Promoting Better Practice Program

REVIEW REPORT

GREATER TAREE CITY COUNCIL

JANUARY 2013

NSW GOVERNMENT

Premier & Cabinet

Division of Local Government

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Promoting Better Practice review found Greater Taree City Council in the process of rejuvenation following a restructure and generally performing well in these circumstances. The Council is in the process of adapting and evolving systems and processes to better deliver community outcomes.

The review examined the 'health' of Council in relation to a number of areas:

- Strategic planning
- Governance
- Planning and regulatory functions
- Asset management and financial planning
- Community engagement and communication
- Workforce relations.

The review team identified some better practice examples, particularly in relation to the Council's planning and regulatory functions. The Library Service and Tourism Marketing Strategy are also examples of better practice.

The Council is commended for the effective governance systems which it has developed over recent years. However, the review also identified a number of areas requiring further development, particularly in relation to strategic planning, governance, asset and financial management, and workforce relations. It is concerning that Council's financial position is based on low liquidity levels, ongoing deficit budgeting, and is restricted by asset maintenance and renewal issues.

The Council has advised that its systems frameworks are incomplete and require development to bring them to an acceptable standard. The review team noted the work to date on Council's governance framework, its asset identification process and maintenance framework. It is apparent that the Council is struggling to deliver outcomes in a significantly challenged resource environment, while concurrently developing and implementing delivery structures.

The review team has serious concerns about Council's financial situation and is particularly interested in Council's plans to resolve the issues outlined in this report.

While the overall assessment is that the Council appears to be generally performing well, there are some important issues that the Council will need to address for the future. The review has identified a number of improvement matters that the Council should address.

The *Summary of Key Findings* table below summarises the review team's observations.

Table – Summary of Key Findings

Better practices/Other noteworthy practices		Areas for improvement	
STRATEGIC PLANNING			
			Strengthen the relationship of the NSW State Plan and regional plans in future revisions of the Community Strategic Plan.
			Include assessment methods in the Delivery Program
			Strengthen the relationship of the Delivery Program to the Community Strategic Plan and Resourcing Strategy to improve integration of these plans.
			Strengthen the relationship of the Asset Management Planning to the Community Strategic Plan, Delivery Program and Long-Term Financial Plan, and include key objectives in the Asset Management Strategy
			Strengthen the relationship of Workforce Management Planning to the Delivery Program.

GOVERNANCE			
			Complete the risk assessment process and incorporate all findings in the risk register.
			Implement the actions of the Corruption Minimisation Plan, and regularly review corruption minimisation controls.
			Develop and implement a system to identify legislative responsibilities and resolve any non-compliance matters that arise.
			Develop disposal policy and procedures and ensure that appropriate internal controls are in place for procurement processes.
			Only use councillor briefings for providing information and answering councillor questions.
			Review chairing arrangements for councillor briefings
			Finalise the councillor induction program and implement it following the 2012 elections.
			Develop an ongoing training program to assist councillors in their role.
			Revise Council's expenses and facilities policy in line with the 'Guidelines for the payment of expenses and the provision of facilities for mayors and councillors in NSW'.
			Review the information needs of councillors and determine whether the Communication Protocol, and its

			implementation is effective in meeting these needs.
			Ensure councillors are familiar with the Communication Protocol
			Compile a political donations register.
			Provide training to staff in the application of council's complaint handling policy. and procedure.
			Council prepare and consider regular detailing the number, progress and outcome of complaints.
			Finalise and adopt all draft policies.
			Ensure that a comprehensive policy and procedural framework exists across the organisation.

PLANNING AND REGULATORY

	The rigour and structure of Council's health inspections for food premises has been externally acknowledged as good practice.		*Develop a register to record and acquit section 94 funds.*
	Development Application Processing in a challenging environment.		*Take immediate action to properly authorise compliance and enforcement officers.*
			Institute a process of review of authorisations to ensure that compliance and enforcement officers have current and accurate delegated authorities.
	The environmental management of acid sulphate soils and the principal waterway, the Manning River		*Finalise, adopt and implement an Enforcement Policy as a matter of priority.*

	Companion Animals information awareness programs		*Examine the best options for managing investigation of cross-functional complaints.*
			Develop and make publicly available a Parking Priority Policy.
			Establish a program to identify all backyard swimming pools in the LGA.
			Consider a routine inspection program of all backyard swimming pools.
			Consider developing a strategic companion animals management plan.
			Developing and implement a program to follow up restricted breeds of dog in the LGA.
			Review and finalise dog attack incident reports on the Companion Animals Register.
ASSET AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT			
			Finalise asset management planning for all asset classes as a matter of urgency. Ensure that expenditure is reflected in the Long-Term Financial Plan.
			Council continues to liaise with the Division of Local Government's Performance and Compliance team to monitor and address its financial situation.
			Ensure Quarterly Business Review Statements comply with requirements.

COMMUNITY, COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION			
	The provision of Library Services in Taree		*Consider the inclusion of performance measures in the Tourism Marketing Strategy.*
	Taree Tourism Marketing Strategy.		*Continue to implement a culture of customer service as a whole of Council approach.*
			Develop specific actions in the Healthy Ageing Strategic Framework, and reflect these in the Delivery Program and Operational Plan.
WORKFORCE RELATIONS			
			Finalise the Workforce Management Strategy.
			Include succession planning for key positions in the organisation.
			Continue to develop an integrated system to monitor and improve work health and safety.
			Include WHS responsibilities in each employee's position description.
			Finalise the development and review of Human Resources policies as a matter of priority.
			Develop and implement an EEO management plan.

PART I.   BACKGROUND

1   ABOUT THE REVIEW

Promoting Better Practice Reviews have a number of objectives. The objectives include generating momentum for a culture of continuous improvement and the promotion of good governance and ethical conduct.

Program objectives

By promoting better practices, the Division aims to:

- work with councils toward strengthening the local government sector by assessing performance and promoting a culture of continuous improvement with an emphasis on:

    o   strategic community planning

    o   efficient and effective service delivery

    o   quality governance and ethical conduct

    o   financial sustainability.

- work cooperatively with councils to promote strong relationships within the sector.

- provide councils with feedback on areas requiring improvement or further development, and assist them in developing solutions.

- identify trends and issues arising from reviews to support policy and legislative changes for the local government sector.

- encourage and facilitate innovation by responding creatively to identified trends and issues.

Review process

The reviews are designed to act as a 'health check', giving confidence about what is being done well and helping focus attention on key priorities. They are conducted by a review team from the Division of Local Government.

A review essentially involves five steps: preparing, assessing, checking, analysing and reporting. The completion of a comprehensive self-assessment checklist by the council is a key element in all reviews.

A risk-based approach is taken, targeting resources to areas identified as core matters for examination, and those matters considered to be important having regard to the local circumstances of an individual council. In other words, a review does not examine every aspect of a council's operations.

All reviews involve checking compliance with a range of statutory requirements, examining appropriate practices, and ensuring that the council has frameworks in place to monitor its own performance.

The primary legislation which sets out minimum requirements and standards for councils in NSW is the *Local Government Act 1993* (the Act) and the Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 (the Regulation). Unless otherwise stated, this report refers to that legislation.

The review team examines local circumstances in order to understand the pressures on council and how the council has sought to manage that environment.

The report

The scope of the review report is limited to documenting those areas the review team identified as:

- exceeding good practice (referred to as better practice)

- otherwise noteworthy for the reasons detailed in the body of the report

- in need of improvement or further development.

SIGNIFICANT OBSERVATIONS	DESCRIPTION
Better practice	• Beyond or above minimum compliance requirements and good practice indicators. • Innovative and/or very effective. • Contributes to continuous improvement within the sector.
Otherwise noteworthy	• May include successful initiatives which respond effectively to local circumstances or practice that is in other ways significant for the council/community. • Practice which in general exceeds good

	practice but may have some aspects that require fine tuning.
In need of improvement or further development	• Does not satisfactorily meet minimum compliance and good practice indicators and may impact negatively on council operations. • Significant improvement initiatives that are in progress and which need to be continued.

A council's overall performance is ranked according to policies, practices, systems and other means it has in place to:

- plan strategically

- govern its day to day operations

- undertake its planning and regulatory obligations

- manages its assets and finances

- involve the community

- recruit and retain its workforce.

A description of each of the rankings in relation to performance is provided below.

Description of performance rankings

PERFORMANCE RANKING	DESCRIPTION
Performing well	• Meets all requirements to a good or high standard • Demonstrates elements of good/better practice
Satisfactory	• Meets all or most requirements to an acceptable standard. • Improvements have been identified by the council and progress toward their rectification is evident.
Requires action	• A critical requirement has not been met • Significant improvement or further development is required in a particular area.

Greater Taree City Council Review

The review team members were Governance Officer Lorraine Hayward and Principal Program Officer Grant Astill. In order to gain a preliminary understanding of local circumstances and how Greater Taree City Council is responding, the Council was asked to complete a comprehensive checklist/questionnaire about key policies, practices and procedures as well as to provide a range documents. The review team examined Greater Taree City Council's responses and documents prior to visiting the Council.

The on-site component of the review took place in the first week of May 2012. It involved the following activities:

- initial interviews with the Mayor and the General Manager
- interviews with a cross-section of staff
- an individual meetings with four councillors
- a review of the Council policies, other documents and systems

The review team had previously observed a Councillor briefing workshop and a Council meeting in April 2012.

Post visit, the review team examined a range of collected information and assessed this material in line with applicable legislation, policy and guidelines where possible. The review team also called on the resources of a number of other agencies while drafting this report.

