

The Local Government Reform Program  
Promoting Better Practice

challenges improvement innovation good governance

## **REVIEW REPORT**

# **CAMPBELLTOWN CITY COUNCIL**

**SEPTEMBER 2004**

Department of Local Government



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## ABOUT THE REVIEW

### Program objectives

The Local Government Reform Program - Promoting Better Practice is a review process that has a number of objectives:

- to generate momentum for a culture of continuous improvement and greater compliance across local government
- to provide an 'early intervention' option for councils experiencing operating problems
- to promote good governance and ethical conduct principles
- to identify and share innovation and good practice in local government
- to enable the department to use review information to feed back into its work in identifying necessary legislative and policy work for the local government sector.

### Program process

The review process was developed after extensive research into council performance measurements in Australia and overseas. The review process is based upon a range of models including:

- the UK Audit Commission council inspection model
- the ICAC corruption resistance reviews
- LGMA/ICAC governance health check
- LGMA financial health check
- previous programs conducted by the Department of Local Government.

A review involves a review team evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of the council's operations and giving feedback. This involves checking compliance, examining appropriate practices and ensuring that council has frameworks in place to monitor its performance. The results of reviews are analysed and fed back to the

elected council, the Director General of the Department of Local Government and the Minister for Local Government.

There are essentially five steps in a review - preparing, assessing, checking, analysing and reporting. The review team examines local circumstances in order to understand the pressures on council and how the council has sought to manage that environment.

### **Campbelltown City Council Pilot Review**

Campbelltown City Council offered to be a pilot site for a review to test the suitability of the review tools and processes. The department is conducting an evaluation of this pilot review to finetune the process.

Campbelltown City Council was asked to complete a corporate self-assessment and a checklist of key council practices. The completed self-assessment and checklist were analysed by the review team prior to commencing the on-site review process.

Senior Investigations Officers Paul Terrett and Lyn Brown comprised the review team who conducted an on-site review of council from 20 July 2004 to 28 July 2004. Senior Investigations Officer John Canadi also attended the council for part of the review.

The review was based on council's response to the self-assessment of its corporate arrangements and capacity. This assessment asked council to respond to four critical questions of its capacity to improve:

- What is council trying to achieve?
- How has the council set about delivering its priorities?
- What has the council achieved/not achieved to date?
- In the light of what the council has learned to date, what does it plan to do next?

In order to review council it is necessary to examine its performance across a range of functions. A number of practice checklists have been developed to assist council in assessing its functions and checking its compliance. Council's response to the checklists is used as a guide for the on-site review and tests how council has set about delivering its priorities and measuring its achievements.

The on-site review consisted of a briefing for council's senior staff, conducting interviews, attending a councillor briefing session and council committee meeting and the review of a number of council's policies and other documents.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Campbelltown City Council is the first council to be reviewed using the Local Government Reform Program - Promoting Better Practice process and has shown that it is a well-managed authority. It enjoys good resident and employee satisfaction and is actively planning to achieve continuous improvement.

The council has set the foundations for a strong strategic approach to its future needs. There is a mature approach by both council management and elected officials to decision-making. Despite different political views among its councillors, there is a shared vision for a better Campbelltown. Councillors work together to achieve this goal.

Council is developing a strategic direction for the Campbelltown City area and council. A key aspect of this is the identification of its core business activities. However, council needs to consider the development of strategies for change where its core business activities are re-defined.

Council aligns its business priorities with its identified goals. Council monitors its progress in relation to meeting its priorities through its quarterly financial reports. Council moves its finances to align with meeting its priorities through this monitoring. As council continues to develop its strategic plan, this framework (the plan) should be substantiated by a series of integrated plans, underpinned by sound financial modelling. This financial planning should identify alternative sources of revenue, a long term rates strategy, and reserves for capital works, land acquisition and community facilities.

The council is mindful of its responsibility as trustee of public assets and has developed a comprehensive asset management plan. This allows council to assess, evaluate, maintain and replace assets proactively. Council could benefit further from the expansion of this assets management plan into other areas, in particular land assets.

The council has developed clear delegation in the Planning and Environment Division to all levels of staff. This degree of delegation needs to be implemented into other divisions of council.

Council is yet to develop a corporate approach to complaint management. While council has a complaint handling policy, this has not been implemented across the organisation. Instead a number of complaint handling systems are in place specific to each council section. Council should develop an implementation plan for its corporate complaint handling policy.

Council has commenced the development of performance indicators in some areas of its work. This is not widespread across the organisation. Council needs to adopt performance indicators, particularly in its areas of service delivery, to ensure a best value approach to services is developed.

Overall, Campbelltown City Council has a strong community service focus. The council understands its community and has comprehensive community services and activities to meet community needs.

It is an organisation where people like to work, with a skill and performance based salary system that encourages employee development. The council faces a future challenge with an ageing workforce. Council needs to develop a workforce plan to identify changes that may occur in workload in particular divisions and the need for the acquisition and transfer of skills.

In summary, the council has strong and clear leadership that is well positioned to strategically address the future needs for the Campbelltown City Council area.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. As part of its strategic planning process council should consider the development of a process that will help it determine and regularly review its core business and develop a strategy for change if the core business is re-defined.
2. Council should continue the development of performance indicators, particularly for its service functions, to ensure there is a best value approach.
3. Council should continue its work in finalising its strategic plan, long-term financial plan and implementation of its asset management plan.

### *Governance*

4. Council should provide information to councillors and designated staff on the completion of disclosure of pecuniary interest returns to ensure they are completed accurately and in a timely way. *(Suggestion: Refer to the department's circular 04/16: Pecuniary Interest Returns)*
5. Council should develop a statement of business ethics to communicate both internally and externally the ethical standards that council abides by and expects others to abide by in doing business with council. *(Suggestion: Refer to the ICAC publication: Developing a statement of business ethics)*
6. Council should examine the costs and benefits of establishing an internal audit function.
7. Council should develop a risk management plan that provides a framework to proactively identify and manage generic and specific risks.
8. Council should conduct routine fraud risk assessments as part of its risk management responsibilities.

