

## **Annexure 3**

### **Key elements of strategic capacity**

The ILGRP report states that Scale and Capacity criteria are based on the key elements of strategic capacity which have been incorporated into IPART's 'Methodology for Assessment of Council Fit for the Future Proposals' (Box 3.1, p21). These criteria are:

- More robust revenue base and increased discretionary spending
- Scope to undertake new functions and major projects
- Ability to employ a wider range of skilled staff
- Knowledge, creativity and innovation
- Advanced skills in strategic planning and policy development
- Effective regional collaboration
- Credibility for more effective advocacy
- Capable partner for State and Federal agencies
- Resources to cope with complex and unexpected change
- High quality political and managerial leadership

Council has undertaken an extensive qualitative review of these key elements of strategic capacity. Following are a range of examples of projects, activities and strategies classified under each of these elements, that demonstrate how Kogarah City Council currently achieves scale and capacity and will continue to do so into the future. While these examples are by no means exhaustive, they provide evidence that Kogarah City Council would satisfy any reasonable assessment against the Scale and Capacity criteria proposed in the 'Fit for the Future' program.

## **More robust revenue base and increased discretionary spending**

Kogarah City Council possesses a very robust revenue base and has demonstrated its ability to increase discretionary spending over time. Council has effective strategies to maximise its revenues to ensure its long term financial sustainability whilst meeting the community's growing expectations and required service levels. Some examples of Council's robust revenue base and increased discretionary spending are provided below:

### *Own Source Revenue Ratio*

The own source revenue ratio measures a council's fiscal flexibility. The ratio demonstrates the degree of control a council has on its sources of revenue. The 'Fit for the Future' benchmark for this ratio is greater than 60% (averaged over three years). Kogarah City Council's own source revenue ratio for the three years to 30 June 2014 was 85.6%. This clearly demonstrates Council's control over its revenue base.

### *Special Rate Variations*

In developing Council's current 4 year Delivery Program (2013-2017) extensive community engagement and consultation was undertaken to determine the community's desired service levels. This engagement demonstrated the community's willingness to pay for the agreed service levels as outlined in the Delivery Program. As a result, Kogarah City Council was granted a Special Rate Variation (SRV) in 2013.

Council is currently in the second year of this SRV which was aligned with the current round of Integrated Planning and Reporting documentation. The SRV contributes to ensuring the provision of financial resources required to fund the 4 year Delivery Program (2013-2017) and that service levels continue to meet the community's on-going expectations and growing needs. It will also allow the condition of infrastructure to be maintained to a satisfactory level and not unduly burden future generations.

Feedback from the community and Council's Community Reference Group has demonstrated the community's faith in Kogarah City Council using special rate variations for the purpose sought and delivering on the key projects and infrastructure as outlined in Council's Delivery Program.

### *Community's capacity to pay for SRV's*

In developing its Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP) and the application for a SRV in 2013, Council considered a range of data available to it surrounding our community's capacity to pay rates above estimated rate pegging levels. The SEIFA Index of Disadvantage measures the relative level of socio-economic disadvantage based on a range of Census Characteristics. A high score on the index means a low level of disadvantage. The Kogarah Local Government Area scores 1,036.2 on the SEIFA index of disadvantage, indicating it is less disadvantaged than the national score of 1,000.0. The SRV application process has demonstrated the community's capacity and willingness to pay for the service levels expected by the community. Accordingly, should the community wish to further increase service levels at any time, Council will be able to maintain its robust revenue base and provide further sources of revenue.

### *Internal Investment Fund*

Kogarah City Council established its own internal Investment Fund in 2001. The investment fund is a pool of capital that has been assigned for investment opportunities. The initial pool of capital was reserved from a favourable budget result in 2001. The investment capital has grown over time by reserving any one-off income items (such as asset sales) and by retaining 50% of all fund earnings.

The Investment Fund was created to improve Council's robust revenue base and allow it to make strategic investment decisions that contribute to this purpose. The establishment of an Investment Fund created a reserve of cash that funds projects that result in additional annual revenues or reduced annual expenditure.

Whilst the Investment Fund has policy restrictions in terms of how the funds are used, it has proven to be an effective mechanism to fund a range of community assets such as childcare and community centres. In these cases the Council owned and operated service pays an annual dividend to Council for rent and other overheads that provide a return on the capital investment in line with the investment policy. A range of other innovative projects that promote long term sustainability, such as lighting retrofits and the installation of solar panels, have also been funded through this source. Over the long term it is expected that this revenue stream will continue to grow and be the source of an increasing proportion of Council's revenue base.

