career development and inclusive leadership initiatives. By aligning with Council's Community Strategic Plan (2035) and Delivery Program (2025-2029), this Workforce Strategy ensures we have the people and capabilities required to meet our long-term strategic objectives.

To achieve these goals, Council will take a targeted approach to workforce planning and development. This includes reviewing and optimising service delivery processes to increase efficiency and performance, while continuously exploring initiatives that enhance the employee experience. Strategies will also focus on attracting and retaining a skilled workforce through targeted talent development initiatives. Further investment in fit-for-purpose equipment and technology will enable employees to work effectively and efficiently in a modern, digitally enabled environment.

The successful implementation of this Strategy will result in a diverse, engaged and high-performing workforce that aligns with Council's values and goals. It will enhance workforce efficiency, agility and capability to meet the needs of our community, while increasing employee satisfaction and retention through improved engagement and career development. Most importantly, this Strategy reinforces Council's commitment to creating a safe, inclusive and healthy workplace where employees can thrive.

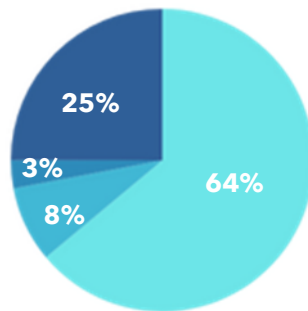
By fostering a proactive and adaptable workforce, Council will be well-positioned to deliver exceptional service to the community. This Workforce Management Strategy lays the foundation for a dynamic, connected, and future-ready workforce that can meet emerging challenges with confidence.

Who are we?

Snapshot of the Wollongong City Council Workforce



1835 employees deliver services to the community



64% of the workforce are permanent, **8%** are on term contracts, **3%** are Cadets, Apprentices and Trainees; and **25%** are casual or other

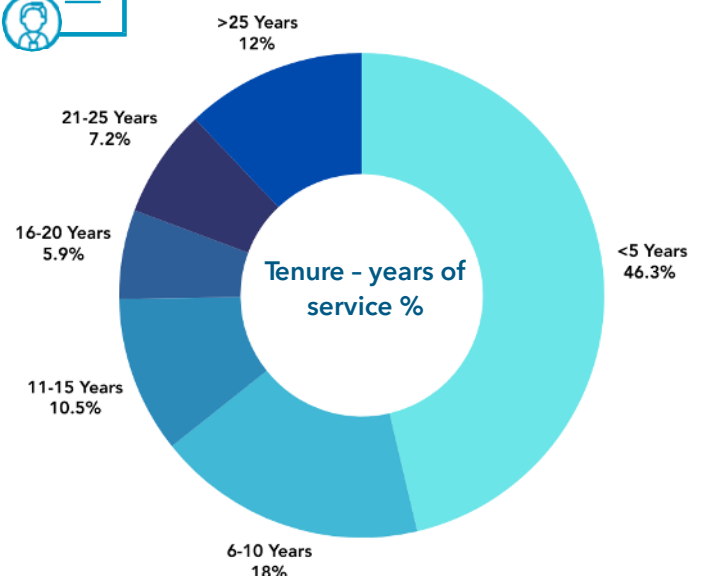


76.8% of our workforce live within the Wollongong Local Government Area

Generations	Employees
Silent Generation (1928-1945)	3 0.16%
Baby Boomers (1946-1962)	217 11.83%
Generation X (1963-1980)	817 44.52%
Generation Y (1981-1994)	446 24.31%
Generation Z (1995-2009)	352 19.18%
	1835 100%



10.1 years is the average tenure of our workforce



1.4% identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Peoples



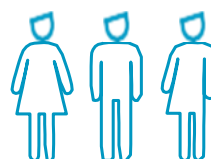
2% identify as living with a disability



3.3% identify as members of a minority group and **8.3%** were born outside Australia



45.4 years is the average age of our workforce



We are **45.5% female**, **54.2% male** and **0.3% indeterminate/intersex/unspecified**



Image: Council crew at a Tourist Park.

What does a successful workforce look like?