The review team would like to take this opportunity to thank the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and those Greater Taree City Council councillors along with the General Manager, Executive and Staff who participated in the review and provided it with valuable assistance.

2   ABOUT THE COUNCIL AND THE AREA

Location and demographics

Greater Taree City Council is a coastal council located in the Manning Valley on the mid north coast of New South Wales, 324 kilometres north of Sydney and 72 kilometres south of Port Macquarie. The Council area covers 3,733 sq km and is boarded by the Port Macquarie Hastings, Great Lakes, Walcha and Gloucester local government areas. Greater Taree is a predominantly rural area with residential, industrial and commercial land use. There are large tracts of State Forest and National Park, featuring beaches, coastlines, waterways and mountains. The area is focussed around the regional centre of Taree, with the towns of Wingham, Old Bar, Harrington and Hallidays Point being other significant population centres.
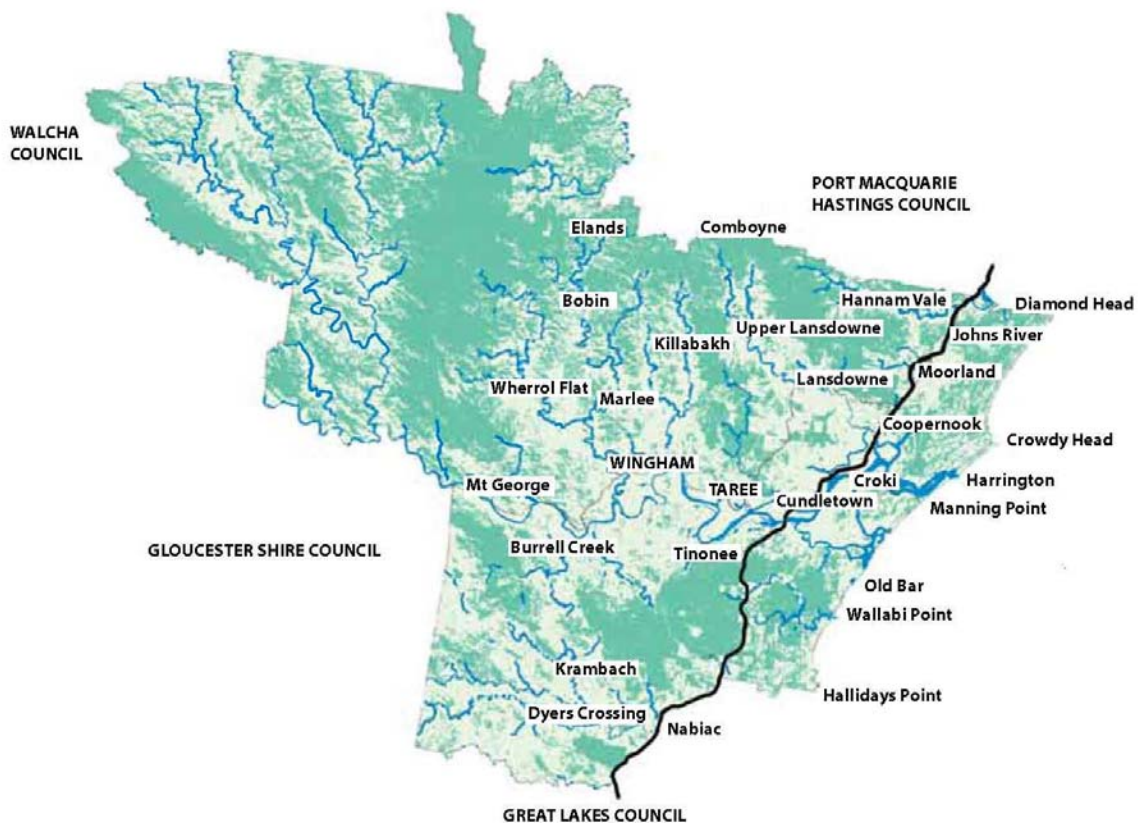
Source: Greater Taree City Council Annual Report 2011

Greater Taree has a population of approximately 48,000 residents:

- approximately 27% are aged 60 and over, 40% are under 35 year of age and 33% are aged between 35 -59 years of age
- 33% receive a pension or benefit of some kind
- around 3% are from non-English speaking backgrounds
- just over 4% identify as indigenous people.

Local issues

The economy of the local government area is increasingly service based although forestry, agriculture and fishing are still viable local industries. The local economy is increasingly driven by the impact of retirees and an aging population seeing a growth in health and community service sector employment. Tourism is a key industry for the Manning Valley and will continue to have a significant impact on the local economy.

Of current community concern is the state of local roads infrastructure, coastal erosion, development matters and the installation of high tension power lines across the local government area.

Current Council

Greater Taree City Council consists of eight Councillors and a popularly elected Mayor. There are two female and seven male Councillors. The Council at the time of the review was elected in 2008 and has since come to the end of its term. A new Council was elected in the September 2012 local government elections and the popularly elected Mayor was returned as were five other Councillors. Council has three newly elected representatives and the Council now comprises two female and seven male Councillors.

Council staffing and structure

The Council has approximately 324 employees representing 253 full time equivalent positions. The Council does not collect data on the diversity of its workforce other than age and gender. Three quarters of Council staff are aged between 35 and 65 years. One quarter of Council staff are aged over 55 years. The Council underwent a

significant restructure in 2010 and is currently organised in three functional areas: futures planning, resource planning and service delivery.

PART II.   PLANNING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

This part of the review focussed on Council's strategic intent and how it has involved its community and other stakeholders in developing long term strategic plans. The review assessed the clarity of Council's strategic direction, whether its plans reflect a shared and realistic vision, and its overall approach to corporate planning. Monitoring and reporting of progress to promote continuous improvement was also an integral consideration in regard to Council's performance in this area.

3   STRATEGIC PLANNING AND REPORTING

An integrated planning and reporting framework for NSW local government is in place to improve councils' long-term community planning and asset management, as well as streamline reporting to the community.

The framework aims to improve the sustainability of local communities by encouraging councils, the community and State agencies to work together to develop and implement long-term plans. The Community Strategic Plan is supported by a Resourcing Strategy that includes long-term financial planning, asset management planning and workforce management planning. The framework is set out in the following diagram.

Overview of strategic planning

Overall, Council's strategic planning and reporting framework is of a good standard, although the Resourcing Strategy requires further work. Council's community engagement guideline and community consultation undertaken as part of developing the Community Strategic Plan are strengths.

Table 1 below describes Council's performance in relation to the key areas of a council strategic planning framework.

Table 1:   Assessment of Council's Strategic Planning framework

Area	Status
Community engagement	**Performing well**
Community Strategic Plan	**Performing well**
Delivery Program	**Performing well**
Operational Plan	**Performing well**
Workforce Management Plan	**Requires action**
Long Term Financial Plan	**Requires action**
Asset Management Plan	**Satisfactory**
Annual Report	**Performing well**

Significant Observations

Areas for improvement

Community Strategic Plan

There is sound evidence of Council's extensive engagement with the community in developing the Community Strategic Plan, which is to be commended. The Plan identifies the community's aspirations and presents a vision for the future of the area. This includes assets and infrastructure, the environment, the economy and lifestyle.

More information could have been provided about the relationship of State and regional planning to the development of the Community Strategic Plan and how The Council plans to work collaboratively with State Government agencies to deliver outcomes for the community.

Recommendation 1

That Council consider elaborating on the relationship of the NSW State Plan and regional plans to the Community Strategic Plan in future revisions of the Community Strategic Plan.

Delivery program

Overall the Delivery Program meets most requirements. The Delivery Program comprehensively defines actions for each of the strategic objectives of the

Community Strategic Plan. However, the Delivery Program does not provide methods of assessment or linkages with the Resourcing Strategy.

Recommendation 2

That the Delivery Program 2012-2014 include a method of assessment to determine the effectiveness of each principal activity in implementing the strategies and achieving the strategic objectives at which the principal activity is directed, to bring the delivery program into compliance with legislative requirements (section 404 Local Government Act 1993).

Recommendation 3

That Council consider including references in the Delivery Program 2012-2014 to the Community Strategic Plan and Resourcing Strategy to improve integration of plans.

Resourcing strategy

Asset Management Strategy

The Asset Management Strategy (April 2010) is still in draft form and does not cover the minimum 10 year period. It supports the objectives of the Community Strategic Plan but is not entirely aligned with the Delivery Program.

The Strategy includes a good condition rating table that states the percentage of each asset type at each condition level. It also indicates the level where current intervention for renewals is set. However, the strategy doesn't identify key performance measures for each action.

Recommendation 4

That, in relation to the Asset Management Strategy, Council:

- *Identify and include links with Community Strategic Plan, Delivery Program and Long Term Financial Plan for improved integration of plans;*

- *Identify and include performance measures; and*

- *Finalise the Strategy.*

Workforce Management Plan

The Greater Taree City Council Workforce Plan 2010-2014 is still in draft form. The legislation merely requires Council to *have* a Workforce Plan. Council's draft plan meets this requirement and is a starting point to identifying the issues facing its workforce.

However, it does not illustrate how Council's structure has been reorganised to meet the objectives in the Community Strategic Plan and Delivery Program. It is also lacking in strategies to address the issues faced by the organisation including succession planning, ageing workforce and skills shortages. These are discussed further below under the heading Workforce Relations.

Recommendation 5

That, in relation to the Workforce Management Plan, Council:

- *Identify and include in Plan strategies to address workforce issues particular to Council;*

- *Identify and include in Plan linkages with Community Strategic Plan and Delivery Program; and*

- *Finalise the Plan.*

Long-Term Financial Plan

The Council has undertaken very detailed financial planning and modelling however it is contained within spreadsheets that are unable to be read by anyone outside the Council. Also there are no projected income and expenditure, balance sheet or cash flow statements that would assist with understanding.