Investments from the Fund are prioritised in order to realise the best possible improvement in Council's financial position over time. Important considerations when establishing investment priorities include; expected rate of return, size of investment, potential risk and time taken to generate returns. Priority is given to projects with the best rate of return for minimal outlay, minimal risk and short payback periods. Such decisions must however align with the Council's strategic direction and values of the organisation.

### *Establishment of an Infrastructure Reserve*

Kogarah City Council has a long history of strong asset management practices. Over the past decade Council has been working on strategies to ensure that adequate funds are available to renew and maintain existing infrastructure. To complement its robust revenue base for existing assets and provide the increased discretionary spending, Council established an Infrastructure Reserve in 2002 to generate an additional revenue stream for existing infrastructure.

The Infrastructure Reserve is a cash reserve set aside to invest in cash assets. The interest returns on those cash assets provides an additional revenue stream for infrastructure maintenance and renewal. The capital in the reserve is preserved and a dividend of 50% of the interest income is available each year for asset management expenditure. The remaining interest income is retained in the reserve so that the reserve and income generated will grow over time. Given the focus on asset management by the Council, the creation of the Infrastructure Reserve dictates that any favourable budget results are directed into the reserve to grow the reserve over time. This strategy improves Kogarah City Council's revenue base and reduces the reliance on other revenue streams.

Rules created for the Infrastructure Reserve give preference to expenditure for maintenance and renewal of existing infrastructure over any upgrades. New infrastructure and facilities are not funded from the Infrastructure Reserve, however the Reserve reduces the burden on the existing budget, allowing Council greater discretionary expenditure from other revenue sources.

#### *Implementation of an Efficiency Dividend*

IPART has already implemented an efficiency (productivity) dividend within their Local Government Cost Index. On top of this, Council has instituted its own efficiency dividend. To ensure productivity and cost containment, Council budgets an efficiency (productivity) dividend of \$200,000 each financial year. This target is contained within Council's annual budget. Management is responsible for delivering cost savings, increased income or other productivity measures to match the financial target that has been set for the year.

Council's service levels have been increased over time, demonstrating further efficiencies and productivity gains. This has been in place since the 2009/10 financial year. The efficiency dividend is forecast to continue over the life of the 10 year LTFP. To date Council has met or exceeded all its budgeted efficiency dividends, providing increased discretionary expenditure ability.

#### *Property Portfolio*

Kogarah City Council continues to monitor all its property assets to ensure that potential revenue is maximised. If assets are deemed surplus to Council requirements they have been sold with proceeds directed into the Investment Fund. This enables funds to be utilised for other entrepreneurial activities, generating other revenue streams for Council to solidify its revenue base.

#### *Section 94 and 94A Contributions*

Council has had in place Section 94 plans for many years to maximise income from new development. Council has also recently introduced Section 94A contributions for development. Voluntary Planning agreements are also considered where there is a positive outcome for the community.

Council aims to optimise the benefits for the community from all development and ensure that the required infrastructure is provided to match the area's growing population. As a result, all forms of new development are subject to improving infrastructure, public amenities and services in the LGA.

These contributions improve Kogarah City Council's expenditure flexibility by providing funds to add or enhance infrastructure to meet our growing population. Council's robust revenue base can then be focussed on delivering the service levels expected by the community, including maintaining and renewing existing infrastructure.

### *Stormwater Management Services Charge*

Rain falling on hard surfaces such as roads and roofs runs off picking up chemicals, rubbish and soil. Stormwater run-off not only pollutes our waterways and bays, it also causes flooding on occasions. The complexities of these issues and the magnitude of works needed to resolve some of these challenges require large sums of capital investment. Recognising the required scope of works and the capital investment needed, the NSW Government endorsed an arrangement for long-term stormwater management funding. This arrangement recognises that stormwater needs to be managed in an integrated manner, to deal with stormwater quality and flooding in a broader natural resources management context.

Through this Stormwater Management Service Charge to urban properties the following revenue is generated on annual basis:

- Residential block: \$25 (per rateable residential property)
- Business/Residential Strata Lot \$10: (per business/ residential strata lot)
- Business Land: \$25 per 350 square metres

This source of funding is directed at addressing specific stormwater issues such as, stormwater asset upgrades, flood mitigation works and stormwater harvest and re-use investigations and provides the ability for greater discretionary spending from other revenue sources.