<p>Aligned with strategic goals</p> <p>Contributes to achieving Council's priorities and delivering community outcomes effectively.</p>	<p>Accountable and transparent</p> <p>Demonstrates integrity and openness in decision-making and service delivery activities.</p>
<p>Capable and multi-skilled</p> <p>Equipped with diverse skills to adapt and respond to changing roles and challenges.</p>	<p>Diverse and inclusive</p> <p>Support the community it serves and fosters a sense of inclusion and belonging through equitable practices.</p>
<p>Purpose driven and values aligned leadership</p> <p>Leaders inspire and guide teams with clear alignment to organisational values and strategic goals.</p>	<p>Engaged and motivated</p> <p>Employees are empowered, committed, passionate about delivering high-quality outcomes.</p>
<p>Supported by flexible work practices</p> <p>Offers adaptable arrangement that support a balance of employee needs with organisational priorities.</p>	<p>Collaborative and connected</p> <p>Teams work cohesively to achieve shared objectives.</p>
<p>Future focused and innovative</p> <p>Embraces and encourages new ideas, technologies and processes to enhance service delivery and efficiency.</p>	<p>Committed to continuous learning</p> <p>Promotes and supports professional development through training, mentoring and career pathways.</p>
<p>Committed to a safety and wellbeing</p> <p>Embeds a culture of physical and psychological wellbeing across the organisation through daily practices and systems.</p>	<p>Responsive and open to change</p> <p>Adapts to evolving circumstances, embraces opportunities for continuous improvement and demonstrates resilience during change.</p>
<p>Committed to Customer Experience</p> <p>Delivers high-quality services that are customer focused, accessible and responsive to community needs.</p>	



Image: Council staff at Wollongong Foreshore.

Looking forward - planning for our people

To effectively plan for our workforce, we need to consider the anticipated trends, challenges and opportunities over the next four years.

Council recognises several critical areas of change that will influence workforce management and planning in the coming years. These changes will require strategic responses to ensure our people are prepared to meet evolving challenges while continuing to deliver high-quality services to the community. Our focus areas, strategies and actions support our workforce to embrace and respond to these challenges.

Wollongong City Council workforce specific trends, challenges and opportunities

Advancements in technology, including Artificial Intelligence (AI) and automation	Scale and pace of change
Attracting and retaining talent	Increasing collaboration and reducing silos
Balancing community and customer expectations with organisational sustainability	Balancing long-term priorities with short-term projects/issues
Loss of skills and knowledge to a retiring workforce	Changing/increasing legislation and public policy
Increased focus on diversity and inclusion	Changing work arrangements including increased demand for hybrid working
Building digital literacy and data skills	Increased need for workforce agility
Keeping our people safe and well	Building workforce resilience
Engaging an aging workforce	Navigating intergenerational workforce dynamics



Image: Council staff with a customer at Beaton Park Leisure Centre, Wollongong.

Drivers of change over the next four years

Agile workforce management

Council is committed to fostering an agile workforce that can adapt to change and respond effectively to the evolving needs and priorities of the community. To achieve this, Council will continue to enhance workforce flexibility through cross-skilling employees, enabling internal mobility, supporting hybrid work arrangements and refining workforce planning to meet the objectives of *Council's Delivery Program 2025-2029*. These efforts directly support the broader goals of the *Our Wollongong Our Future 2035 Community Strategic Plan*, particularly fostering a well-connected, liveable city through responsive and adaptable service delivery.

With 32.2% of the workforce aged 55 and over and 19.5% aged 60 and over, Council recognises the impact of an aging workforce. To address this demographic shift, we will continue to implement strategies that facilitate knowledge transfer and maintain critical expertise. These efforts include mentorship and knowledge-sharing programs, as well as initiatives that support career transitions through our Transition to Retirement Policy. This approach reflects Council's commitment to inclusivity and respect for all stages of working life, supporting *Goal 4 of the Community Strategic Plan (We have a healthy, respectful, and inclusive community)*.

Succession planning remains a priority to ensure business continuity and the retention of critical skills across all roles. To build a future ready workforce, Council will continue investing in education-to-employment programs, including traineeships, apprenticeships, cadetships, graduate and work experience placements, fostering a pipeline of emerging talent. These initiatives align with *Goal 3 of the Community Strategic Plan (We foster a diverse economy, and we value innovation, culture, and creativity)* by supporting economic growth and skills development within the region.

These strategies will support Council in attracting and retaining skilled talent in a competitive market, ensuring our workforce is equipped to deliver exceptional services to the community.