The Council has previously submitted seven different work files on the Long-Term Financial Plan to the Division covering 20 years. While much financial information is provided, there is little commentary or discussion which enables the reader to make sense of this large amount of information.

The Council has undertaken very detailed financial planning and modelling. The Council has used different models in the preparation of its long term financial plan - the Status Quo, the Steady Improvement and the quick fix. However it does not

document the 10-year results, assumptions, sensitivity analysis and performance indicators for each scenario.

The Council does not appear to have a strategic Long-Term Financial Plan that appropriately supports the goals of the Community Strategic Plan. However, It appears that the financial planning undertaken by the Council was considered in the finalisation of the delivery plan

Council response

Council utilises the *Local Government Solutions* Long-Term Financial Planning (LTFP) model developed specifically for NSW Local Government. The LTFP modelling was undertaken to include various scenarios and sensitivity analysis and discussed at councillor workshops as part of the budget process. In 2010/11, Council included only a summary of the LTFP in the adopted Operational Plan, noting that Council had reviewed the Operating Statement, Balance Sheet and Cash flows during the budget process. Council has subsequently included these financial statements and cash flow in the adopted Operational Plan for 2011/12.

Also, Council is reviewing its Community Plan and Delivery Program as required under IP&R Guidelines. Council recognises that the link between the two needs to be more articulately expressed and that the LTFP must support the activities identified.

PART III.   DELIVERING AND ACHIEVING

This part of the review examined the key structures, systems and processes involved in delivering activities to achieve the stated outcomes of the Community Strategic Plan. This included considering the means by which the Council:

- governs its day-to-day operations

- undertakes it planning and regulatory obligations

- manages its assets and finances

- engages and involves the community

- recruits and retains its workforce.

4 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 local government sector in the organisation

- ensures that an organisation is meeting its legal and ethical obligations

- assists in the prevention and detection of dishonest or unethical behaviour.

Overview of Greater Taree City Council's governance practices

Overall, Greater Taree City Council has developed, or is in the process of developing, many effective governance systems in recent years. It appears that, like customer service, a positive governance culture is evolving within the Council and that employees across the organisation are becoming more aware of their governance responsibilities. Ongoing staff training will assist in further developing this governance culture.

Table 2 below describes Council's performance in relation to the key areas of a council governance framework.

Table 2: Assessment of Council's Governance framework

Area	Status
Ethics and values	Performing well
Code of Conduct	Performing well
Gifts & benefits	Performing well
Communications devices	Performing well
Disclosure of pecuniary interests	Performing well
Business ethics	Performing well
Risk management	Satisfactory
Corruption prevention	Requires action
Business continuity/Disaster recovery plan	Performing well
Internal audit	Performing well
Legislative compliance	Satisfactory
Legal services	Performing well
Procurement, disposal and tendering	Satisfactory
Privacy management	Performing well
Records management	Performing well
Public Officer	Performing well
Access to information by the public	Performing well
Policy register	Performing well
Executive management meetings	Performing well
Delegations	Performing well
Council meetings	Satisfactory
Council committees (s355 & others)	Performing well
Councillor induction and ongoing training	Satisfactory
Expenses and facilities policy	Satisfactory
Councillor staff interaction	Performing well
Access to information by councillors	Satisfactory
Political donations	Requires action
Complaints handling	Satisfactory
Public interest disclosures and internal reporting	Performing well
Strategic alliances	Performing well
Information technology	Performing well

Significant Observations

Areas for improvement

Risk management

Risk management is about the systematic identification, analysis, evaluation, control and monitoring of risks. While risk cannot be entirely eliminated, councils should aim to establish a risk-aware culture and to continually work towards protecting the interests of the council, the public and other key stakeholders.

The Council has developed a Risk Management Framework that complies with the Australian Standard (AS/NZS IS31000:2009) on risk management. As part of the Council's risk management strategy a risk register is being compiled, but is not yet complete. Until it is finalised, it is not clear how comprehensive the risk register will be. For example, some staff raised concerns with the review team that's timber bridges may have been overlooked as a risk that should be included.

Recommendation 6

That Council complete the risk assessment process and incorporate all findings in the risk register.

Corruption prevention

The Council has a good Corruption Minimisation Plan and Policy. The review team notes that one of the actions in the Plan is to review and amend corruption minimisation controls biannually. Action 4.4 of the Plan is to develop risk management strategies and the risk register in 2012 and review annually. However, the Council most recently conducted a systematic corruption risk assessment in July 2005.

Recommendation 7

That Council implement the actions contained in the Corruption Minimisation Plan, particularly reviewing corruption minimisation controls as part of a systematic corruption risk assessment.

Legislative Compliance

The Council has indicated that it does not have a system to determine and monitor its compliance with its legislative responsibilities. Individual staff are responsible for keeping up to date with legislation that applies to their area of expertise and notifying colleagues when there are changes.

Recommendation 8

That Council considers developing and implementing a system to identify its legislative responsibilities and resolve any non-compliance matters identified.

Procurement and disposals and tendering

The review team noted that the Council has developed adequate tendering and procurement procedures and has a draft procurement policy. The Council is yet to develop a policy and procedures for the disposal of assets.

The review team has concerns about the consistent application of procurement procedures. For example, the Council should ensure that accounts staff are aware of Council's financial delegations to ensure appropriate approval of purchases.

Recommendation 9

That Council develop a disposal policy and procedures, and ensure that appropriate internal controls are in place for procurement processes.

Councillor workshops/briefings

The Council holds regular councillor workshops/briefing sessions and the review team had the opportunity to observe a councillor workshop. The Division of Local Government supports workshops as a way of providing councillors with background information about matters before council and developing councillor knowledge and expertise.

The meetings provisions of the Local Government Act and Regulation do not apply to workshops. The procedure for councillor workshops is a decision for the Council. As noted in part 13 of the Division's Meetings Practice Note, workshops should not be used for detailed or advanced discussions where agreement is reached and/or a de

facto decision is made. Any detailed discussion or exchange of views on an issue, and any policy decision, should be left to a formal Council or committee meeting. Workshops should be used as a means of communicating information to councillors to enable them to make informed decisions at open Council meetings.

The review team observed that councillors were indicating the way they intended to vote on some matters during the workshop. The workshop observed by the review team was chaired by the Mayor and appeared to be run like a Council meeting. It may be beneficial to differentiate between a workshop and the purpose and procedures of a formal Council meeting. It is suggested that the General Manager or other senior staff member convene the workshops, rather than the Mayor.

Recommendation 10

That councillor briefings be used only for disseminating information to councillors and answering councillors' questions.

Recommendation 11

That Council consider having the General Manager or other senior staff member chair/lead/convene councillor briefing sessions.

Councillor induction and ongoing training

Councillors' knowledge and skills have a significant impact on the organisation's capacity to make sound and transparent decisions. New councillors require both induction and ongoing development to equip them with the knowledge and skills required to properly carry out their duties and allow them to be effective members of Council's elected body. There is an ongoing challenge to keep up-to-date with changes in areas where they are making decisions for their communities. Of particular importance in Greater Taree City Council's case is the ability to determine the nature of Council's financial position and find ways of meeting the community's resourcing requirements in a sustainable way. It is therefore appropriate that the Council allocates adequate resources to councillor training and development.

The Council does not currently have a structured training program for elected members. The Council advised the review team that an induction was being prepared for the incoming Council following the local government elections in

September 2012. The Council should ensure that the new Council is supported to develop corporate financial literacy.

Recommendation 12

That Council finalise its induction for councillors and implement it following the 2012 elections.

Recommendation 13

That Council develop an ongoing training program to assist councillors in their role.

<u>Expenses and facilities policy</u>

Council's policy on councillors' expenses and facilities is adequate but would benefit from some improvements. The policy should include a dispute resolution process, a proper approval process and set monetary limits for expenses and facilities. Currently there are only limits for internet allowance, the Mayor's travel expenses and partners' expenses.

The policy should also include a statement on, and mechanism for, reimbursement of private benefit, including for the Mayor's car. "Reasonable entertainment expenses" associated with the office of Mayor should be defined and quantified.

The Council could also consider including provision for the cost of care arrangements, including childcare expenses, and the care of elderly, disabled or sick immediate family members to allow councillors to undertake their Council business obligations.

Recommendation 14

That Council consult the Division of Local Government's Guidelines for the payment of expenses and the provision of facilities for mayors and councillors in NSW*, and review and update its expenses and facilities policy by 30 November 2012 as required by the Local Government Act.*

Access to information by councillors

It is important that councillors are equipped with sufficient information to carry out their functions and make effective decisions on behalf of the community.

The Council has a Communication Protocol to guide interactions between staff and councillors. It outlines access to information and how councillors can request access to information.

As part of the Communication Protocol, the Council was required to establish a councillor information portal through the Council intranet. Although the portal has been established, it has not yet been populated with relevant information. The Council staff advised that the Council intends to instead give councillors access to the intranet and abandon the councillor information portal. If the councillor information portal is going to be substituted with intranet access, the Communication Protocol should be amended accordingly.

In addition, councillors have regular workshops where they are briefed by senior staff on matters that are before the Council. This appears to be an effective mechanism for providing information to councillors.

The review team was concerned that despite the Council having a Communication Protocol and regular councillor workshops, some councillors did not feel that they were receiving adequate information about Council's activities.