9. Council should conduct routine risk assessments of council's procurement and disposal procedures.
10. Council should develop a disposal policy for its assets.
11. Council should develop an internal reporting procedure to assist staff wishing to make disclosures under the Protected Disclosures Act 1994. (*Suggestion: Refer to NSW Ombudsman publication: Protected Disclosures Guidelines*)
12. Council should continue its work on developing a records management plan and business continuity plan that reflects the requirements of the State Records Act 1998. The business continuity plan should include consideration of the risk of the loss of development application information.
13. Council should continue its work on the review and development of the IT strategic plan. We suggest that council develops a way of assessing the value for money that it gets from its investment in IT as part of this process.
14. Council should review the format of its draft management plan to ensure that it complies with the requirements of the Local Government Act and General Regulation.
15. All divisions within council should adopt the delegations format used by the Planning and Environment Division, where delegations are clearly set out for positions at every level of the Division. Council could consider providing examples of the types of decision that can be made by (for example) team leaders, specialists etc. Council should review its delegations.
16. Council should ensure that when it records the reasons for closing its meetings to the public in the minutes of the meeting, it does so in full compliance with section 10D of the Local Government Act 1993.
17. Council should discontinue the practice of providing councillors with reports on warrants.

18. Council should develop an implementation plan for the complaint handling policy which includes:

- a. identifying who is responsible for dealing with complaints and how they are handled;
- b. training for staff in complaint handling;
- c. the reporting of complaints data to senior management and council; and
- d. how the community will be informed of council's complaint handling procedures. (*Suggestion: Refer to the NSW Ombudsman publication: Complaint Handlers Toolkit*)

19. Council should ensure that complaints and customer requests are separately identified so that trends can be identified and monitored.

### *Regulatory*

20. Council should continue its work on developing one LEP for its area that incorporates its current LEP and IDOs

21. Council should develop a companion animal management plan that particularly deals with the issues of:

- a. the micro-chipping of dogs and cats
- b. up-skilling of staff to enable council to carry out micro-chipping
- c. hardship relief, and
- d. the return of micro-chipped companion animals to owners.

22. Council should establish a companion animals advisory committee to oversee the development and implementation of the companion animal management plan.

23. Council should conduct its micro-chipping days in different localities in the community to enable people to more readily access this service and to improve registration rates.
24. Council should develop a swimming pool awareness program in accordance with the Swimming Pool Act 1992 and Department of Local Government Circulars 04/13, 04/12 and 03/34.
25. Council should review the staffing requirements for its Compliance section to enable it to continue to effectively carry out its compliance functions.

*Asset and financial management*

26. Council should complete the development of its long-term financial plan in conjunction with its strategic plan by July 2005, taking into account the following considerations:
  - a. alternative sources of revenue
  - b. long term rates strategy (rating structure, special variations etc)
  - c. long term borrowing needs and debt service ratio
  - d. investment strategies
  - e. the alignment of its long-term financial plan with other strategic directions such as its 2025, asset management, social and strategic plans
  - f. long-term plans for capital works, land acquisition and community facilities.
27. Council should consider how it incorporates its information and communications technology assets and land assets in its asset management plan.
28. Council should investigate the development of a hardship policy.

*Community, communication and consultation*

29. Council should continue the development of the community consultation policy and framework to guide its activities in this area.
30. Council should ensure that a copy of its annual report is provided to the Minister for Local Government as required.
31. Council should consider providing a list of council's policies on its website as well as information on how to access council information and council's complaint system.

*Workplace relations*

32. Council should develop a workforce strategy to address its future employment needs particularly in relation to the age of its workforce.

*City Works*

33. The Operational Services section of the City Works Division should focus on:
  - a. improving the communication of delegations to all levels of staff
  - b. continuing with team leader training, particularly on decision making issues
  - c. conducting a review of the work or precinct areas of the section so that these are aligned
  - d. the establishment of performance indicators
  - e. provision of resources for the input and analysis of performance data
  - f. a review of complaint handling and customer request processes.
34. Should council establish a Waste Watch Committee, it should focus on the following areas. To oversee:
  - a. the risk management practices and reporting systems
  - b. the complaint handling and customer request systems
  - c. the effective delegation within the organisation
  - d. the establishment of performance indicators across the organisation.

## CONTEXT

Campbelltown City is located in the Macarthur region of NSW, approximately 50 kms south west of the Sydney CBD and covers a land area of 312 sq kms. The population within the city is approximately 150,000 people. The average age of residents is 30 years. Families with children make up 75 percent of the population. Campbelltown has the second largest indigenous population in NSW. The number of residents born in non-English speaking countries is growing steadily.

In 2002 there were 48,696 properties classed as residential, 1921 business A properties, 141 business B properties and 68 farmland properties. The Campbelltown local government area is bounded by the local government areas of Liverpool to the north, Camden to the west, Wollondilly to the south and Sutherland and Wollongong to the east.

Campbelltown City Council has 15 councillors comprising members of the Labor Party, Liberal Party, Greens and Independents. Council has four committees which meet monthly, followed by a full council meeting once a month. Two briefing sessions are held for councillors each month.

Campbelltown City Council employs 617 full time equivalent staff. Council has structured itself into four divisions. These divisions are Community Services, Corporate Governance, Planning and Environment and City Works.

In 2002/03, Campbelltown City Council had a total expenditure budget of \$98.6 million. Council has made operating surpluses (before and after capital items) in the last 4 years with an estimated surplus for 2003/04 of \$1.5 million.

Campbelltown City Council determined 1,570 development applications in 2002/03 with a median time for determining development applications of 27 days. However, council deals with approximately 1,000 additional applications that are determined as complying development under State Environmental Planning Policy No 60.

## 1 COUNCIL'S AMBITIONS, PRIORITIES AND FUTURE FOCUS

This part of council's assessment focussed on: clear ambition; a focus on communities and services; ownership of problems and willingness to change; a shared and realistic vision; a sustained focus on what matters; improvement integrated into day to day management; flexibility and innovation; capacity and systems to continue to deliver performance improvement.

### *What is working well*

Council is currently developing a planning strategy for the City of Campbelltown – Campbelltown 2025, and a strategic plan for Campbelltown City Council. Council has brought together the views that have been gathered from the community and used them to guide the strategic and planning strategy processes. Council has conducted a range of community surveys including surveys on vision, social planning, service delivery and telephone sampling. The consistent themes that have come through these surveys form the basis of the key strategic directions for council.

Council aligns its business priorities with its identified goals. Council monitors its progress in relation to meeting its priorities through its quarterly financial reports. Council manages its finances to align with its priorities through this monitoring process.

Council recognises that one of the most important strategic challenges facing local government is the effective management of infrastructure. Council has recently formulated a strategic asset management plan for its area. Council's aim is to ensure local infrastructure supports future social, economic and cultural needs.