Emerging technological and digital transformation

Council recognises the transformative role of technology in driving innovation, productivity, and agility in service delivery to the community. To keep pace with the rapid pace of technological advancements, Council will continuously review its digital infrastructure and adopt tools that enhance business intelligence, data analytics, systems and processes to better support business decision-making, collaboration and efficiency. These initiatives directly contribute to *Goal 3 of the Community Strategic Plan (We foster a diverse economy, and we value innovation, culture, and creativity)* by strengthening Council's capacity for innovation and supporting a future-focused economy.

Council's *Digital Strategy 2025-2029* will guide these efforts by identifying opportunities to optimise productivity, streamline processes and enhance services for the community. We will be adaptive to global trends and implement new ways of working that are aligned to our future customer and staffing needs.

A key focus will be enhancing digital literacy across the organisation to equip our people with the skills, confidence and resources needed to effectively utilise digital solutions. System updates will align with best practice, as outlined in the *Digital Strategy*, to leverage technology to improve customer experience and operational efficiency. These initiatives will ensure Council remains agile and responsive to technological advancements.

Drivers of change over the next four years

Attracting and retaining talent

Our people are our greatest asset in achieving our goals. Attracting and retaining a diverse workforce with a broad range of skills and experiences is essential to delivering high-quality services to our community. We recognise the broader employment market faces ongoing skills and resource shortages, making attracting and retaining talent challenging. To remain competitive, we will continue to strengthen our Employee Value Proposition (EVP) by offering competitive rewards, benefits and career opportunities that position us as an employer of choice.

We understand that to retain talent we need to remain focused on employee engagement, supporting continuous development and providing career progression pathways that enable our people to actively shape their growth and development within Council.

Diversity and inclusion

Council acknowledges and recognises that its strength lies in the diversity of its people. We are committed to fostering an inclusive environment where every employee feels valued, respected and empowered. Council is committed to embedding culturally safe practices, providing a physical and psychological safety environment and supporting access and equity at all levels to create a workplace that reflects the diversity of its community.

Building on the achievements of key policies and action plans—including the *Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging Policy*, the *Equal Employment Opportunity Action Plan*, the *Disability Inclusion Action Plan*, the *Reconciliation Action Plan*, and the *Child Safety Action Plan*—Council will continue to embed inclusion across the workforce.

Leadership and workforce capability

Council is committed to investing in its people by building a capable and adaptable workforce equipped with the skills and training necessary to deliver a high-quality service to the community. Workforce capability will continue to be enhanced through targeted training and development programs designed to prepare employees for emerging roles alongside career pathways that support professional growth and strengthen succession planning.

Council will continue to invest in leadership development programs that equip leaders at all levels with the tools and skills needed to navigate complex challenges, drive innovation and support their teams effectively. These programs will support leaders to meet organisational needs and deliver on strategic priorities.

By embedding a culture of continuous learning, innovation and adaptability Council will build a resilient workforce that is ready to meet the future needs of the community.

Governance and Compliance

Strong governance and compliance are fundamental to ensuring accountability, transparency and alignment with evolving regulatory requirements. Council is committed to maintaining a robust governance framework that supports operational integrity and fosters community trust and confidence.

Drivers of change over the next four years

Governance and Compliance Continued

To strengthen governance and compliance practices, Council will:

Work collaboratively with the elected Council to align workforce priorities with updated strategic objectives and community expectations.

Monitor and respond to legislative changes to ensure compliance and identify opportunities for enhanced service delivery.

Enhance internal governance frameworks, ensuring policies and procedures remain transparent, robust and aligned with evolving regulatory requirements.

By fostering a culture of adaptability and maintaining strong internal controls, Council will be well-positioned to meet future challenges, uphold governance excellence and deliver on its commitments to the community with accountability and transparency.

Health, Safety and Wellbeing

The health, safety and wellbeing of our people are fundamental to Council's Workforce Management Strategy. We will continue to embed preventative health models across the organisation while promoting a culture of physical and mental wellbeing.

Council will continue to foster a safe and supportive workplace by implementing initiatives that focus on preventative health, risk prevention, support recovery at work, enhanced education and awareness and promoting positive workplace behaviours and building resilience, contributing to all Community Strategic Plan goals by ensuring the long-term wellbeing and resilience of our workforce – essential for sustaining high-quality community service delivery in the face of emerging challenges.



Image: Council staff member at a community engagement event.