Recommendation 15

That Council review the information needs of councillors to determine if the Communication Protocol, and/or the way it is being implemented, is effective in meeting these needs. It is recommended that this revision be undertaken prior to the new Council commencing in September 2012.

Recommendation 16

That councillors are informed of the Communication Protocol, and that information about it be included in the councillor induction program.

Political donations

The General Manager is required to keep a register with copies of current declarations of political donation disclosures that have been lodged with the Election Funding Authority by or on behalf of councillors under section 328A of the Local Government Act. The Council does not currently have a political donations register.

Recommendation 17

That Council compile a political donations register that complies with section 328A of the Local Government Act.

Complaints handling

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

The Council has indicated that once the new complaints policy is finalised it will arrange training in the application of its complaints handling policy and procedure. It has also signalled its intention to introduce reporting on complaints in the future.

Recommendation 18

That Council provide training to staff in the application of its complaint handling policy and procedure.

Recommendation 19

That Council prepare and consider regular reports on the number, progress and outcome of complaints.

Draft policies and plans

The Council has a number of policies and plans in draft form or currently under review. These include:

- Values statement

- Disaster Recovery Plan

- Corruption Minimisation Policy

- Procurement Policy.

The Council should undertake an organisation-wide analysis to determine policy, planning and procedural gaps. For example, the Council may benefit from developing a Records Management Plan and an Information and Communication Technology Strategic Plan that supports Council's Resourcing Strategy.

Recommendation 20

That Council finalise and adopt its draft policies and plans.

Recommendation 21

That Council ensures it has a comprehensive policy, planning and procedural framework across the organisation.

Council response

In January 2011, the Executive adopted a *Guide to developing policies, procedures and guidelines* and is currently developing and reviewing policies, and conducting process reviews against these guidelines. A review of its Delivery Program is planned and it is proposed that the opportunity of reporting against such progress be incorporated into the IP&R. Council, therefore concurs with the recommendations of this section.

5 PLANNING AND OTHER REGULATORY FUNCTIONS

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

Overview of land use planning, development assessment and regulatory practices

Overall, the Council is delivering land use planning and development services in a timely and effective manner. The Council has a recently-endorsed Local Environment Plan and Development Control Plans that follow the Department of Planning requirements. These plans are available on Council's website, and are accompanied by a number of planning instrument fact sheets that explain Council's plans and processes.

NSW Department of Planning statistics indicate that the Council is performing well in determining development applications within 47 days. The State average determination time is 68 days. It is noted that 95% of all Development Applications are determined by staff under delegation. The Council has a comprehensive development application package and process that is well supported by information on Council's website.

The Council has a draft Compliance Policy that needs to be finalised and supported by documented procedures. The review team found that some staff were unsure about how to handle complaints and investigations that crossed functional boundaries within the Council. In addition, the review team were informed that a number of the Council officers did not possess a current Certificate of Authority.

Table 3 below assesses Council's performance in relation to the key areas of the self-assessment checklist to provide an overview of Council's planning and regulatory framework.

Table 3:   Council's planning and regulatory framework.

Area	Status
Strategic land use instruments	Performing well
Development applications process	Performing well
Contribution plans and planning agreements	Performing well
BASIX	Performing well
Graffiti	Performing well
Compliance and enforcement	Requires Action
Environmental management	Performing well
Companion animals	Satisfactory
Water safety	Satisfactory

Significant Observations

Noteworthy practices

Award for Food Surveillance Practice

Council's Environmental Health Officer (Food), Mr Joshua Smith, was the recipient of the 2011 NSW Food Authority's *Food Surveillance Champion Award for an Individual* (country category). The award is given by the NSW Food Authority in recognition of excellence in food surveillance practices under the NSW Food Regulation Partnership. This award demonstrates how the Council staff can continue to deliver high quality services during a time of significant change, for which they are to be commended.

Development Application Processing

The Council reported that 95% of development applications are determined by staff under delegated authority. This is a good use of delegated authority that the Council should aim to further improve. In leading councils, 98% of all development applications are determined by staff under delegated authority.

The Council has developed quarterly reports to keep councillors informed of planning and development work. The review team was advised that applications are reported to the Council only where there is significant public interest, substantial non-compliance with, or variations to, development controls, significant objections or

significant land use or environmental issues. This is commendable, as this practice should facilitate timely and objective decision-making, and suggests that the elected councillors have a good understanding of their primary role in determining policy matters and matters of strategic importance.

The Council staff are proactive in discussing development applications with applicants through pre-lodgement briefings, and ensuring that applicants have sufficient opportunity during the assessment process to provide the required information. It is apparent that development application forms and processes are well considered and provide sufficient information to applicants, objectors and the community about the assessment process. The Department of Planning's *Local Development Performance Monitoring: 2010-11* report states that of 541 development applications determined by the Council, there were only 3 reviews pursuant to section 82A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, and no Class 1 merit review appeals or Class 4 or 5 proceedings in the Land and Environment Court. This is commendable.

The efficient turnaround times, well considered processes and low level of litigation are evidence that Council's planning and development procedures are working well.

Environmental Management

The Council has undertaken a number of initiatives to enhance its overall environmental responsibilities. Internally, the Council has committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by implementing aspects of its Green Office Action Plan such as energy-efficient lighting and water-saving systems. Externally, the Council has committed to an Integrated Catchment Management Strategy to manage the health of the Manning River. The Council has undertaken the award winning Cattai Wetlands project which is growing into the Big Swamp project, and is aimed at addressing acid sulphate soil issues. The Cattai Wetlands Project was a finalist in the 2011 Local Government and Shires Associations *Natural Protection and Enhancement – Excellence in the Environment* awards, and received a highly commended award in the Tidy Towns *Sustainable Communities Awards 2011*.

The Council is continuing to work with partner agencies such as the Office of Environment and Heritage, neighbouring councils and community interest groups to

develop coastal and river management plans and activities. The Council is also looking at ways to further involve the community in environment management projects in accordance with community expectations arising from the Community Strategic Plan. The Council is to be commended for its approach to managing the community's local environment in an integrated and sustainable way.

Companion Animal Programs

The Council is undertaking proactive responsible pet ownership programs in conjunction with the RSPCA. Promoting pet ownership as a lifetime commitment through the *Learn to love your dog* campaign provides the community with the information needed to comply with the provisions of the *Companion Animals Act 1998*. The inclusion of a behavioural assessment may provide owners with further information about their dogs and enable the Council to identify problem dogs in the community earlier.

Areas for improvement

Compliance delegations

At the time of the review, the review team asked the senior leaders of the compliance teams to produce their delegations and authorisations. Two of the three leaders were unable to do so and told the review team that their teams did not have current signed delegations nor certificates of authority. This poses a significant risk for the Council. These officers would be acting without authority if they were found not to have current delegations or certificates of authority signed and issued by the General Manager.

Recommendation 22

That Council take immediate action to properly authorise its compliance and enforcement officers.

Recommendation 23

That Council institute a process of review of authorisations to ensure that its compliance and enforcement officers have current and accurate delegated authority at all times.

At the time of the review, it was noted that the Council had a draft Enforcement Policy. It is important for the Council to have a sound policy framework to enable it to act promptly, consistently and effectively in its enforcement activities.

Recommendation 24

That Council finalise, adopt and implement its Enforcement Policy as a matter of priority.

Cross-function investigations

The review team noted that Council's compliance staff were unsure how to best handle cross-function investigations. The review team noted that the Council did not appear to have a lead investigations process or a framework to support multiple breaches forming one complaint. The Council should consider how best to assign investigations to increase the utility of compliance staff across functional areas.

Recommendation 25

That Council examine the best options for co-ordinating and managing investigation of cross-functional complaints.

Parking Priority Policy

The review team noted that the Council is currently conducting a CBD Integrated Traffic and Transport study. The Division of Local Government has issued a circular to councils (08-36) which notes that it is good practice for a council to develop a parking priority policy outlining its approach to parking enforcement and compliance. This circular requests that councils also have a publicly available complaints handling policy, which Greater Taree City Council has. As the Council currently conducts parking enforcement activities, it would be good practice to adopt a parking priority policy and make it publicly available.

Recommendation 26

That Council develop and make publicly available a Parking Priority Policy.

Swimming Pool Safety

The Council has a number of pool safety pamphlets available and manages pool safety issues as part of its development certification system for the installation of new swimming pools. However, there does not appear to be a program to promote swimming pool safety for existing private swimming pools. No corresponding inspection program for private swimming pools exists to promote compliance with pool safety standards.

Recommendation 27

That Council develop a program to identify all backyard swimming pools in the LGA.

Recommendation 28

That Council consider a routine inspection program of all backyard swimming pools.

Companion Animals Co-ordination

The Council has a number of programs and processes that indicate it has a significant understanding of companion animal management issues. Co-ordination of companion animal management may benefit from an overarching instrument such as an adopted Strategic Companion Animals Management Plan. It is considered good practice that councils have such a plan that could include establishing a Companion Animal Advisory Committee. Such a committee may assist the Council to enhance community involvement in the overall management of companion animals.

Recommendation 29

That Council consider developing a strategic companion animals management plan in partnership with its community.

Councils are required to report certain companion animal-related matters to the Division of Local Government. The Council has been reporting as required, indicating an awareness of its obligations.

The *2010-2012 Survey of council seizures of cats & dogs* suggests that almost 100% of the cats and dogs euthanased were euthanased because homes were unable to

be found. No animals were euthanased because they were deemed unsuitable for re-homing or because they were sick or injured.