Council has regular briefing sessions for councillors to keep them informed of current issues. The Mayor has identified the importance of "getting the culture of the organisation right" and illustrates this by the way that councillors interact with each other and noting that processes are inclusive. Council has a mature approach to decision making, which is commendable.

There are clear examples of the different divisions of council working together on issues. Council has developed processes to enable this to work.

There is evidence that council is able to respond to problems and reach solutions. For example, council identified that it had unspent section 94 funds from an area that had been developed. It was aware that it had statutory obligations in relation to these funds. As it was some time since the funds had been collected, the needs of the community may have changed. Council conducted a community survey to determine the community's current needs. Through this process council was able to develop a solution that is consistent with the identified needs of the community and requirements of the section 94 plan.

### ***Challenges to improve***

Council needs to develop a process that will help it regularly review its core business and develop a strategy for change if its core business is re-defined. *(Recommendation 1)*

Council has commenced the development of performance indicators in some areas of its work. This is not widespread across the organisation. Council needs to adopt performance indicators, particularly in its areas of service delivery, to ensure a best value approach to services is developed. *(Recommendation 2)*

Council needs to continue its work to finalise its strategic and long term financial plans as well as the implementation of its asset management plan. *(Recommendation 3)*

## 2 DELIVERING AND ACHIEVING

This part of council's assessment focussed on: capacity and systems to deliver performance improvement; defined roles and responsibilities and accountabilities; delivery through partnership; modern structures and processes; strong financial management; resources follow priorities; performance information; risk managed appropriately; open to external challenge.

### **Overview**

There is clear evidence that council has a culture where divisions work together to achieve their objectives. Examples of this include the close working relationship between all divisions on the strategic planning initiative and the 2025 planning process. Other examples include the establishment of inter-divisional committees dealing with specific issues such as section 94 plans and plans of management.

Council also has examples where it works collaboratively with its neighbouring councils and other organisations. For example, council is part of a project group along with Camden Council and the CSIRO to develop sustainability indicators for the region. Additionally, council is a strong supporter and participant of the Macarthur Regional Organisation of Councils.

Strong links between financial management and the organisation's priorities are evident. This is clearly evident in the quarterly financial statements that are presented to council. These statements provide comparisons and analysis of the budget position against the management plan objectives.

## 2.1 Governance

“Corporate governance refers to all the means by which entities are directed and controlled.” (Standards Australia, HB401-2004:12) Corporate governance is important because it enhances organisational performance; manages and minimises risks; increases the confidence of the community and the industry in the organisation; ensures that an organisation is meeting its legal and ethical obligations; and assists in the prevention and detection of dishonest or unethical behaviour.

A review was conducted of a range of aspects of council’s governance practices including:

- Ethics and values
- Risk management and internal control
- Council’s decision-making processes
- Monitoring and review

### ***What is working well***

#### *Code of conduct*

The council’s code of conduct adopted under the Local Government Act is important because it assists councillors and council staff to understand the standards of conduct that are expected of them. Campbelltown Council’s code of conduct is a current document that covers key ethical issues. It provides a reference to related policies and standards. It is provided to all new staff and councillors as part of their induction. Refresher training on the code of conduct is provided for staff. It is available on council’s website. The code of conduct is also made available to council’s contractors.

#### *Councillor expenses and facilities policy*

A policy on the payment of expenses and provision of facilities to the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors is a requirement under section 252 of the Local Government Act. Council’s policy has recently been reviewed. It is a clearly written policy that covers key topics including the issue of legal assistance for councillors as well as the

circumstances for private use of resources. The revised policy is due to be placed on public exhibition as required by section 253.

#### *Delegations – Planning and Environment Division*

The power of delegation is an important tool that assists council officers to carry out the functions of council in an effective and timely manner. Delegations need to be made in accordance with sections 377-381 of the Local Government Act and continually reviewed to ensure they remain current.

The Planning and Environment Division has developed a matrix that identifies delegations to positions in its various sections. This matrix identifies all the positions that are responsible for exercising delegated authority, the relevant legislation under which the delegation is exercised and any limits to the delegation. The matrix applies to positions at all levels in the division from managers to trainee officers. This matrix provides staff with a clear understanding of decisions they are able to make. The delegations include a range of functions, including the type of correspondence a staff member can sign.

#### *Policy register*

Council has adopted a standard and clear format for policies that identifies who is responsible for the policy, the date it was adopted, the date for review and any related policies or other documents.

#### *Legal services reports*

Legal status reports are currently being provided to council on a regular basis. These reports keep councillors informed of matters where legal action is pending, matters currently before the courts and future and actual legal costs of decisions made by council. These reports provide council with an excellent mechanism to manage its legal risks and costs.

## ***Challenges to improve***

### *Pecuniary Interest*

The Local Government Act sets out the parameters which must be adhered to when councillors and staff have a conflict between their public duty and private interests that constitutes a pecuniary interest. The Act requires that councillors and designated staff complete and lodge disclosure of pecuniary interest returns. It is important that councillors and staff observe these requirements, as to not do so has the potential to seriously undermine the community's confidence in the integrity of local government and the decision-making processes.

Campbelltown City Council has a large number of pecuniary interest returns (over 80). We conducted a random sample of pecuniary interest returns. This identified that some returns were lodged late and some councillors' returns did not have addresses for employers. The standard of the returns varied. The Local Government Pecuniary Interest Tribunal has pointed out the need for councillors (and designated staff) to give due care and attention to the accuracy, detail and content of the disclosures required in returns.

Some staff indicated that they did not receive any instruction on how to complete the return. It is important that councillors and staff who are identified as designated persons complete the pecuniary interest returns accurately and in a timely way. Council could use the information provided in the department's circular 04/16 to prepare information for staff and councillors to assist them in completing their returns. *(Recommendation 4)*

### *Statement of business ethics*

Council has business relationships with the private sector but does not have a statement of business ethics to guide these relationships. This is important because strong working relationships with the private sector are an essential part of building an efficient and cost-effective public sector. A statement of business ethics can be an excellent tool for raising private sector awareness of public sector values. *(Recommendation 5)*

### *Risk management and internal control*

A risk management plan provides council with a framework to proactively identify and manage generic and specific risks so that ethical behaviour and practice can be promoted.