Wollongong is Sustainable Connected Vibrant Inclusive

We are a sustainable and climate resilient city

We have well planned, connected, and liveable places

We foster a diverse economy, and we value innovation, culture, and creativity

We have a healthy, respectful, and inclusive community



Image: Council staff with a community member at the Customer Contact Centre, Wollongong.

Our Focus Areas

Our Workforce Strategy focus areas have been developed through engagement with our people, together with a review of our Community Strategic Plan and Delivery Program objectives to determine current and emerging workforce requirements. These focus areas respond to workforce drivers, ensuring our organisation remains future-ready, adaptable and high-performing.

We have identified four key Focus Areas, each with distinct objectives and aligned actions.



**Inclusive and
Engaged**



**Aligned and
Accountable**



**Capable and
Enabled**



**Healthy
and Safe**



Image: Council staff with a community member at the Flagstaff Hill, Wollongong.

Focus Area 1 - Inclusive and Engaged

Overview

We strive to create a workplace culture where all employees feel valued, respected and included, fostering engagement and a sense of belonging. Empowering diverse voices to contribute to decision-making and innovation, ensuring our people and customers feel represented and understood.

To create a workplace where everyone feels valued and included, we are shifting from conventional approaches to more dynamic strategies that celebrate diversity, foster belonging, and promote cultural and psychological safety.

Our vision is to create an inclusive employee experience where everyone thrives. By embedding culturally safe practices, equitable recognition programs and providing continuous development opportunities, we ensure every voice is heard and every contribution is valued.

Through enhanced employee experience initiatives and a refined Employee Value Proposition (EVP), we aim to attract and retain diverse talent. This inclusive approach empowers our people to bring their authentic selves to work, strengthening engagement and alignment of our people.

How this will be achieved

Embed diversity, equity, and inclusion principles across workforce policies and practices.

Foster a culture of belonging through employee engagement initiatives and recognition programs.

Build a workforce that reflects the diversity of the community through inclusive attraction strategies.

Strengthen communication and feedback mechanisms to ensure our people feel valued.



Image: Council staff meeting, Burelli Street, Wollongong.

Focus Area 2 - Aligned and Accountable

Overview

We ensure our people understand their role in achieving Council's goals and are accountable for delivering consistent and high-quality outcomes. Building a culture of ownership, values driven behaviour and shared responsibility is fundamental to our success. This focus area drives clarity, commitment and responsibility across our workforce.

To support this, we will embed streamlined communication systems and robust performance metrics to ensure that employees understand how their individual contributions create an extraordinary workplace. Cross-functional collaboration and decision-making frameworks will empower teams to deliver consistent, high-quality outcomes.

By embedding a culture of accountability, we ensure that our workforce is unified, focused and committed to delivering on the promises we make to our community.

How this will be achieved

Align individual and team performance objectives with organisational priorities to deliver on strategic outcomes.

Strengthen leadership accountability and value-driven decision-making at all levels.

Enhance communication systems to ensure clarity of purpose and direction across teams.

Establish performance metrics to track progress and ensure operational alignment.

Build a culture of shared responsibility and continuous improvement across the workforce.



Image: Council lifeguards at City Beach, Wollongong.

Focus Area 3 - Capable and Enabled

Overview

We equip our people with the skills, knowledge, tools and resources they need to excel in their roles and adapt to future workforce challenges.

We will continue to invest in professional development, including enhancing our leadership capability, mentorship programs and career pathways. By prioritising access to contemporary tools and digital literacy programs, we enable employees to work efficiently and effectively in a modern workplace.

This commitment to enabling our workforce is key to achieving sustainable success.

How this will be achieved

Invest in professional development to strengthen workforce capability.

Ensure employees have access to fit-for-purpose tools and technology to support their roles.

Create pathways for career growth and succession planning across the organisation.

Enable workforce agility by preparing employees for evolving roles and challenges.

Build systems that encourage knowledge sharing and collaboration.



Image: Council crews completing roadworks, at Dapto.

Focus Area 4 - Healthy and Safe

Overview

Council is committed to fostering a supportive, healthy and safe work environment. This focus area enhances employee wellbeing, workplace safety and a positive organisational culture, which are essential for service excellence and supports all [Community Strategic Plan](#) goals.

We prioritise the physical, mental and wellbeing of employees, recognising that a safe and supportive workplace is essential for both productivity and employee success.