The Council does not appear to have a working relationship with any re-homing organisations as no animals were recorded as being released to a re-homing organisation. Animal Rescue Taree holds an exemption from payment of registration fees under clause 16(d) of the Companion Animals Regulation 2008 and appears to be active in re-homing unwanted dogs and cats in the area. The Council may wish to consider taking steps to reduce its pound euthanasia rates through a proactive re-homing program with an organisation such as Animal Rescue Taree.

It is important that all councils are aware of the existence of dangerous and restricted dogs, including dogs that might reasonably be considered to be dangerous or restricted, that are ordinarily kept within their area. Approximately 18,270 dogs are recorded on the Companion Animals Register as residing in the local government area. A review of Council's Companion Animals Register entries shows that the Council has never issued a Notice of Intention to Declare a Dog a Restricted Dog.

The Companion Animals Register also indicates that 16 restricted dogs reside in the local area, some of which are not registered. There are also ten cross-breeds of restricted dogs currently pending assessment or not declared restricted. If these dogs are deceased or no longer reside within the area, the Register should be updated accordingly. The Council may need to review the Companion Animals Register and follow up on restricted breed dogs and crosses of restricted breed dogs that are ordinarily kept within its area.

Recommendation 30

That Council develop and implement a program to follow up restricted breed dogs in its area.

The Companion Animals Register indicates that the Council appears to be reporting dog attack incidents and also appears to investigate incidents. However, it is noted that there are 20 outstanding incidents with a status of 'commenced' or 'under investigation' dating back to 2008.

Recommendation 31

That Council review and finalise dog attack incidents on the Companion Animals Register.

Council response

Companion Animal matters – Council has investigated and addressed more than 2000 dog attack incidents since 2008. It appears that a small number (20) of the incidents have not been completed as addressed within the system. This is an administrative or system error with the investigations having all been completed. The system will be updated as a priority.

6 ASSET AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Under its charter, the 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.

Overview of asset and financial management practices

The review team has concerns about Council's financial position based on low liquidity levels, ongoing deficit budgeting, and asset maintenance and renewal issues.

The Asset Management Policy supports the objectives of the Community Strategic Plan. The actions outlined in the *Draft Assets Management Strategy (review 2012)* don't appear to be entirely aligned with the Delivery Program. The Strategy includes a good condition rating table that states the percentage of each asset class at each condition level and also records the current intervention level at which an asset is to be renewed.

Greater Taree City Council has undertaken significant works quantifying the extent and condition of its civil infrastructure assets. The Council has a system for recording its assets and condition assessments, and has a process for scheduling asset maintenance. This process directly informs Council's annual works program. The Council has yet to develop asset management plans for every class of asset identified in its *Draft Asset Management Strategy (review 2012).*

It is noted that the Council has undertaken a review of its engineering processes to ensure it is undertaking the right work activities in the right way to ensure asset longevity. Works Project Management is still an issue for the Council. However, steps are being taken to ensure works are completed to specification and within budget. The Council has received a Special Rate Variation as well as Commonwealth and State grant funds for infrastructure projects. These funds are tied to specific works the Council must complete.

The Civil Infrastructure Capital Works program forms part of the Operational Plan and annual budget which are placed on exhibition for community comment. In addition the list of works that the Council is currently undertaking through the Special Rate Variation was determined through community consultation. The community was invited to submit works priorities during the recent 2012/2013 budget process.

Greater Taree City Council's net operating loss (before capital items) is of concern. The Council reports a significant amount is required to be spent on roads to bring them to a satisfactory standard. The Division of Local Government will continue to monitor Council's financial position and progress.

The comprehensive implementation of the Integrated Planning & Reporting framework, which includes asset management and long-term financial plans, will assist the Council to make informed decisions to address its longer-term financial and asset management planning challenges.

Table 4 below assesses Council's performance in relation to the key areas of the self-assessment checklist to provide an overview of Council's asset and financial management practices.

Table 4:   Council's asset and financial management framework

Area	Status
Asset management	**Requires Action**
Land assets	**Performing well**
Financial management	**Requires Action**
Council businesses	**Performing well**
Council involvement in companies, partnerships, corporations, co-operatives, and joint ventures	**Performing well**
Insurance	**Performing well**

Areas for improvement

Asset Management

In Council's unaudited *Special Schedule 7*, its assets have a written-down value of over $483.7 million. It is estimated that it will cost $274.2 million to bring the assets to a satisfactory condition, with roads estimated to cost $253.4 million. The Council re-valued community land in 2010/11, and reduced the value of this class of assets by $135.578 million. The *Special Schedule 7* shows that the majority of road assets are in an unsatisfactory condition. The Council has also been exposed to a number of floods in recent years that have negatively impacted asset condition. The Council has "impaired" or written off $19 million of roads during 2010/11.

To maintain its infrastructure assets, the Council has estimated that an annual maintenance budget of $19.694 million would be required. However, in 2010/11 the Council spent only $10 million (a shortfall of over $9.6 million).

Council's long-term asset maintenance capacity, especially for road assets, is of significant concern. The Council was granted a Special Rate Variation in 2010/11 to assist with the maintenance of road assets. According to Council's 2010/11 Annual Report, the additional funding only covered works for 1.4km of roads.

Recommendation 32

That Council finalises its asset management plans for all asset classes as a matter of urgency, and ensure associated expenditure is adequately reflected in the Long-Term Financial Plan.

Financial position of Greater Taree City Council.

Greater Taree City Council' financial position of concern to the Division due to the reported write off of roads valued at $19.248 million following floods in June 2011. The Council also reported an increase in depreciation of $19.187 million following the revaluation of assets.

Financial position for the past 3 years						
	2010/11		**2009/10**		**2008/09**	
	$'000	**%**	**$'000**	**%**	**$'000**	**%**
Revenue						
Rates and annual charges	26,986	*52*	24,433	*48*	21,724	*46*
User charges and fees	4,400	*9*	4,433	*9*	3,800	*8*
Interest and investment revenue	1,813	*4*	1,499	*3*	1,637	*3*
Other revenue	1,823	*4*	1,706	*3*	1,423	*3*
Grants and contributions - operating	12,861	*25*	10,848	*21*	13,089	*27*
Grants and contributions – capital	3,624	*7*	7,828	*15*	5,777	*12*
Profits from disposal of assets/share in joint ventures					215	
Total	**51,507**	*100*	**50,747**	*100*	**47,665**	*100*
Expenses						
Employee costs	18,370	*20*	17,713	*35*	16,259	*35*
Borrowing costs	1,647	*2*	1,545	*3*	1,340	*3*
Materials and contracts	15,126	*17*	14,802	*29*	13,695	*29*
Depreciation and amortisation	31,947	*35*	12,760	*25*	12,453	*27*
Impairment	19,248	*21*				
Other expenses	4,068	*4*	3,485	*7*	3,077	*7*
Net loss on disposal of assets	1,006	*1*	101	*0*		
Total	**91,412**	*100*	**50,406**	*100*	**46,824**	
Surplus/(deficit)	**(39,905)**		**341**		**841**	
Operating result before capital grants & contributions	**(43,529)**		**(7,487)**		**(4,936)**	

Greater Taree City Council achieved surplus net operating results in 2009/10 and 2008/09 (if capital grants are included). The results before capital grants and contributions however, are deficits that have steadily increased from 2006/07.

Council's consolidated operating result before capital grants and contributions for 2010/11 was a loss of $43.529 million. This included impairment of $19.248 million due to floods in the area in June 2011, and an increase in deprecation of $19.187 million due to the revaluation of assets. Council's annual financial statement (Special Schedule 8 – unaudited) forecasts net operating losses (after capital) for three of the next four years.

Council's income for 2010/11 (before capital) was up by $760,000, while its expenses increased overall by $41.006 million. Rates and annual charges increased by $2.55 million and user charges and fee revenue decreased by $33,000 from 2009/10. Grants and contributions received for operating purposes were up by $2 million compared to 2009/10, while grants and contributions for capital purposes decreased by $4.2 million.

The Unrestricted Current Ratio (UCR) indicator is a measure of a council's ability to meet its financial obligations, such as paying for goods and services supplied. A ratio of between 1.5:1 and 2:1 is satisfactory and shows that a council has sufficient liquid assets on hand to meet its short-term liabilities. The Council has a UCR of 1.28:1 which is unsatisfactory and is a decrease from its UCR of 1.88:1 in 2009/10.

The Council had a Rates and Annual Charges Outstanding ratio (RACO) of 6.16% which is unsatisfactory against the benchmark limit of 5% for coastal councils. This result has been similar for the past three years.

Council's net operating losses (before capital items) are of concern for the projected longer-term, as is the amount required to be spent on roads to bring them to a satisfactory standard. The Council has a significant structural fiscal imbalance that needs to be addressed. The Division of Local Government will continue to monitor Council's financial position and progress.

Recommendation 33

That Council continues to liaise with the Division of Local Government's Performance and Compliance team to monitor and address its financial situation.

Quarterly financial reporting

Under clause 203 of the Local Government (General) Regulation 2005, the Responsible Accounting Officer of a council must prepare and submit to the council a budget review statement that shows, by reference to the estimate of income and expenditure that the council has adopted for the relevant year, a revised estimate of the income and expenditure for that year.

Council's quarterly financial reviews are presented in a manner that is informative. On its own, this information would be difficult for the lay person to understand, however the Chief Financial Officer's statement provided in Council's business papers provides an overview of Council's financial situation that is readily understood. The Quarterly Business Review Statement (QBRS) reports are generally compliant with the Division of Local Government's QBRS Guidelines. However it is noted that the report did not include Councils' *Net Operating Result Before Capital Items* position as required.

Recommendation 34

That Council ensures its Quarterly Business Review Statements comply with the Division of Local Governments' guidelines.