Council does not have an overall plan to guide its risk management activities. It has been at least 5 years since council carried out a fraud risk assessment and at least 2 years since a risk assessment of council's procurement policy was conducted. There is no systematic scrutiny of council's operations, systems and performance. This is illustrated by the fact that loss or theft trends are not able to be identified as there is no central lodgement and monitoring of theft/loss incidents. Some comments were that there is a feeling that theft of equipment may have increased, but there is no central monitoring of this. (*Recommendations 6, 7, 8 & 9*)

Council does not have a disposal policy guiding the disposal of its assets. The failure of council to adopt such a policy increases the risk it will fall victim to corrupt practices. (*Recommendation 10*)

Council does not have an internal reporting policy to assist staff with disclosures under the Protected Disclosures Act 1994. Mention of this policy is made in council's code of conduct. However the policy on reporting corruption, maladministration and serious and substantial wastage could not be located. (*Recommendation 11*)

### *Record keeping and information technology*

Council is required to make and keep full and accurate records of its activities in accordance with section 12 of the State Records Act 1998. Council must establish and maintain a records management program that conforms with best practice standards and codes.

Council is in the process of developing a records management plan that will also include a business continuity plan. The business continuity plan should apply to council's physical records as well as electronic records. We encourage and support the development of a records management plan that particularly reflects the requirements of the State Records Act 1998. (*Recommendation 12*)

Council is in the process of reviewing its IT strategic plan. Council is currently in the process of implementing a new electronic document management system that it is relying on to manage and link a range of council's communications. Council's expectations of this new system are high. We encourage and support the development of an IT strategic plan. Council should consider developing a mechanism whereby it can assess the value for money that it gets from its investment in IT. (*Recommendation 13*)

In addition, council should incorporate, or link, the management of its information and communications technology assets with its asset management plan. (*Recommendation 27*)

### *Management planning*

Each year council is required to prepare a draft management plan with respect to its activities for at least the next 3 years and its revenue policy for the next year. Sections 403 and 404 of the Local Government Act require certain particulars to be included in council's draft management plan. The draft management plan is to be exhibited in accordance with section 405 of the Act.

The review team noted that council's draft management plan for 2004-2005 requires greater detail in order to comply with sections 403 and 404 of the Local Government Act and the Local Government (General) Regulation 1999. Specifically, the draft management plan should contain more information on the following:

- activities that respond to its current state of the environment report and identify the activities to manage, develop, protect, restore, enhance and conserve the environment
- the programs to be undertaken to implement its equal employment opportunity management plan
- proposed council activity relating to access and equity activities to meet the needs of residents in the council's area
- activities relating to stormwater in accordance with clause 28 of the Regulation

We noted that a separate document detailing fees and charges accompanies the draft management plan. This document was identified in the management plan as being available from council offices and libraries, but was not made available with the draft plan or on council's website. This may make the document more difficult for the public to access. Council should review the revenue and finances section of the draft management plan in order to ensure that it complies with the requirements of section 404 of the Act. (*Recommendation 14*)

### *Delegations*

The power of delegation is an important tool that assists council officers to carry out the functions of council in an effective and timely manner. Delegations need to be made in accordance with sections 377-381 of the Local Government Act and regularly reviewed to ensure they remain current.

Council has a delegations register that identifies the relevant staff positions with delegated authority. The format used by the Planning and Environment Division (previously discussed), where these delegations are clearly set out for positions at every level of the division, should be adopted by all divisions within council. There were examples in other divisions where the delegations may not have been as clearly outlined for the relevant positions. There were also examples where procedures were being developed that identified the delegations for positions that were not listed in the delegations register.

Staff should be given written information that clearly identifies the level of decision making that they can make. Council could consider providing examples of the types of decision that can be made by (for example) team leaders, specialists etc. Council's delegations have not been reviewed since September 2003. (*Recommendation 15*)

### *Open and closed meetings*

As a general rule, meetings of the council and its committees are required to be open to the public. Where council determines that a matter should be dealt with in

confidential session, section 10 of the Local Government Act outlines the requirements for this determination.

Based on our review of council's minutes, council considers a number of confidential issues and only closes that part of the meeting relating to the confidential item. From our review of the recent confidential items, the reasons for closing the meeting fall within the requirements of section 10A(2) of the Act. While this seems reasonable, the community does not see the reasons for closing these meetings because they are recorded in the confidential section of the business paper and not recorded in the minutes. The grounds for closing council meetings need to be set out in accordance with the requirements of section 10D of the Act and recorded in council's minutes. *(Recommendation 16)*

#### *Council warrants*

Council currently receives reports on the council warrants (cheques written by council). These are given to councillors as a separate document to their business paper. Councillors are able to take this information away from the council chambers. The warrants identify individual names, which could represent a privacy issue. The role of councillors (section 232) is focussed on the overall direction of council rather than on day to day issues such as reviewing the day to day payments made by council. Councillors could still be provided with access to this information if requested and could view these documents on site. The practice of reporting on warrants should cease. *(Recommendation 17)*

#### *Complaint handling*

An effective complaint handling system is an essential part of the provision of quality council services. It is one method of measuring customer satisfaction to provide a useful source of information and feedback for improving the council's service.

Council is yet to develop a corporate approach to complaint management. While council has a complaint handling policy, this has not been implemented across the organisation. Instead a number of complaint handling systems are in place specific to each council section. Council should develop an implementation plan for its corporate complaint handling policy.

Council also has difficulty differentiating complaints from other correspondence in its current system. Complaints need to be recorded so that types of trends can be identified.

There is no regular management reporting on the frequency of complaints, their type, progress in handling complaints and the outcome of complaints. Only broad data on correspondence and general requests is available. Complaints and customer requests need to be separately identified. It is acknowledged that the new computer system will rectify this by categorising complaints when they are received. By establishing clear guidelines and procedures for the handling of complaints, the council will be in a better position to improve services.

No specific training has been provided for staff in complaints handling.  
*(Recommendation 18 & 19)*

## **2.2 Regulatory Functions**

Council exercises regulatory functions in relation to a range of activities within its area. The efficiency and probity of council's regulatory functions is important for effectively managing council's responsibilities and for preserving public trust in council and its staff. Regulation is important to achieve a wide range of social, economic and environmental goals.

A review was conducted of a range of aspects of council's regulatory practices including:

- Council's planning instruments and policies
- Development assessment
- Section 94 plans
- Environmental management
- Graffiti removal
- Enforcement practices

## ***What is working well***

### *Determination of Development Applications*

Council has developed a clear set of criteria to assist staff in deciding which DA determinations are referred to council. Council indicates that 99% of its DAs are dealt with under delegated authority. Councillors “call up” DAs as the exception rather than as a rule. This indicates that councillors are aware of their role and the role of staff in the determination of DAs.