### *Grants*

Kogarah City Council has a very high success rate in securing grant funding and will continue to pursue all avenues for additional grant funding. Council has demonstrated over a number of years not only its ability to successfully obtain grant funding, but also to deliver the outcomes outlined in grant applications. Council has worked collaboratively with all funding bodies to ensure positive outcomes are achieved. Council not only partners with the funding bodies on grant projects but has also been the lead Council partnering with a number of other councils to deliver such projects.

Council's ability to obtain grant funding allows for greater discretionary spending from other revenue sources. Council will continue to vigorously pursue grant funding opportunities. Council's track record for successful grant applications also allows objectives and goals under the Community Strategic Plan to be achieved in a shorter timeframe.

### *Financial Sustainability and Council's Robust Revenue Base*

Council has a proven record of best practice and sound financial management. Council's Long Term Financial Plan has been highlighted as an example of best practice by the Office of Local Government. Council has been able to demonstrate through past performance that its forecasts are realistic and achievable and has outperformed its benchmarks every year for the past decade and not squandered any windfall gains. Kogarah City Council has a strong financial policy framework in place to grow its revenue base over time and utilise all outperformance in a financially sustainable way. Council is confident in meeting all future forecast targets, underpinned by its robust revenue base. Council believes that it is in a sound financial position and, with the financial discipline imbedded in its strategic planning, budgeting and operations, will remain financially sustainable over the long term.

Kogarah City Council received a T-Corp financial sustainability rating of Moderate and an outlook of Neutral. T-Corp has reviewed Council's LTFP and has verified the financial assumptions contained within it. T-Corp has highlighted that Council is not highly reliant on external revenue and indicates that it has sufficient financial flexibility.

Council has a low level of external debt and this external borrowing capacity is very important should any large or unforeseen infrastructure costs arise in the future. Council also has the ability to fund future infrastructure replacements from external loans should funding not be available from other sources.

Dedicated reserves, various sources of funding, efficiency dividends and extremely low debt combine to ensure that Kogarah City Council has the capacity to cope with any unplanned financial challenges it may face in the future. Council's financial policy framework has ensured the financial discipline drives the delivery of the strategic outcomes detailed within its integrated planning documents. Council has a proven track record of tackling the tough financial and asset management challenges faced by the Local Government industry and will continue to be proactive in dealing with them in the future. This has all resulted in a very robust revenue base and growth in discretionary spending over time.

## **Scope to undertake new functions and major projects**

Kogarah City Council has demonstrated over many years its capacity to undertake new functions and major projects. Council's highly skilled and experienced workforce provides the flexibility to adapt to changing community needs and expectations.

New functions and major projects have been delivered despite an ever increasingly complex and demanding environment, through the use of unique funding arrangements, partnerships with other levels of government, coordinating service delivery through other organisations and agencies, and through advocating on the community's behalf. Council has leveraged its organisational experience and reputation, project management practices and sound financial management record to deliver its stated goals and actions including the implementation of many new functions and major projects.

Some examples of new functions and major projects delivered by Kogarah City Council include:

### *Jubilee Oval (\$27m)*

Kogarah City Council has been involved in the redevelopment of Jubilee Oval project since 2003. This was a complex multi-million dollar project to upgrade a suburban sports field to an international standard sporting and entertainment facility.

To deliver this project Kogarah City Council formed a steering committee to partner with the St George Rugby League Football Club. The steering committee oversaw the security and expenditure of Federal and State Government grants totalling over \$25 million.

Substantial building works have been completed at Jubilee Oval including new HDTV sports lighting, two extensions of the grandstand, new community playground and field, community training and meeting space, as well as refurbishment of existing facilities. Architectural design, construction and commissioning were also undertaken through delegated oversight by the steering committee.

The steering committee also liaised with the local community and held community meetings which saw very few issues arise relative to the scope and size of the project. This project emphasises Council's ability to deliver large scale projects by advocating for funding, working in partnership with other organisations and engaging with the community.

### *Penshurst Aged Care Facility (\$33m)*

Council is currently working with an external aged care provider to deliver an aged care centre for the community on Council owned land. As part of Council's rationalisation of its assets, an unused piece of Council owned land will be used to provide much needed aged care facilities for the community.