Council response

Council believes that the use of the coastal councils benchmark for Rates and Annual Charges Outstanding ratio (RACO) is an unfair comparison. The Greater Taree City Council rate of 6.16 is below MIDROC average of 6.48%, and slightly higher against group 4 Average of 5.90.

Greater Taree City Council Income and Expenditure reports are separated to clearly identify Operational, Waste and Capital and also include a Consolidated Report, However, the Consolidated Report has now been amended to include the Capital Result on the Consolidated Page in accordance with the DLG Guidelines.

7 COMMUNITY 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 the 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.

Overview of community and consultation practices

The review team observed that the Council is in the process of implementing a more customer-focused culture across the Council. The Council has developed a comprehensive suite of policies to this end, including a community engagement guideline, a service excellence charter, a complaints handing policy and a communication policy. It is anticipated that the work to implement these policies will continue.

The review team noted that the Council provides good cultural facilities for the community including a library, entertainment centre and art gallery. The Council has improved promotion of the entertainment centre to encourage better utilisation of the facility.

In the area of economic development, the review team noted that the Council has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Manning Valley Business Chamber and is providing financial assistance to the Chamber during the term of the MOU. The Council achieved recognition in 2010, with an *Economic Development Strategic Planning Award – Regional*, for Taree Regional Airport.

The Council has also achieved recognition for its youth programs, winning Best Youth Week and Most Innovative Youth Week Program in NSW in 2009.

Table 5 below assesses Council's performance in relation to the key areas of the self-assessment checklist to provide an overview of Council's practices in relation to community and consultation programs.

Table 5:   Council's community and consultation framework.

Community and consultation area	Status
Ageing population	**Performing well**
Community participation	**Performing well**
Communication policy	**Performing well**
Tourism	**Performing well**
Economic development	**Performing well**

Significant Observations

Better practices

Library services

The review team was impressed with the way the Council has provided its library services at the main branch of the library in Taree. The library is an inviting space for the community. For example, the children's corner is enhanced by a mural painted by a well-known local artist who also illustrates children's books. There is a separate youth space with computers and age-appropriate music. Reading areas for all ages and an appealing layout contribute to a facility that is attractive to the community.

The library offers books catalogued by genre, an extensive collection of periodicals, multimedia borrowings and facilities, computers and internet access, meeting rooms, a local and family history room, and a dedicated exhibition area. The multifunction approach demonstrates Council's thoughtful consideration of the needs of the community.

In addition to the main branch, the Council also provides four smaller branch libraries for outlying communities. The Council has demonstrated ongoing targeted community consultation around the provision of library services to ensure that the services provided are relevant and appropriate to the community's needs.

Noteworthy practices

Tourism

Tourism is one of the major industries in the Greater Taree local government area. The Council has developed a Tourism Marketing Strategy in consultation with the Manning Valley Tourism Board. The review team was impressed by the Manning Valley Tourism Partnership Program Prospectus developed to support the Strategy. The Program demonstrates how the Council is working with local businesses to develop the local economy through tourism.

The Council achieved recognition for its Manning Valley tourism marketing in the *Countrylink North Coast 2011 Tourism Awards.*

Recommendation 35

That Council considers including performance measures for each of the strategies identified in the Tourism Marketing Strategy.

Areas for improvement

Customer service

The review team found that the Council is working on providing improved customer service, for example in the counter services area. The Council has consolidated its separate service counters into one customer service counter as a single point of contact with the community.

The customer service team regularly reports collated data about responses to phone calls as a means of documenting Council's performance in customer service. The reports and sample internal service level agreements provided to the review team indicate Council's strong commitment to improving customer service delivery.

To further the cultural shift towards improved customer service, it is important that the culture of customer service/community focus is implemented across teams, not just within the customer service centre. In addition, to continue the improvements in customer service standards, the customer service team needs to be supported by staff with specialist knowledge across the Council. The Council may wish to consider the processes that would support the flow of information between technical staff and

the customer service team. The Council should consider formalising these internal relationships to provide clarity for staff.

Recommendation 36

That Council continue to promote a culture of customer service, but as a whole-of-Council approach. Ensure that the customer service team is supported by information and resources from staff with specialist knowledge from other teams across Council.

<u>Ageing population</u>

The review team noted that the area has an ageing population due in part to the net migration loss of young people and the net migration gain of retirees. To address the issues this poses, the Council has established an Age Friendly City Task Force comprised of staff and councillors. The Task Force has developed a Healthy Ageing Strategic Framework to assist the Council to progress its planning for an ageing community. It is not clear whether the Framework was developed in consultation with the community and health and aged care service providers.

The Healthy Ageing Strategic Framework is a positive step to address the challenges of an ageing population. This initiative could be improved by translation into specific actions in the Delivery Program and Operational Plan, or as part of an Ageing Strategy linked to the Community Strategic Plan.

Recommendation 37

That Council develop specific actions in consultation with the community to implement the goals/statements of intent of the Healthy Ageing Strategic Framework within the Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

Council response

Council will develop an Ageing Strategy based upon the Healthy Ageing Strategic Framework, which was developed by Greater Taree City Council in 2008. This document was developed utilising a whole-of-Council approach and best practice research in age-friendly communities. Council adopted the framework in August 2008, with the intention of seeking funding in the future to develop this framework into an ageing strategy. Council has applied for funding in November 2012 for a

grant, to employ a worker to progress the framework into an Ageing strategy and begin the implementation stage of the strategy.

Objective 1: To create a localised, whole-of-Council Ageing Strategy which incorporates Council's integrated planning framework, as well as other planning documentation across the whole of Council.

Objective 2: Development of a communication/information hub, which enables older people to remain as a connected valued member of the wider Greater Taree population.

Objective 3: Ensure that planning documentation and resulting initiatives take into consideration best practice community engagement, through the empowerment of key stakeholders, including community aged care providers, aged community groups and associations, as well as the aged population themselves.

8 WORKFORCE RELATIONS

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

Overview of Council's Workforce Relations systems.

The Council has recently (2010) undergone significant and fundamental structural and process change. Staff numbers have been reduced and reporting lines redrawn, placing significant stress on the organisation. The Council currently has 253 full-time equivalent staff. The Council does not collect data on the diversity of its workforce, other than for age and gender. Approximately 75% of the workforce is aged between 35 and 64 years, and approximately 25% (or 69 staff) are aged 55 and over.

Council's recent restructure included the appointment of a Leader Organisational Development, who is currently coordinating significant work on Council's Human Resources, Health and Safety, training and development, and corporate planning systems and processes. The review team found that almost all of Council's Human Resources processes were either under review or reconstruction. The Council acknowledged that there are significant pieces of work still to be completed before the Council has a comprehensive workforce relations system in place. As discussed earlier, the Council is yet to finalise its draft *Workforce Plan 2010 -2014* as part of its suite of Integrated Planning and Reporting documents.

The Council staff are working to document a number of workforce systems and processes. Several new policies have recently been adopted by the Council including a Recruitment and Selection policy and a Flexible Working Hours policy, with more policies in draft. However, the Council has yet to develop succession plans and has not incorporated Workplace Health and Safety responsibilities into many position descriptions. The Council has no Equal Employment Opportunity management plan.

Table 6 below assesses Council's performance in relation to the key areas of the self-assessment checklist to provide an overview of Council's practices in relation to workforce relations.

Table 6:   Council's workforce relations framework.

Area	Status
Workforce Management Strategy	Satisfactory
Workforce planning	Requires Action
Employee surveys	Performing well
Employment contracts	Performing well
Consultative committee	Performing well
Recruitment and selection	Performing well
Job descriptions and evaluation	Satisfactory
Employee remuneration	Performing well
Equal Employment Opportunity	Requires Action
Staff induction	Performing well
Grievance management	Performing well
Work Health and Safety	Satisfactory
Secondary employment	Performing well
Exit of staff	Performing well

Significant Observations

Areas for improvement

Workforce Management Strategy

All councils are exposed to a number of workforce issues, such as:

- the shortage of specialised skills in certain areas, such as in the area of environmental planning. The 'National Skills Shortage Strategy for Local Government May 2007' provides more information and is available on the Local Government Managers' Australia website at www.lgma.org.au

- an ageing workforce

- changing workloads and priorities as the Council and government priorities change

- changing employment market pressures.

The Council is continuing the development of its Workforce Management Plan. This plan forms part of Council's Resourcing Strategy as required by the Integrated Planning and Reporting framework. The Workforce Management Plan is required to address the human resource requirements of the Council's Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

Recommendation 38

That Council give priority to the finalisation of its Workforce Management Strategy and reflect identified workforce actions in its Delivery Program and Operational Plans.

Workforce Succession Planning

The Council has identified at least six staff who are due to retire in the next 18 months. Some of these staff hold key positions in the organisation. However, the Council currently does not have a formal succession plan for its key positions.

Council's workforce profile reveals that the majority of Council's staff are aged between 35 and 64, with 59 staff aged between 55 and 64. This latter age group represents a high proportion of staff who may look to exit the workforce in the short to medium term.

Succession planning aims to increase the availability of experienced and capable employees prepared to assume key roles as they become available. Succession planning also links to skill enhancement and training plans to ensure that staff are given the best possible opportunities to be competitive for key roles within the Council.

Recommendation 39

That council develop its succession planning for key positions in the organisation and incorporate this into its Workforce Management Plan.

Work Health and Safety (WHS)

The *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* requires both employers and employees to work to stringent safety requirements. The Council is required to develop written safe

work procedures. The Council is currently reviewing and updating its safe work method statements.