It is noted that there is a view that the department’s comparative data on DAs does not accurately reflect council’s true position in terms of the time it takes to determine applications. For example, Campbelltown Council deals with approximately 1,000 complying development applications under State Environmental Planning Policy 60 (SEPP60) that are not recorded in the comparative data set.

### *BASIX*

Council is currently developing a new Development Control Plan (DCP) for the entire area that will incorporate the environmental standards outlined in State Environmental Planning Policy (Building Sustainability Index: BASIX) 2004. We encourage and support council’s work in bringing the BASIX requirements into its DCP.

### *Compliance*

Council has established a separate section that deals specifically with council’s compliance responsibilities. This has allowed council to acquire specialist skills and expertise in the monitoring and enforcement of council’s policies and legislative responsibilities. It has enabled council to undertake compliance initiatives such as control of the use of trail bikes, shopping trolley control, underage smoking, compliance with footpath signage and highway vending.

## ***Challenges to improve***

### *Planning instruments*

Council currently has one Local Environmental Plan (LEP2002) that covers the urban area of the city and a number of Interim Development Orders (IDOs) that cover the remaining area. Council has allocated a budget for a process to consolidate its LEP and IDOs into one planning instrument. This will follow the development of council's 2025 planning process and will operationalise the land use decisions made by the 2025 process. We encourage and support the development of one Local Environmental Plan for the Campbelltown City Council area. *(Recommendation 20)*

### *DA processing*

Council is currently in the process of implementing a new electronic document management system that it is relying on to manage its DA information and to link DA files to other relevant documents. Council's expectations of this new system are high. We encourage and support the development of a business continuity plan that will particularly identify strategies that deal with the possibility that development application information may be lost. *(Recommendation 12)*

### *Companion Animals*

The adoption of a companion animal management plan is recognised as good practice. Campbelltown City Council does not currently have such a plan. A plan would provide council with an opportunity to identify the future direction of these services and strategies to meet the challenges faced in providing these services. Many councils establish a companion animals advisory committee to oversee this plan. *(Recommendations 21 & 22)*

Currently council does not micro-chip dogs leaving the pound. It provides vouchers for people to present to selected vets to have this procedure carried out. This relies on the individual responsibility of the pet owner to have this done. Currently council staff are not trained to provide this service. Council does organise for local vets to conduct micro-chipping days from the pound from time to time. These days could be conducted in local communities to improve the attendance and increase the number

of dogs and cats micro-chipped. We note that council is currently investigating the introduction of a program to micro-chip dogs and cats in Department of Housing estates in response to a low level of micro-chipping in these areas. *(Recommendation 23)*

Council does not provide hardship relief in relation to its companion animal services.

Currently council does not return seized micro-chipped dogs and cats to their owners, they are taken directly to the pound. The Companion Animals Act requires that a seized animal is delivered to its owner, if the owner can be identified, as soon as possible.

#### *Swimming pools*

The Swimming Pool Act 1992 requires that council promotes awareness of the requirements of this Act in relation to private swimming pools within its area. Council does not currently have a program to meet these requirements. *(Recommendation 24)*

#### *Compliance section*

The amount of work being undertaken in the compliance area has increased over time and staffing numbers may need to be reviewed. *(Recommendation 25)*

### **2.3 Asset & Financial Management**

Under its charter, council has a responsibility to raise funds for the purposes of carrying out its functions. This can be achieved by the fair imposition of rates, charges and fees, borrowings and grants. The council is also the custodian and trustee of public assets and must effectively account for and manage these assets.

A review was conducted of a range of aspects of council's practices in the areas of:

- Financial management
- Asset management
- Insurance

### *Overview of financial position*

Council has made operating surpluses (before and after capital items) for each of the last 4 years with an estimated surplus for 2003/04 of \$1.5 million. These surpluses have improved the council's liquidity situation to have an unrestricted current ratio of 1.1:1 (2002/03). This indicator is a measure of council's ability to meet its financial obligations. A ratio of 1.5:1 is considered satisfactory, a ratio of 2:1 or better is generally viewed by the industry as good. Council acknowledges that this needs further improvement and estimates the unrestricted current ratio to be 1.5:1 for 2003/04.

Council's debt service ratio for 2002/03 was 12.24% and 11.24% for 2003/04. Council estimates that this will reduce to 5.3% for 2004/05. This indicator assesses the degree to which revenues from ordinary activities are committed to the repayment of debt. There is no set benchmark for the debt service ratio given debt is influenced by a range of factors including the level of growth in a local government area. The use of loan funds for infrastructure improvements and other capital purposes is considered to be a prudent financial strategy.

Council successfully applied for a special variation to rates in 2002/03 to increase minimum residential rates from \$339 to \$390. In 2000/01 council was granted a permanent increase in rates of 4.35% for road infrastructure maintenance. The council has recently been granted approval to raise rates by 6.49% to fund ongoing costs associated with asset maintenance.

Council has low residential rates in comparison to comparable councils, with average rates at \$479 compared to \$618 for the group. However, special rates have not been included in this calculation and if they are included it brings council's average residential rate to \$662. Council levies significantly higher rates for farmland and business categories in comparison to councils in the same category.

It should be noted that council has been successful in decreasing domestic waste management charges by \$21.30 per assessment. This is significant given that most Sydney councils have experienced increase costs in domestic waste management.

## ***What is working well***

### *Financial monitoring*

Council uses the financial health check that has been developed by the Local Government Managers Australia organisation to assess its financial health. This has assisted council to identify areas for review and is a pro-active approach to financial management.

### *Asset management*

Council has developed a comprehensive Asset Management Plan for the period 2004–2009. This has allowed council to forward plan its asset maintenance requirements and seek funds to address its asset maintenance shortfall.

This asset plan was accomplished through a full field analysis (condition assessment). This is a good example of linking audit to priorities and the work program in a systematic way. This approach has been further extended into the Horticulture section of the City Works Division where a full field analysis was conducted of council's sportsgrounds.