We will maintain our comprehensive Work, Health and Safety (WHS) management system and provide education programs that emphasise safety and wellness.

By celebrating safe workplace behaviors and promoting positive practices, we create an environment where our people can thrive. This holistic approach to health and safety not only protects our people but strengthens our organisational performance.

How this will be achieved

Promote employee wellbeing through preventative health models and wellness programs.

Build a strong safety culture through proactive risk management and compliance.

Ensure workplace practices support physical, mental health for all employees.

Foster work-life balance through policies and practices that prioritise flexibility and wellbeing.



Image: Council crew at Botanic Garden, Keiraville.

Inclusive and Engaged

Aligned and
Accountable

Capable and enabled

Healthy and Safe



Workforce Planning Across Council

Workforce planning is an ongoing exercise in a dynamic operating environment that exists within Divisional Workforce Plans. They enable the implementation of this Strategy and Council's ongoing commitment to its people.

Council recognises several critical areas of change that will influence workforce management and planning in the coming years. These changes will require strategic responses to ensure our people are prepared to meet evolving challenges while continuing to deliver high-quality services to the community. Our focus areas, strategies and actions support our workforce to embrace and respond to these challenges.

Strategic workforce planning ensures we:

Identify future business directions and workforce needs based on global and sector challenges and opportunities.

Analyse and understand the make-up of the current workforce.

Determine the necessary skills, capabilities and competencies required to achieve strategic and operational goals in the future.

Develop strategies and actions that will assist in achieving these goals.

Are better able to respond to the changing needs of our customers and identify strategies that are people-focused, unleash human potential and contribute to our business success.

Evaluation and Review

This Strategy will be reviewed annually as part of Council's reporting processes to ensure the approach remains current and relevant, as well as to track progress to ensure the Strategy is being delivered.

A review of this document will be carried out toward the end of the term of the Strategy, aligned with the preparation of the next Resourcing Strategy and Delivery Program.



Image: Council crew at Belmore Basin, Wollongong.



Image: Council staff at Thirroul Community Centre.

Wollongong City Council

Digital Strategy 2025-2029

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Supporting Wollongong's Future Through Digital Innovation

Technology is reshaping how communities connect, live and grow. As Wollongong evolves, digital transformation will play a role in shaping a city that is connected, sustainable and future-focused, supporting the community's vision for a resilient environment, thriving communities and a diverse, innovative economy.

The Digital Strategy supports this evolution. It reflects our ambition to lead with purpose, create equitable access for all and build a city that is smart, resilient and inclusive. Through this Strategy, we aim to foster innovation, strengthen community connections and support the development of well-planned, liveable places that enhance quality of life for everyone.

By investing in digital infrastructure and innovation, we are ensuring our services are secure, accessible and responsive to community needs – optimising service delivery, supporting meaningful community engagement and helping us deliver on the aspirations set out in our Community Strategic Plan.

Aligning Digital Innovation with Our Community's Vision

Our community has set a clear vision for Wollongong's future – one that is sustainable, inclusive, innovative and connected. The *Digital Strategy* plays an essential role in supporting these ambitions by enabling smarter, more accessible and more efficient ways of working and connecting.

Achieving the outcomes of the *Our Wollongong Our Future 2035 Community Strategic Plan* is a shared responsibility across the whole community, involving individuals, businesses, organisations and all levels of government. While Council is not solely responsible for delivering every aspect of the plan, this Strategy ensures we are equipped to lead, support and enable all the services and initiatives that fall within Council's responsibility, as outlined in the Delivery Program 2025-2029.

The Resourcing Strategy outlines how Council will align its financial, technological, workforce and asset resources to effectively support service delivery and contribute to the community's long-term goals.

This Strategy underpins our commitment to sustainability by using technology to improve resource management and enable service delivery. It strengthens connections across our city by enhancing access to information and services, making Wollongong a more liveable and well-connected place for everyone. By fostering innovation and supporting creative solutions, it contributes to a strong and diverse economy, while also ensuring digital services are inclusive and accessible to all members of our community.

To support the delivery of Council Services and contribute to the broader aspirations of the *Community Strategic Plan*, the *Digital Strategy* is built around *seven strategic focus areas*. These focus areas guide how we will use technology and information to improve services, strengthen connections and enable innovation across our city.