This project will deliver not only the benefit of facilities for an ageing community but also provide an ongoing income stream from a piece of vacant land. The income generated by this project will help strengthen Council's financial position and contribute towards the optimum utilisation of Council's assets. This project demonstrates that Council has the

ability to work with other organisations and levels of government to deliver outcomes for the community.

#### *New Kogarah Library and Cultural Centre (\$5.6m)*

Kogarah City Council delivered a new central library and cultural centre to its community in 2006. This project was uniquely funded in two ways. The building for the library and cultural centre was provided by a developer as part of a land swap arrangement. The fit-out of the library and cultural centre space was completed using an internal loan funded by Council reserves.

Council's sound financial position allowed it to utilise internal reserves to fund the fit-out. Council was able to then fund the operational repayments of the internal loan together with the increased on-going operating and maintenance costs that flowed from this project.

#### *Beverley Park Water Reclamation Plant (\$2.1m)*

Kogarah City Council has been recognised and awarded for delivering this unique project which involves the recycling of sewerage water for use in the irrigation of parks, reserves and golf course. This project was very complex, not only from a technical point of view but also from a funding aspect and the complex interaction between the stakeholders in the project.

There were many challenges faced in the implementation of the project. The first was ensuring the technology could deliver required outputs. This was achieved through the building of a pilot plant to prove the technology. Funding was also a challenge with a number of funding bodies involved. Council used part of its environmental levy (secured through an SRV process) to help fund the project. Community support for the use of the environmental levy was only possible due to the reputation of Council in delivering world class environmental projects.

Understanding of complex technology involved with the plant had to be transferred from the consultants to Council staff who are responsible for the on-going operation and maintenance of the plant. This requires the utilisation of Council's skilled workforce. Complexity also existed due to the relationships between Council, the community, sporting groups and the golf club.

This project also required a large ongoing commitment by Council to fund the plant's continued operation, further infrastructure requirements and maintenance. Additional costs include irrigation infrastructure, large scale water tanks, water carting truck and other operational costs.

#### *Moore Reserve Wetlands (\$1.5m)*

Kogarah City Council has demonstrated its strong focus on total water cycle management for almost 20 years. In 1998 Council identified numerous suitable locations for constructed wetlands to treat and improve stormwater quality and increase local biodiversity. Sites include Shipwrights Bay and Moore Reserve.

In 2000, Kogarah City Council constructed a large wetland system in Moore Reserve to treat stormwater from a 130 hectare catchment. The project also developed extensive new



aquatic habitat. Innovative design solutions on a challenging land fill site, competitive contract tendering and efficient project management processes allowed Kogarah's Environmental Engineers to deliver this large scale project.

Since construction, the wetland has been expertly managed and currently supports large areas of native aquatic vegetation, numerous fish, frogs, macroinvertebrate and water bird species, as well as eastern long-necked turtles. Kogarah City Council has also undertaken an assessment and management works program to revitalise planting zones in the wetland environment to ensure continued growth of this high biodiversity area while continuing to improve water quality entering the Georges River.

#### *Foreshore Improvement ( \$3m)*

Kogarah City Council has in recent years constructed a number of river foreshore habitat enhancement projects. These have included works at Claydon Reserve, Dover Park East, Carss Park, Kyle Bay, Oatley Bay, Neverfail Bay and Sans Souci Park. These works all successfully replaced what were essentially featureless, species poor artificial structures with biologically diverse natural foreshore habitats.

Kogarah City Council is responsible for foreshore infrastructure along the Georges River and its bays including seawalls, jetties and boat ramps. Council has an ongoing repair and improvement program which increases the amenity of the foreshore and allows for greater access.

#### *Storm Water Management*

Council has an ongoing commitment to treat stormwater before it reaches bays and rivers. The 2,500 pits located throughout the Kogarah LGA act as sediment traps and are cleaned on a regular basis. All of the small Gross Pollution Traps including the Litter Nets in Kogarah Bay, Bandalong trap at Beverley Park and Carss Bush Park, Ski Jump Trap at Oatley and Litter Baskets throughout Connells Point, Oatley and Park Road are also cleaned and maintained regularly to ensure they remain effective. Around 90 tonnes of rubbish was collected last year from pits and small GPT's and disposed of by Council.