## ***Challenges to improve***

### *Long term financial planning*

Council demonstrates an understanding of its past financial problems and is in the process of developing a long term financial plan to be completed by July 2005. We encourage and support council in completing this long term financial planning. *(Recommendation 26)*

### *Alternative sources of revenue*

Council currently relies heavily on rates and grants as its sources of income. Over time this will increase the rate burden on residents and businesses if alternative sources of revenue are not identified.

|                                       |                          |     |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----|
| Total revenue over the last year was: | Rates and annual charges | 62% |
|                                       | User Charges and fees    | 11% |
|                                       | Grants and Contribution  | 22% |
|                                       | Interest                 | 2%  |
|                                       | Other revenue            | 3%  |

Council needs to identify and access sustainable sources of funds other than rates and grants. (*Recommendation 26*)

#### *Long-term rates strategy*

Council has applied for a number of rating special variations in recent years. Council needs to review its rating structure as part of its long-term financial planning process. This will ensure that rating policy meets council's costs over the long-term and provides a strategic approach to the spread and structure of rates. (*Recommendation 26*)

#### *Rates hardship policy*

Section 577 of the Local Government Act 1993 allows council to extend concessions to avoid hardship in relation to its rates and charges. Council does not have a rates hardship policy in place. Given the demographics of the area there appears to be a need for council to consider adopting such a policy. (*Recommendation 28*)

#### *Linking of strategic plans*

Council has commenced setting strategic directions for its area and its organisation. It is important that the financial direction of the council is aligned to its strategic objectives. Therefore the development of council's long-term financial plan should support its strategic direction. (*Recommendation 26*)

#### *Reserves and section 94 contributions*

Currently the council has no long-term capital works program, long-term land acquisition fund or strategic projects reserve. A strategic approach to identify future capital works, land acquisitions, community facilities and other areas requiring significant capital reserves needs to be taken in conjunction with the development of council's long-term financial planning. We acknowledge that council has commenced

work on reviewing its section 94 contributions plans and has identified the importance of linking these plans to its capital works program.

#### *Asset Management Plan*

Council's Asset Management Plan 2004-2009 identifies its road, footpath, kerb and guttering, bridges, culverts, furniture and building assets. Council does not include its land assets in its asset management plan, other than developed sportsfields. The Horticulture section of the City Works Division has conducted a process of identifying the land assets that it is responsible for such as parks and walkways. This information should be included in council's asset management plan so that a coordinated approach can be taken to the future management of these assets.

*(Recommendation 27)*

## **2.4 Community, Communication and Consultation**

A council's charter requires that a council:

- Provides services after due consultation
- Facilitates the involvement of councillors, members of the public, users of facilities and services and council staff in the development, improvement and coordination of local government
- Actively promotes the principles of multiculturalism
- Plans, promotes and provides for the needs of children, and
- Keeps the local community and State government informed about its activities

The review of council's activities in this area looked at:

- The methods council uses to involve and determine the views of its community
- Access to information
- Interaction between councillors and staff
- Social and community functions of council
- Annual reporting
- Cultural planning
- Ethnic affairs obligations

- Reporting to the community and keeping the State government informed about its activities

### ***What is working well***

#### *Council's community focus*

Overall, Campbelltown City Council has a strong community service focus. It has a clear idea of the profile of its community and has conducted an inventory of its community services and facilities. Council's social plan meets the requirements of the department's guidelines and there is evidence that the social planning process is linked to council's strategic planning process. The community consultation processes undertaken as part of the social planning process have driven and underpinned council's strategic planning. Council has included information about the social plan in its annual report and management plan.

#### *Community feedback*

Council uses a range of methods to obtain feedback from its community, including focus groups, resident surveys, shopping centre surveys, customer satisfaction surveys and telephone surveys. Council regularly consults the community on planning and policy issues. Additionally, council conducts briefing sessions in the community to provide residents with the opportunity to raise and discuss issues directly with councillors and council staff.

#### *Community participation*

Council has a number of sub-committees that regularly meet and include members from the community. Council has a memorandum of understanding with the local Aboriginal community. Council is developing a community consultation policy and framework to guide its practice. We encourage and support the development of this community consultation policy to guide council's processes in engaging its stakeholders. (*Recommendation 29*)

#### *Community information*

Council keeps its community informed through the production of a quarterly newsletter that is delivered to all residents. Council maintains and updates a website.

Information is made available through council facilities, its libraries and visitor information centres.

#### *Access to information*

Section 12 of the Local Government Act identifies the documents that are available for the public to inspect free of charge. Council has a policy that identifies documents that are publicly available and any specific exceptions. The policy identifies who members of the public can obtain assistance from. Council only imposes a charge for reasonable copying costs. To date, copying charges have not been levied. The policy is consistent with the requirements of section 12 of the Local Government Act. However, this policy process could be improved by informing the public about how they can access council information.

#### ***Challenges to improve***

##### *Annual report*

Council has only provided a copy of its annual report to the department in one of the last three years. Section 428 of the Local Government Act 1993 requires that council furnish a copy of its annual report to the Minister. (*Recommendation 30*)

##### *Council's website*

Council has a user-friendly website. There are a number of council policies that would be of interest to the community that are currently not contained on the website. Council could consider providing a list of its policies on its website so that members of the community are aware of the policies that council has developed. Council should consider providing information that assists members of the public to access information under council's policy and information on how to lodge a complaint or comment with council. (*Recommendation 31*)

## **2.5 Workplace Relations**

Councils have a number of legislative responsibilities in relation to their role as an employer. Council is required to conduct itself as a responsible employer.

A review was conducted of a range of aspects of council's workplace relations practices including:

- Consultative committee processes
- Job descriptions and job evaluation
- Recruitment and selection processes
- Employee remuneration
- Equal employment opportunity
- Staff development
- Grievance management
- Occupational health and safety
- Secondary employment

#### *Overview of the organisation*

Campbelltown City Council has undergone an organisational restructure since 2000. The outcome of this restructure was that Directors were reduced from 6 to 4 and Managers were reduced from 23 positions to 19. Council paid approximately \$1 million in redundancies over two financial years, but was still able to continue to increase its Employee Leave Entitlement restricted funds (ELE) to \$5,628,000 in 2002/03.

#### ***What is working well***

##### *Employee survey*

Council commissioned an employee opinion survey of all staff on a wide range of issues. This showed some positive results for the council and will assist with the development of future human resource policies and planning.

##### *Work experience programs*

Council has utilised a number of work placement programs to provide experience to young people and migrant workers. These programs have assisted council in a number of areas including the surveying of council's assets.

### *Skills and performance based salary system*

Campbelltown Council has a skill and performance based salary system that is linked to the requirements of clause 7 (iv) of the Local Government (State) Award. The award requires councils to introduce a salary system based on skills based progression. The council has developed a system that links employees' skills, performance review and training needs that are then identified in individual training plans. This has allowed for skills to be acknowledged and employees to have a willingness to learn and develop in the organisation. The performance review of employees and supervisor/managers is based on an upwards and downwards evaluation.