Each focus area outlines a set of priorities to ensure our resources are aligned to support effective service delivery and meet the evolving needs of our community. Together, these focus areas provide a clear path forward, helping us deliver smarter, more accessible and more responsive services for the people of Wollongong.





Focus Area 1 - Culture of Security

Overview

Integrate comprehensive security measures into all aspects of the organisation to ensure the protection of digital and physical assets. Additionally, this focus area aims to foster a culture of security among all levels of the organisation through education. As a result, this will enhance community confidence in Council's ability to safeguard sensitive information against cyber threats and inappropriate use.

Objectives

Council is committed to ensuring the secure delivery of its business to the community and continuing to build trust and confidence in our ability to engage with and manage operational security risks. Operational security ensures the secure delivery of Council's business. The objectives of this focus area include:

Building trust and confidence in the storage of sensitive information.

Establishing a plan to address data breaches or security incidents, balancing customers' expectations and legal obligations.

Ensure transparency regarding the use, storage and protection of community data.

How this will be achieved

Implement the Wollongong City Council Cyber Security Strategy.

Implement the Operational Security Strategic Plan 2023-2025.

Embed security considerations into the design and delivery of all technology systems, processes and services.

Continue to develop and implement Council-wide security awareness programs to ensure staff understand their responsibility.

Regularly assess and improve Council's security measures to protect systems and information from emerging threats.

Continue to build partnerships with external agencies and neighbouring councils to stay informed of best practices and evolving security standards.



Image: Customers and Council staff at Corrimal Library.

Focus Area 2 - Customer at the centre of everything we do

Overview

This focus area prioritises customer needs and improving experience at all stages of technology development and service delivery. By providing efficient and responsive technology, Council aims to improve user satisfaction, simplify interactions and offer seamless, intuitive experiences.

Objectives

Our community expects convenient, responsive and easy to access services that deliver meaningful outcomes. Objectives of this focus area include:

Focus on the community's needs and improving their experience throughout all stages of the customer journey.

Create value, build trust and continuously meet evolving customer expectations.

Make it easier for the community to engage with Council.

How this will be achieved

Explore implementation of a unified booking and event management system.

Investigate expanding Wi-Fi services across tourist parks, beaches and community facilities.

Deliver modernisation upgrades to library technology.

Implement feedback mechanisms to regularly assess customer satisfaction and identify areas for improvement.



Focus Area 3 - Customer through one lens

Overview

This *Digital Strategy* is designed with the customer at its core, emphasising consistency and seamlessness in all technology interactions. This focus area aims to remove barriers between technology, the community and Council, ensuring a seamless and consistent experience for customers. Whether engaging online, over the phone, or through mobile apps, the Strategy focuses on simplifying interactions and enhancing the user experience.

Objectives

Council aims to create a unified, holistic view of our customer across all services, ensuring consistency and ease of interaction. Objectives of this focus area include:

Build a deeper understanding of customer needs and preferences.

Ensuring the community's technological interactions with Council are seamless regardless of the digital platform used.

Remove obstacles between technology, the community and Council, creating easier and more efficient engagement and interaction pathways.

How this will be achieved

Develop a new Council website that integrates with corporate systems to make the customer experience more accessible, consistent, efficient and intuitive.

Improve how Council shares information with the community and streamlining the technology used for community engagement.

Implement data analytics tools to gain insights and better understand community needs, preferences and behaviours.

Continue to develop a centralised, secure customer database to enable a single, unified view of all customer interactions.



Focus Area 4 - Information is an asset

Overview

Council recognises the critical role of information in identifying improvement opportunities and meeting customer needs. This focus area involves improving our ability to effectively collect, manage and protect information, treating it as a strategic asset. By doing so, we aim to drive business insights, innovation and informed decision-making. Our goal is to leverage data to improve community interactions and operational efficiency through robust data governance.

Objectives

Our community expects information to be managed responsibly, securely and transparently. Ensuring data is accurate and supports decision-making strengthens community trust and promotes accountability. Objectives of this focus area include:

Enhance community interactions by providing relevant data to improve service delivery, engagement and interactions.

Improve operational efficiencies by utilising data to identify areas where services and operation can be improved.

How this will be achieved

Enhance Council's records management and data handling practices by aligning with legal requirements, improving internal relationships, developing staff training and addressing cyber security threats.

Establish data sharing agreements and integrate advanced technologies like Internet of Things and Artificial Intelligence to boost data quality and decision-making.