The review did not involve a comprehensive audit of Council's WHS practices. However, the review team did consider a range of matters to gain an understanding of Council's WHS system. These included Council's policy on WHS obligations, the operation of its WHS Committee and the system(s) for recording and following up on identified hazards/accidents.

A WHS committee has been established and meets monthly in accordance with its constitution. The Committee is currently focused on developing a WHS policy and procedures. The Council has a WHS field officer tasked with improving staff commitment to a positive WHS culture. This role is pivotal to ensuring that staff adopt safe practices and the Council meets its legislative obligations.

The Council records incidents and provides statistical information on injuries in the workplace through a report to each Leadership Team meeting. Council's injury statistics show a reduction in overall incidents but an increase in hours lost during 2012.

Overall it appears that Council's management team has a commitment to work health and safety. This commitment should continue to be enhanced through the establishment and ongoing review of an integrated system for monitoring practices and events to enhance safety in the work environment and minimise risk.

Recommendation 40

That Council continue to develop an integrated system to monitor and improve work health and safety.

One way of ensuring every staff member is aware of their WHS responsibilities is to include these responsibilities in each staff member's position description. These responsibilities can then be reviewed as part of Council's performance appraisal system and assist in building a positive WHS culture.

Recommendation 41

That Council finalise the inclusion of WHS responsibilities in each employee's position description.

<u>Human Resources (HR) policies</u>

The Council is developing a comprehensive suite of HR policies and procedures, which in most cases are based on a revision of existing policies. The Council is encouraged to refer to the *Human Resources Manual (2004)* produced by the Local Government and Shires Associations of NSW when reviewing its HR policies.

A number of HR policies are available on Council's intranet and are listed in the internal policies and procedures register.

Recommendation 42

That Council finalise the development and review of its Human Resources policies as a matter of priority.

<u>Equal Employment Opportunity</u>

The Council is required to prepare and implement an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) management plan in accordance with the provisions of the *Local Government Act 1993*. The Council has an EEO Policy that articulates its commitment to EEO principles. An EEO Management Plan could be developed and incorporated into Council's Workforce Management Plan. Identified strategies and actions would then inform the Delivery Program and Operational Plans.

The Council assured the review team that an EEO Management Plan was being developed. However the Council could not provide information about its staff that would assist in implementing the objectives of such a plan. The Council does not collect data on the diversity of Council employees, other than for age and gender.

Recommendation 43

That Council develop and implement an EEO management plan that complies with the provisions and objectives set down in the Local Government Act 1993*.*

Council response

Council has an EEO policy, adopted in 2004. The preferred approach is to incorporate strategies to implement EEO principles in the Workforce Plan, rather than develop a stand alone EEO management plan.

Reviewers comment

Section 345 of the *Local Government Act 1993* requires the Council to prepare and implement an EEO management plan and further defines the provisions to be included in such a management plan. It is sensible to incorporate EEO management planning into the Workforce Plan. However, whatever approach the Council takes, it must satisfy the current legislative requirements.

PART IV.   ACTION PLAN

9   RISK RATING OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations made in this report have been assessed based on the following risk analysis. The result informs the priority ranking in the action plan attached to this report.

		CONSEQUENCE		
		Significant *Significant risk to the operations of council and if not addressed could cause public outrage, non-compliance with council's statutory responsibilities, severe disruption to council's operations and council's ability to meet its goals.*	**Moderate** *Moderate risk to the operations of council and if not addressed could cause adverse publicity, some disruption to council's operations and council's ability to meet its goals.*	**Minor** *Minimal risk to the operations of council, little disruption to council's operations and will not limit council's ability to meet its goals.*
LIKELIHOOD	**Almost certain**	**High**	**High**	**Medium**
	Possible	**Medium**	**Medium**	**Low**
	Unlikely	**Medium**	**Low**	**Low**

Priorities for recommendations: *(based on application of risk analysis)*	Risk categories could include:
• **High** • **Medium** • **Low**	• Reputation • Compliance with statutory requirements • Fraud/corruption • Financial • Legal liability • OH&S

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10   ACTION PLAN

The Action Plan is to be completed and adopted by the Council to guide the implementation and monitoring of the recommendations in this report. The reviewers have allocated notional priority rankings using the risk rating analysis in the previous section. The Council is encouraged to review and revise these, if necessary.

RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY	ACTION PROPOSED	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBILITY	PROGRESS REPORT
Recommendation 1 *That Council consider elaborating on the relationship of the NSW State Plan and regional plans to the Community Strategic Plan in future revisions of the Community Strategic Plan.*	*Med*	To be incorporated into Integrated Planning & Reporting Framework review of Community Strategic Plan, and Delivery Program	June 2013	General Manager, Executive Leaders & Senior Leaders Governance; Organisational Development & Strategic Planning	

RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY	ACTION PROPOSED	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBILITY	PROGRESS REPORT
Recommendation 2 *That the Delivery Program 2012-2014 includes a method of assessment to determine the effectiveness of each principal activity in implementing the strategies and achieving the strategic objectives at which the principal activity is directed, to bring the Delivery Program into compliance with legislative requirements (section 404 Local Government Act 1993).*	*High*	To be incorporated into Integrated Planning & Reporting Framework review of Community Strategic Plan, and Delivery Program	June 2013	General Manager, Executive Leaders & Senior Leaders Governance & Organisational Development	
Recommendation 3 *That the connection is strengthened between the Delivery Program 2012-16 and the Community Strategic Plan and Resourcing Strategy to improve integration of the plans.*	*Med*	To be incorporated into Integrated Planning & Reporting Framework review of Community Strategic Plan, and Delivery Program	June 2013	General Manager, Executive Leaders & Senior Leaders Governance & Finance & Organisational Development	

RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY	ACTION PROPOSED	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBILITY	PROGRESS REPORT
Recommendation 4 *That, in relation to the Asset Management Strategy, Council:* **Recommendation 44** *identify and include links with the Community Strategic Plan, Delivery Program and Long-Term Financial Plan for improved integration of plans* **Recommendation 45** *identify and include performance measures* **Recommendation 46** *finalise the Strategy.*	*High*	To be incorporated into Integrated Planning & Reporting Framework review of Community Strategic Plan, and Delivery Program	June 2013	General Manager, Executive Leaders & Senior Leaders Governance & Finance & Organisational Development & Asset Planning,	

RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY	ACTION PROPOSED	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBILITY	PROGRESS REPORT
Recommendation 5 *That, in relation to the Workforce Management Plan, Council* • *identify and include strategies to address workforce issues particular to Council* • *identify and include linkages with the Community Strategic Plan and Delivery Program* • *finalise the Plan.*	*High*	Currently being drafted and reflected in current operational plan	June 2013	General Manager, Executive Leader – Futures Planning & Senior Leaders Governance & Organisational Development	
Recommendation 6 *That Council complete the risk assessment process and incorporate all findings in the risk register.*	*Med*	In progress, needs to be considered in context of Corruption Minimisation Plan and will incorporated into Delivery Progam 2014-2017	May 2013	Leadership Team (GM; ELs and SLs)	

RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY	ACTION PROPOSED	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBILITY	PROGRESS REPORT
Recommendation 7 *That Council implement the actions contained in the Corruption Minimisation Plan, particularly reviewing corruption minimisation controls as part of a systematic corruption risk assessment.*	*High*	This is currently occurring and will be further embedded as part of 2014-2017 Delivery Progam. Additionally, quarterly reporting to capture Corruption Minimisation Progress	Quarterly Reporting to begin 2nd quarter 2012-2013	Executive Leader –Futures Planning & Senior Leader - Governance	
Recommendation 8 *That Council considers developing and implementing a system to identify its legislative responsibilities and resolve any non-compliance matters identified.*	*Med*	We will seek advice from DLG on examples of good practice prior to developing budget bid.	June 2013	Executive Leader Service Delivery Senior Leader Governance	

RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY	ACTION PROPOSED	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBILITY	PROGRESS REPORT
Recommendation 9 *That Council develop a disposal policy and procedures, and ensure that appropriate internal controls are in place for procurement processes.*	*High*	Included in Procurement Review Action Plan currently being progressed.	Feb 2013	Executive Leader – Service Delivery & Senior Leader – Property & Procurement	
Recommendation 10 *That Councillor briefings be used only for disseminating information to councillors and answering councillors' questions.*	*Med*	Feedback sought from Mayor and Councillors	Feb 2013	Mayor & General Manager	
Recommendation 11 *That Council consider having the General Manager or other senior staff member chair/lead/convene councillor briefing sessions.*	*Med*	Feedback sought from Mayor and Councillors	Feb 2013	Mayor & General Manager	

RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY	ACTION PROPOSED	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBILITY	PROGRESS REPORT
Recommendation 12 *That Council finalise its induction for councillors and implement it following the 2012 elections.*	*Med*	Induction Plan finalised and implemented	Oct 2012	Senior Leader - Governance	
Recommendation 13 *That Council develop an ongoing training program to assist councillors in their role.*	*Med*	Utilising DLG training Program and LGSA program. Reflected in current Operational Plan	Jan 2013	Senior Leader - Governance	
Recommendation 14 *That Council consults the Division of Local Government's* Guidelines for the payment of expenses and the provision of facilities for Mayors and Councillors in NSW*, and reviews and updates its expenses and facilities policy by 30 November 2012 as required by the Local Government Act.*	*High*	Redrafted and placed on Public Exhibition following Councillor Consultation and should be finalised prior to 30 november as per legislation.	Dec 2012	General Manager & Senior Leader - Governance	DLG consulted Draft policy & report went to Oct Council Meeting. On public exhibition

RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY	ACTION PROPOSED	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBILITY	PROGRESS REPORT
Recommendation 15 *That Council review the information needs of councillors to determine if the Communication Protocol, and/or the way it is being implemented, is effective in meeting these needs. It is recommended that this revision be undertaken prior to the new Council commencing in September 2012.*	*High*	Feedback sought from Mayor and Councillors	4th quarter 2012-2013	Mayor & General Manager & Senior Leader - Governance	Copy was circulated to all Councillors elected

Recognised that this policy is key for new Council to review |
| **Recommendation 16** *That councillors are informed of the Communication Protocol, and that information about it be included in the councillor induction program.* | *med* | Copy circulated to all Councillors | Oct 2012 | General Manager & Senior Leader - Governance | Copy was circulated to all Councillors elected as part of induction

All Councillors invited to contact GM, ELs & SL-Gov to discuss |

RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY	ACTION PROPOSED	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBILITY	PROGRESS REPORT
Recommendation 17 *That Council compile a political donations register that complies with section 328A of the Local Government Act.*	*High*	Register to be created	Dec 2012	General Manager & Senior Leader - Governance	Process to be created to capture declaration and access through website
Recommendation 18 *That Council provide training to staff in the application of its complaint handling policy and procedure*	*Med*	Training planned	Dec 2012	Executive Leader – Futures Planning & Senior Leader Governance, with support from Senior Leader Organisational Development	Training with Records & customer Service Staff implemented November 2012. Process piloted November 2012 with a view to finalisation December 2012
Recommendation 19 *That Council prepare and consider regular reports on the number, progress and outcome of complaints.*	*Low*	Incorporate into quarterly reporting to Council	Fourth Quarter 2012-2013	Executive Leader –Futures Planning & Senior Leader - Governance	Reported in 2012 Annual report

RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY	ACTION PROPOSED	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBILITY	PROGRESS REPORT
Recommendation 20 *That Council finalise and adopt its draft policies and plans.*	*High*	Council adopted approach in June 2012 in preparation for new term of Council	Each month policy to be reviewed by Leadership Team	General Manager, Executive Leaders & Senior Leaders Governance	Leadership team incorporates policy review into monthly meeting.
Recommendation 21 *That Council ensures it has a comprehensive policy, planning and procedural framework across the organisation.*	*High*	The Executive adopted a Guide for the development of policies, procedures and guidelines in January 2011. Report on policy development to be incorporated into Quarterly reporting cycle.	Fourth Quarter 2012-2013	General Manager, Executive Leaders & Senior Leaders Governance	

RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY	ACTION PROPOSED	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBILITY	PROGRESS REPORT
Recommendation 22 *That Council take immediate action to properly authorise its compliance and enforcement officers.*	*High*	Implemented with electronic staff access	October 2012	Senior Leader-Regulatory Services	Completed
Recommendation 23 *That Council institute a process of review of authorisations to ensure that its compliance and enforcement officers have current and accurate delegated authority at all times..*	*High*	Reviewed and updated	October 2012	Senior Leader-Regulatory Services	Completed While delegations have been finalised process for review to be determined with Governance
Recommendation 24 *That Council finalise, adopt and implement its Enforcement Policy as a matter of priority.*	*Med*	Being developed	Fourth Quarter 2012-2013	Senior Leader-Regulatory Services	Development off a compliance policy has commenced. To be finalised by Jul 2013.
Recommendation 25 *That Council examine the best options for co-ordinating and managing investigation of cross-functional complaints.*	*Med*	Being developed	Fourth Quarter 2012-2013	Senior Leader-Regulatory Services	This is being considered in development of the compliance policy

RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY	ACTION PROPOSED	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBILITY	PROGRESS REPORT
Recommendation 26 *That Council develop and make publicly available a Parking Priority Policy.*	*Med*	Await outcome of CBD Study which commenced Jan 2012.	December 2013	Senior Leader-Regulatory Services & Senior Leader - Asset Planning	To be considered with the CBD Traffic Study CBD Study on schedule.
Recommendation 27 *That Council develop a program to identify all backyard swimming pools in the LGA.*	*Med*	To be considered as part of new legislation	June 2013	Senior Leader-Regulatory Services	To be developed in conjunction with new swimming pool legislation and a swimming pools inspection program.

RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY	ACTION PROPOSED	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBILITY	PROGRESS REPORT
Recommendation 28 *That Council consider a routine inspection program of all backyard swimming pools.*	*Med*	To be considered as part of new legislation	June 2013	Senior Leader-Regulatory Services	To be developed in conjunction with new swimming pool legislation and a swimming pools inspection program.
Recommendation 29 *That Council consider developing a strategic companion animals management plan in partnership with its community.*	*Low*	Already undertaken

Council already has in place a management plan. | June 2013 | Senior Leader-Regulatory Services | This plan is currently under review and scheduled for completion by Jun 2013. |
| **Recommendation 30** *That Council develop and implement a program to follow up restricted breeds dogs in its area.* | *High* | Completed | Nov 2012 | Senior Leader-Regulatory Services | Completed and updated with information from the Companion Animals Register. |

RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY	ACTION PROPOSED	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBILITY	PROGRESS REPORT
Recommendation 31 *That Council review and finalise dog attack incidents on the Companion Animals Register.*	*Med*	Incidents need to be reviewed and marked 'closed'	March 2013	Senior Leader-Regulatory Services	The Companion Animals register is being reviewed and updated.
Recommendation 32 *That Council finalises its asset management plans for all asset classes as a matter of urgency, and ensure associated expenditure is adequately reflected in the Long-Term Financial Plan..*	*High*	To be incorporated into Integrated Planning & Reporting Framework review of Community Strategic Plan, and Delivery Program	June 2013	General Manager, Executive Leaders & Senior Leaders Governance & Asset Planning,	

RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY	ACTION PROPOSED	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBILITY	PROGRESS REPORT
Recommendation 33 *That Council continues to liaise with the Division of Local Government's Performance and Compliance team to monitor and address its financial status..*	*High*	Continue to liaise with DLG. Finance and Investment Committee to continue to review investment and borrowing strategies to maximise financial opportunity.	Annually as part of Budget process	Senior Leader - Finance	Review T-Corp Assessment and address outcomes identified.
Recommendation 34 *That Council ensures its Quarterly Business Review Statements comply with the Division of Local Governments' guidelines.*	*High*	Review QBR report parameters against DLG guidelines	4th Quater 2012 - 2013	Senior Leaders - Finance & Governance	Completed, QBRS now complies with DLG Guidelines.

RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY	ACTION PROPOSED	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBILITY	PROGRESS REPORT
Recommendation 35 *That Council considers including performance measures for each of the strategies identified in the Tourism Marketing Strategy.*	*Med*	Complete. The Tourism Marketing Strategy is a guide for expenditure of industry financial contribution. Expenditure is in accordance with an annual plan prepared and monitored by the MVTB.	June 2013	Executive Leader – Futures Planning Tourism Development Officer	New Tourism Board members being sought as at November 2012. New Board will review Strategy
Recommendation 36 *That Council continue to promote a culture of customer service, but as a whole-of-Council approach. Ensure that the customer service team is supported by information and resources from staff with specialist knowledge from other teams across Council.*	*High*	Review Policy and Standards	Dec 2012	Senior Leadership Team	Customer Service Policy being reviewed consideration at December 2012 Council meeting.

RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY	ACTION PROPOSED	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBILITY	PROGRESS REPORT
Recommendation 37 *That Council develop specific actions in consultation with the community to implement the goals/statements of intent of the Healthy Ageing Strategic Framework within the Delivery Program and Operational Plan.*	*Med*	To be incorporated into new Delivery Program	June 2013	Executive Leader – Futures Planning & Senior Leader - Governance	Council has applied through the Age Friendly Grants Scheme to create a localised whole of Council Ageing Strategy linked to Council's integrated planning framework.
Recommendation 38 *That Council give priority to the finalisation of its Workforce Management Strategy and reflect identified workforce actions in its Delivery Program and Operational Plans.*	*High*	To be incorporated into Integrated Planning & Reporting Framework review of Community Strategic Plan, and Delivery Program	June 2013	General Manager, Executive Leader – Futures Planning & Senior Leader Organisational Development	Is identified in this year's Operational Plan and progressing accordingly.

RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY	ACTION PROPOSED	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBILITY	PROGRESS REPORT
Recommendation 39 *That Council develop its succession plan for key positions in the organisation and incorporate this into its Workforce Management Plan.*	*Med*	Being Drafted as part of Workforce Plan	June 2013	Senior Leader Organisational Development	
Recommendation 40 *That Council continue to develop an integrated system to monitor and improve work health and safety.*	*High*	Monthly reporting to Leadership Team on activities	immediate	Senior Leader Organisational Development	Implemented
Recommendation 41 *That Council finalise the inclusion of WHS responsibilities in each employee's position description.*	*High*	Reference is currently included in Position Description Template	Immediate	Senior Leader Organisational Development	Completed
Recommendation 42 *That Council finalise the development and review of its Human Resource policies as a matter of priority.*	*Med*	Priority policies have been identified and worked through with Staff Consultative Committee	Ongoing	Executive & Senior Leader Organisational Development	Significant progress made and listed in Annual Report

RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY	ACTION PROPOSED	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBILITY	PROGRESS REPORT
Recommendation 43 *That Council should develop and implement an EEO management plan that complies with the provisions and objectives set down in the* Local Government Act 1993*.*	*High*	Strategies to implement EEO principles to be incorporated in Workforce Plan	June 2013	Senior Leader Organisational Development	Underway and reflected and reflected in Operational Plan