The larger Gross Pollution Traps (South Hurstville), Moore Reserve (Hurstville Grove), Empress Reserve (Hurstville South), Donnelly Reserve (Connells Point) and Grosvenor Reserve (Hurstville South) are cleaned on a regular maintenance cycle with approximately 60 tonnes of rubbish removed each year.

#### *Kogarah Town Square and Belgrave Street Redevelopment*

The Kogarah Town Square provides a strong focal point for the Kogarah CBD and local community. Street level retail enlivens the development and links it with the established 'main street' shopping of nearby Railway Parade. The project was developed with a high level of community consultation and despite its density the Kogarah Town Square provides a feeling of community through liveable, people sized scale, the separation of residential and public access and a diverse residential mix, with apartments overlooking the activity of the central Town Square, which includes the Kogarah Library and Cultural Centre.

The development represents an Australian first, and was the recipient of the 2004 RAIA Award for Ecologically Sustainable Design. The project was the result of Council partnering with a number of other stakeholders (State and Federal Government, UNSW and private developers) to provide the first large scale Building Integrated Photovoltaic (BIPV) system in

Australia. A major component of the development is the integration of 1459 photovoltaic (solar) cells into the fabric of the building.

The development also incorporated Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) through the Kogarah Town Square Water Reuse Project. The innovative water management program also set new standards in environmental conservation of water. It is designed to deliver a saving of 42 percent in mains water supply, via a combination of recycling and efficiency measures. 85 percent of the stormwater falling on the site each year is collected and stored in large retention tanks the size of Olympic swimming pools under the basement carpark. Conserved rain water and treated water is recycled for use in toilet flushing, irrigation and water features.

The Kogarah Town Square has received the following awards:

- 2004 NSW RAIA – Winner – Ecologically Sustainable Design
- 2003 NSW Urban Design Institute of Australia (UDIA) – Winner – Energy Efficiency
- 2003 Green Building Awards, TAS & Francis Greenway Society – Gold Medal
- 2003 Planning Institute of Australia – Honourable Mention – Australian Awards for Urban Design Excellence
- 2003 NSW Urban Design Institute of Australia (UDIA) – Commendation – Public Sector Leadership in Urban Development
- 2003 Australian Property Institute – Winner – Excellence in Property – Australand Local Government Award
- 2003 Banksia Environmental Awards – Finalist – Leadership in Sustainable Buildings
- 2003 SEDA Green Globe Awards – Commendation
- 2003 Keep Australia Beautiful Metro Pride Award – Winner – Best Overall Sydney Metropolitan Council
- 2003 Local Government & Shires Association Awards – Winner – Excellence in Environment – Sustainable Design, Planning and Building
- 2003 Winner – Water Sensitive Urban Design Award (Belgrave Street Stormwater)

#### *Recent Other Projects and New Functions*

- Increased regulatory responsibility – including parking enforcement, swimming pool inspections and growth in building compliance regulation and investigations resulting from an increase in private certification, all of which have been imposed upon Local Government by the State Government.
- Increasing emphasis on community and cultural development in response to the needs and demographics of the community
- Development of the Kogarah Cultural Program incorporating the Kogarah Art Prize and international Artist in Residence program.

- Implementation of the Integrated Planning and Reporting process providing the ability to change direction and focus of community projects and events in response to community engagement processes.
- Sans Souci Bathers Pavilion Restaurant – Working with the developer to provide a new facility in conjunction with the restoration of a heritage listed building.
- Successful track record in designing, constructing and completing complex major projects for the community. Some examples of these include, but are not limited to:
  - Carss Park Kiosk
  - Narani Childcare Centre and 3 Bridges offices
  - Kogarah Council Depot Solar Roof (generating 75% of Kogarah City Works power needs)

Kogarah City Council continues to deliver a successful program of large and diverse capital works. Over the past decade Council has delivered over \$100 million in capital works. Council, in partnership with its community, has been able to deliver the growing levels of service expected by the community and has uniquely funded many of these projects through a variety of sources including;

- Special rate variations
- Environmental levies
- Internal borrowing from reserves
- Successful grant applications
- Developer contributions
- Partnering with other organisations
- Working with or advocating to other levels of government
- Council's Investment Fund

Kogarah City Council's sound financial position, corporate knowledge and highly skilled workforce provide the ability to adapt to any future requirements of the community for new services or infrastructure. Projects to date have been recipients of regional, national and international recognition, delivered on time and on budget. Council is of a unique size, being large enough to resource adequately new services and infrastructure, but small enough to allow agility and flexibility to adapt to changing needs of the community. Further, Council's reputation in delivering on world class projects enables it to attract and retain talented and motivated staff.