Implement data quality standards and best practices across all Council systems to ensure reliability and consistency.



Focus Area 5 - Reflecting good practice

Overview

Continuously improve Council operations by reflecting on and implementing industry best practices. This focus area promotes the continuous improvement of systems, processes and services by ongoing evaluation and adaptation against proven frameworks, guidelines or business processes. By integrating best practices, we enhance efficiency, reduce risks and maintain a strong foundation for scalability and innovation.

Objectives

Our community expects Council to operate efficiently, responsibly and in alignment with recognised best practices. By continuously improving how we work, we can deliver better services and build public trust. Objectives of this focus area include:

Enhance systems, processes and services by integrating industry best practices.

Improve the community's experience and Council decision-making by developing and responsibly embedding Artificial Intelligence into Council's technology landscape.

Derive maximum value from technology assets to improve the community's user experience and Council operations.

How this will be achieved

Develop an Artificial Intelligence Strategy to enhance customer experience and decision-making, responsibly and ethically.

Continue to review the recently implemented Enterprise Resourcing Planning system for improvements.

Support contemporary modern ways of working, enhancing protected disclosure reporting processes with technology and streamlining meeting management.



Image: City Beach, Wollongong.

Focus Area 6 - Smart cities optimisation

Overview

Smart Cities is dedicated to leveraging technology and data driven solutions to create more efficient, sustainable and connected communities. Council aims to take a considered approach to the implementation of Internet of Things, Artificial Intelligence and data analytics to enhance services, infrastructure and improve the quality of life for our community. By implementing smart city initiatives, we aim to promote environmental sustainability and deliver intelligent systems that respond dynamically to the needs of the community. This focus area ensures our city is technologically contemporary, inclusive, resilient and future ready.

Objectives

Our community expects technology to be used to enhance everyday life, making services more efficient, accessible and sustainable while improving the liveability and connectivity of our city. Objectives of this focus area include:

Leveraging Internet of Things, Artificial Intelligence and data analytics to optimise infrastructure and enhance public services, reduce traffic congestion and improve public amenity.

Adopt Smart City technologies to better prepare for future advancements and challenges.

Take a proactive approach to ensure Council remains competitive and capable of evolving with technological progress aligning with community expectations.

How this will be achieved

Implement smart infrastructure including smart parking, people counting, temperature sensors, moisture level sensors, bin sensors and climate sensors to understand usage patterns and inform service delivery.

Use data analytics and real-time information to inform infrastructure planning, urban planning and decision-making.

Foster partnerships with industry, academia and community organisations to drive innovation.



Image: Customers and Council staff at Beaton Park Leisure Centre, Wollongong.

Focus Area 7 - Sustainable, simple and seamless

Overview

This focus area is to address the needs of customers, employees and the community by creating sustainable, simple and seamless solutions. It aims to design user-friendly and easily integrated systems that reduce complexity for both users and technical staff. This involves a focus on seamless technology integration to provide consistent and reliable user experiences, enhancing productivity and satisfaction. It ensures Information Technology solutions are future proof and aligned with community commitments to deliver intuitive, efficient and sustainable technology solutions.

Objectives

Objectives of this focus area include:

More consistent and reliable services to commercial and community facing teams, as employee scheduling will be better managed.

Moving towards cashless operations will provide the community with faster and more convenient transaction options, reducing wait times and enhancing the overall experience with Council.

How this will be achieved

Develop and implement a standardised, Council-wide rostering system to streamline employee scheduling.

Review the Work Health and Safety and Workers' Compensation systems to improve safety and maintain compliance with laws and regulations.

Investigate payment options to increase efficiency and sustainability.



Image: Central Business District, Keira Street, Wollongong.

Wollongong is Sustainable Connected Vibrant Inclusive

We are a sustainable and climate resilient city

We have well planned, connected, and liveable places

We foster a diverse economy, and we value innovation, culture, and creativity

We have a healthy, respectful, and inclusive community



Image: Belmore Basin, Wollongong.

On Dharawal Country, from the mountains to the sea,
we value our natural environment, we respect each other,
our past and future. We will be a sustainable, connected,
vibrant, and innovative city, with a diverse economy.

We are a sustainable and climate resilient city

We have well planned, connected, and liveable places

We foster a diverse economy, and we value innovation, culture, and creativity

We have a healthy, respectful, and inclusive community



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