### ***Challenges to improve***

#### *Workforce planning*

Campbelltown, like many councils, is exposed to a number of workforce issues, such as:

- the shortage of specialised skills in certain areas, such as in the area of planning
- an ageing workforce
- a change in workload for certain sections as council's and government priorities change
- increases in career opportunities outside the Campbelltown area.

Council needs to consider a long-term workforce plan that looks at the staffing need of each section of council and allocates staff according to workload and priorities. The long-term plan should also address the issue of council's ageing workforce and increase opportunities for apprenticeships, cadetships and traineeships. *(Recommendation 32)*

### **3 CITY WORKS DIVISION**

#### **3.1 Focus of the Review**

The Operational Services section of the City Works Division

#### **3.2 Scope of the Review**

*Background:*

The review team from the department of local government was asked to look at the operations of the Operational Services section of the City Works Division as part of its general review of Campbelltown City Council.

This was requested in the context of a resolution that council establishes a “Waste Watch Committee” that would initially focus on the operations of the City Works Division. The role of the proposed waste watch committee, initially, would be to:

- Independently investigate and report to council on suggestions made by the community and staff to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of City Works operations.

#### **3.3 Process of the Review**

The review team requested and reviewed the following documentation:

- Campbelltown City Council’s organisational chart, the City Works Division chart and the Operations Services section chart
- Written delegations
- Approvals processes
- Operational Services plan
- Work plans for areas under the Operational Services section
- Performance indicators/benchmarks
- Written communication of the section’s performance

The review team interviewed the following people:

- Mayor
- General Manager
- Deputy General Manager
- City Works Division Director
- Manager, Operational Services
- Coordinators of: Roads and Drainage, Horticulture, Building, and Plant and Workshop
- USU representative

### **3.4 Outcome of the Review**

#### *Structure:*

Campbelltown City Council's structure is organised around four main groupings or divisions. The City Works Division is the second largest division (community services is the largest division in terms of number of staff employed), but receives the largest share of council's budget. The Operational Services section of the City Works Division is one of four sections in the Division. The Operational Services section is by far the largest section of the City Works Division with around 230 staff and receiving the largest share of the Division's budget. The Operational Services section is the more complex section of the City Works Division in terms of its organisational chart. The section has a Manager, 3 Coordinators and a number of Team Leaders.

The Operational Services section was divided into four sub-sections until recently. The section responsible for the coordination of building maintenance has been moved into the Assets and Supply section of the Division. This section provides the day to day "reactive" maintenance for council's building assets. Moving this section into the assets section provides better coordination between the section responsible for the long term planning and maintenance of council's building assets and the day to day maintenance of these assets. This ensures that maintenance actions are appropriate for the age of the building.

The other sub-sections of Operational Services deal with horticulture, roads and drainage, plant and workshop. The Horticulture sub-section looks after council's parks, sportsgrounds and open spaces such as road verges, walkways and trees. It includes activities such as mowing, mulching, tree pruning, specialist horticulture work, inspections and cleaning. The Plant and Workshop sub-section takes care of the maintenance of council's plant such as its cars, large plant, and equipment such as lawn mowers and whipper-snippers. This sub-section is responsible for the purchasing and servicing of equipment and being responsible for the program of plant replacement. The Roads and Drainage sub-section is responsible for the road maintenance program and responding to issues about drainage problems.

*Decision making:*

The General Manager has made specific delegations to the City Works Director and to the Managers of Operations, Technical Services, Property and Support Services, and Contract and Supply Services. In addition some specific delegations have been made to technical services staff and the Coordinators of Horticulture, Roads and Drainage, Contracts and Supply, Building, and Plant and Workshop.

These delegations were last reviewed on 2 September 2003 and it is clear from the organisational chart that a number of the positions have had a change in their title since that time. The Director of City Works is currently developing specific procurement procedures for his division and has identified positions in this document that will require delegated authority in order to exercise their responsibilities under this procedure. In order to effectively implement this procedure it will be necessary for the Director to review his Division's delegations and make recommendations to the General Manager. It would also be useful for the Division to adopt the same approach to communicating the Division's delegations as has been taken by the Planning and Environment Division.

The application of decision-making in relation to day to day work was discussed with a number of staff during interviews. The review team was advised that the individual Team Leaders have some flexibility in deciding which jobs need to be done while out in the field. While this has been verbally communicated to Team Leaders, there is still some reluctance to exercise this flexibility, with some Team Leaders still feeling

the need to ring to check before a decision is made. This can slow down work, or in some cases, mean that staff are undertaking work that may not be necessary. Providing Team Leaders with a clear direction on the sorts of decisions they can make, without the need for further consultation, may assist this decision-making process. The review team was advised that Team Leaders will be undertaking a team leaders' course that will provide information on their role, responsibilities and decisions they can make. Having clear written areas of decision-making will also clarify this further for team leaders.

*Planning:*

The City Works Division has an overall plan for its activities. This is included in council's management plan. It identifies the Division's purpose, future directions and principal activities. Each section of the Division identifies its objective, the actions and strategies employed to achieve its objective and how it will measure its effectiveness.

The Operational Services section is responsible for the maintenance of council's roads, drainage, building and open space infrastructure. A forward works program is determined by councillors as part of the yearly management plan process. However, a reasonable proportion of the Operational Services section's work is reactive rather than proactive and the works program needs to be flexible enough to deal with this. Requests for inclusion on the works program are dealt with according to criteria that are used to determine priorities. Generally work allocations are 60% proactive maintenance, 30% reactive maintenance and a 10% contingency to deal with emergency or other requests.

A spreadsheet on the progress of the Operational Services works program is reviewed and updated weekly by the City Works Director. Spreadsheets are also used by Operational Services to monitor the cost of programs according to the allocated budget. The works program is reviewed daily to account for reactive or urgent maintenance that may be required. A specific work crew has been established to respond to urgent requests that are unable to be managed through the pre-determined program. The daily work sheets link directly to the adopted works program.

The Horticulture and Roads and Drainage sub-sections alter the number of members in their teams according to their work requirements. For example, there is a reduction in mowing in winter and staff from this section are allocated to road maintenance activities. The reverse occurs in summer, where mowing crews see an increase in their number. This has not only provided flexibility in dealing with seasonal workloads, but provides an opportunity for staff to gain additional skills. This approach appears to have been well supported by the staff involved.

It was of interest that different parts of the Horticulture sub-section had divided the Campbelltown area into different precincts for their work. For example, the open space crew has 10 areas with set runs, while some other crews have divided the area into 30 or more precincts. This may be the case across other sub-sections of Operational Services and could create some confusion. It would be more effective if these precincts were aligned and would also make the transition between road maintenance and open space teams more efficient. This could also contribute to crews having “ownership” of particular areas and could create friendly competition between crews.