## **Ability to employ wider range of skilled staff**

Like all local government authorities within New South Wales, Kogarah City Council's responsibilities demand that it employs a wide range of professional, para professional and trade staff, both on a full time and part time basis. Kogarah City Council is located in a central business and employment hub with excellent access to public transport and road links. Approximately 25% of staff employed by Council also live in the Kogarah Local Government Area (LGA) and an additional 44% live in the adjoining LGA's. The demographics of Kogarah and its surrounding suburbs demonstrate that Kogarah City Council is in an excellent location to access and employ a highly educated and skilled professional population to comprise its workforce.

Council has a proven ability to attract and retain appropriately skilled staff to meet the organisational and service needs of its community. Detailed below are a range of strategies, programs and activities that Council has developed and implemented to contribute towards ensuring that this occurs.

### *Links to Educational Institutions*

- Council has well established relationships with Universities and TAFE institutions. Council is committed to providing structured university and TAFE student placements in professional areas such as children's services, libraries, engineering, planning etc. This has proven to be a valuable tool for identifying potential local government employees and has led to the development of graduate positions that are consistent with Council's 'grow your own' philosophy. Council also works in partnership with Universities and TAFE to develop cost effective recruitment campaigns for specific positions. Council officers have participated in presenting at seminars and conferences for educational institutions. It also has been an ambassador for these institutions and is featured on DVD's and in promotional material, demonstrating its reputation and success in this regard.
- Kogarah City Council has developed a Traineeship and Apprenticeship program in partnership with TAFE and other registered Training Organisations. This provides Council with the opportunity to attract younger workers and has assisted with recruitment in some skill shortage areas. Council has enjoyed outstanding success with its Traineeship program including retaining a large percentage of these workers and supporting them to progress to professional positions, including supervisor and team leader positions. Council trainees have been nominated for and won various awards.

Examples of awards include the Southern Sydney Training Awards. Over the years Council has seen at least 10 trainees nominated for a range of awards, for example, Aboriginal Trainee of the Year and General Trainee of the Year. From these nominations, Council boasts six finalists and one winner. The winner was crowned Southern Sydney Trainee of the year and went onto represent the region at the State Awards. Again this year, Council has a finalist from its Records Department.

Council has shared its successful program with other organisations through participation on committees, media requests, presentations at seminars and providing advice to external parties and other councils.

- Council actively participates in school work placements to ensure that Kogarah City Council and the broader local government sector is viewed as a career of choice that offers a variety of opportunities.

#### *Gender equity programs*

Council is committed to achieving gender equity with specific programs in place to attract female employees, as well as encourage and support existing female employees. Kogarah City Council has achieved Bronze and Silver accreditation through its participation in the Australian Local Government Women's Association's 50:50 Gender Equity Program for Local Government. Kogarah City Council was the first metropolitan Council in NSW to achieve Silver accreditation.

In 2006, Council's Manager Human Resources was awarded the metropolitan Local Government Woman of the Year Award for recognition of her work in this area.

Council's success with programs, plans and policies specifically for attracting, supporting and promoting women in the workforce is demonstrated by the fact that in the past years Council's demographics for women in the workplace has remained close to a 50:50 ratio, with it being exceeded at times. This ratio compares very favourably against local government authorities nationally.

#### *Employer of Choice*

Through comprehensive consultation amongst staff and management, Kogarah City Council has established a well-developed and thoroughly understood vision for staff values in the workplace. Kogarah City Council's values guide Council's practices and are at the core of how staff engage with each other and our community. Our values reflect Kogarah City Council's progressive culture and underpin Council's reputation as an employer of choice.

Council recognises the value of promoting Local Government and, more specifically, Kogarah City Council as an employer of choice. Council's reputation for best practice has assisted in attracting and retaining high quality staff, many of whom have developed as industry leaders.

Programs and practices that are in place at Kogarah City Council include:

- A range of Flexible work arrangements for existing employees
- Flexible employment options for attracting and retaining new employees
- Competitive remuneration
- Career development opportunities
- Training policies that support staff development and multiskilling across the organisation
- A strong commitment to the health and safety of employees resulting in industry best workers compensation premiums
- A range of Health and Wellbeing initiatives

## **Knowledge, creativity and innovation**

Since the inception of Kogarah City Council's first Community Strategic Plan in 2010 under the IP&R reporting requirements, Council has remained steadfastly focused on fulfilling its vision for a 'viable and sustainable future in partnership with our community'. Council has implemented innovative projects, championed green initiatives, introduced new programs and activities and built modern infrastructure and facilities.