There are regular meeting processes to monitor progress according to work plans. For example, there are managers meetings following the council meeting to review and alter the works program in accordance with any council resolutions; meetings between each manager and the Division Director on a regular basis to discuss progress according to the section’s work plan, as well as meetings within the Operational Services section between the manager and coordinators to monitor progress.

*Customer service:*

The Operational Services section has a number of customer service officers who deal with all customer requests. These requests are registered and allocated according to safety and priority. A summary of the requests received is put to council each month. The section is currently investigating a regular process for gaining feedback from its customers. The section is relying on the new computer system to

assist in monitoring customer requests and linking them to the current works program.

It was commented that City Works employees look similar to other outside workers. The badging of work clothes may assist the community to distinguish council workers from other workers such as those working for private contractors and electricity authorities. This was discussed with the Manager and we were advised the badged clothing would be obtained from now on.

*Performance:*

The City Works Division has developed performance standards and output measurements for some of its areas of operation. It also monitors its performance according to budget and time. The Operational Services section uses Microsoft Project to plan and monitor its project work.

The Operational Services section is in the process of identifying its core activities based on a range of business decisions such as the cost of equipment, capital investment required, the amount of activity and environmental considerations/standards. The section's customer service officers are currently reviewing the section's processes and simplifying these to flowchart or dot point form.

Operational Services is currently using day sheets to collect data on performance and will use this data to establish benchmarks. Concern was expressed that adequate resources are not available to input and collate the data from these sheets. This is an area that will require investment in order to make effective use of the data. Council has attempted to obtain benchmarks from other councils with little success. Further attempts for this exchange of data should continue to be made.

While the section currently provides activity reports to council, its aim is to turn these into performance reporting. In order to do this the section is developing performance indicators for broad activities and for each job. The day sheets are a critical means of capturing information necessary to monitor performance.

### 3.5 Conclusion

In summary, areas where the Operational Services section needs to focus are:

- Improving the communication of delegations to all levels of staff
- To continue with team leader training, particularly on decision making issues
- Conducting a review of the work or precinct areas of the section so that these are aligned
- The establishment of performance indicators
- To provide resources for the input and analysis of performance data
- A review of complaint handling and customer request processes

The implementation of a number of recommendations made in this report will also assist in improving the section's operations. (*Recommendation 33*)

### 3.6 Waste Watch Committee

We believe that a number of the actions we are recommending as a result of the review of council will assist a waste watch committee or may affect the role of such a committee. It is our understanding that a waste watch committee would look at issues of waste and inefficiency and establish a system by which the public can make confidential reports on these issues. Council's intention was that this committee would initially focus on the operations of the City Works Division.

The review of council found a number of areas directly related to the concept of waste watch that could be improved. These are improvements to:

- Council's complaints handling system;
- The risk management practices of council, particularly in relation to regular monitoring of fraud and procurement risk and a policy on the disposal of assets;
- The delegations in some areas of council that require clarification;
- The internal reporting procedures to assist staff with disclosures under the Protected Disclosures Act 1994; and
- The establishment of performance indicators across the organisation.

These measures will put systems in place that will enable council to gain information on any areas of concern both to the public and council staff. Systems such as risk management assessments and internal reporting procedures enable council to monitor its practices.

The focus of a waste watch committee could be to oversee these systems and ensure they are working effectively. Additionally, a waste watch committee could focus on establishing performance indicators and measuring council procedures as a way of improving council's efficiency. (*Recommendation 34*)

## COUNCIL'S RESPONSE

Council's General Manager formally responded to the review draft report on 2 September 2004 as follows:

*"As a result of the Department of Local Government's review of Council I wish to advise that I have established an Organisational Review Group to undertake detailed investigation of all the recommendations contained in the Department's Report.*

*A template for responding to and implementing the recommendations has been developed and will be forwarded to appropriate staff to complete. A copy of the template is attached for your information.*

*The Review Group has adopted a program that by November 2004 will result in the development of important foundation documents that will enable Council to appropriately implement all of the recommendations detailed in your report.*

*Foundation documents will be prepared in respect of*

- *A long term Financial Plan*
- *A Human Resources Management Plan*
- *A Risk Management Plan*
- *An Information Technology and Customer Service Plan*

*These documents will provide the organisation with a solid base from which to work from and will feed into the development of the Council's Strategic Plan due for completion in December 2004.*

*Council's interim responses to the Department's recommendations are attached for your consideration."*

The actions identified by council have been included in a draft action plan that will be tabled at a council meeting along with this final report.

## SUMMARY - WHAT'S WORKING WELL & CHALLENGES

### COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES AND FOCUS

#### *What is working well*

- Council links its strategic planning processes
- Council aligns its business priorities and finances with its identified goals
- Council has a mature approach to decision-making
- Council's divisions work well together

#### *Challenges to improve*

- Performance indicators need to be developed and adopted across the organisation

### GOVERNANCE

#### *What is working well*

- Generally, council's policies are clear and comprehensive
- The Planning and Environment Division's delegations are comprehensive and clear
- The legal reports to council provide an excellent mechanism for council to manage its legal risks and costs

#### *Challenges to improve*

- The development of an overall plan to guide risk management activities
- The development of a business continuity plan for physical and electronic records
- The adoption of the Planning and Environment Division delegation format across the organisation
- The implementation of council's complaint handling policy

### REGULATORY

#### *What is working well*

- 99% of council development application determinations are dealt with under delegated authority
- Council has a specialist Compliance section that enables it to deal with a range of compliance initiatives

## **REGULATORY (continued)**

### *Challenges to improve*

- The adoption of a companion animal management plan
- A program to promote awareness of the requirements of the Swimming Pool Act 1992
- Maintenance of the effective functioning of the Compliance section

## **ASSET AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

### *What is working well*

- Council has a pro-active approach to financial monitoring
- Council has a strategic and comprehensive approach to asset management

### *Challenges to improve*

- Development of a long-term financial plan
- The inclusion of land assets in council's asset management plan

## **COMMUNITY, COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION**

### *What is working well*

- Council uses a range of methods to involve and obtain feedback from its community
- Council has a clear idea of the profile of its community

### *Challenges to improve*

- More information could be provided on council's website

## **WORKPLACE RELATIONS**

### *What is working well*

- An employee opinion survey has provided council with positive results

### *Challenges to improve*

- The development of a long-term workforce plan