Examples of such projects, activities and initiatives outlined below demonstrate that Kogarah City Council is an organisation with the scale and capacity that enables it to develop and maintain an excellent level of knowledge, creativity and innovation that delivers a range of positive outcomes to the Kogarah community.

### *Promoting Better Practice Program – Office of Local Government (OLG)*

In 2014 Council underwent the OLG's Promoting Better Practice Program audit process, which highlighted the following six examples of best practice across the organisation:

- The Council has a mature Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework and there is an entrenched culture of integrated planning across the organisation
- The Council has an entrenched culture of community engagement which is used to develop key strategic planning documents and is also applied at an operational level
- The Council has a strong culture of sustainable land-use planning, and has developed a suite of innovative tools to promote sustainability within the local community
- The Council has mature asset management plans, policies and practices
- The Council has a comprehensive organisational improvement program, including a longstanding use of the Promoting Better Practice checklist and Internal Audit functions to undertake organisational review
- The Council has procedures in place which reflect a strong commitment to support and develop councillors to undertake their role.

They also commended Council on the following initiatives:

- The innovative use of a Community Reference Group to provide feedback on key Council plans and initiatives.
- The level of information provided by the Council to the Community Reference Group to inform their discussions is extremely clear and effective.
- Council staff participated in a review of other councils' community engagement strategies to identify better practice options to be implemented at Kogarah City Council.
- Clear community engagement is evident in other Council practices (eg: *Kogarah Life* distributed on a quarterly basis, *Your Pocket Parking Guide to Kogarah*).

For more information on the findings of the OLG's 2014 Promoting Better Practice audit see Annexure I0.

### *Integrated Planning and Reporting*

The Office of Local Government's assessment of Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting suite of documents in 2010 specifically acknowledged the advanced nature of its Asset Management Plan.

Following the IP&R process, Council further developed a suite of key strategic planning documents that guide Council decisions regarding the activities and programs that are provided. These included:

- Ageing Strategy
- Kogarah Cultural Plan
- Community Safety Strategy 2013
- Youth Strategy
- Multicultural Strategy
- Disability and Access Action Plan

The IP&R process has supported the development of Council's culture of community engagement. Major projects require a community engagement strategy to be developed as part of the project plan. Council also has formal structures in place that encourage community empowerment through knowledge and participation. For example, Council has a Working Party structure with community representation, a Community Reference Group and a Youth Advisory Committee. All of these groups actively provide information and feedback to Council on policy and program decisions.

Innovative program areas that have significantly grown at Kogarah City Council in direct response to community feedback during the development of the CSP (2010) and the CSP review (2012) include a range of cultural development programs and activities such as:

- Annual Music at Twilight Concerts series
- Annual Kogarah Art Prize
- Artist in Residence Program
- Skills Development workshops for artist and cultural industry workers
- Community Events – promoting community harmony and celebration.

### *Sustainability Practices*

Kogarah City Council's Environmental Sustainability Vision is to achieve a 'Clean, Green and Sustainable City'. This vision recognises our responsibility as a community to protect the environment and to preserve it for current and future generations.

Kogarah City Council addresses local environmental sustainability issues through partnerships formed with our community, staff, neighbouring councils, industries and other organisations. This commitment is on-going and has been made in partnership with our community to preserve and nurture our local environment.

In working to achieve our community's vision of a clean, green and sustainable City, Council has undertaken numerous environmental programs and projects which have delivered valuable outcomes within the areas of catchment protection, biodiversity, water efficiency, renewable energy, combating climate change and waste minimisation.

In addition, Council provides a number of educational programs to improve community and staff awareness, such as the Catchment Crusaders Program, Eco Living workshops and Green Champions.

Council's sustainability programs and practices have led to local, national and international recognition through the following awards:

- The International Awards for Liveable Communities 2012 – Gold Award for cities with a population of 20,000 to 60,000.
- Keep Australia Beautiful NSW Sustainable Cities Awards 2011 – Overall Most Sustainable Council
- Keep Australia Beautiful NSW Award 2011 – Overall Winner
- Improving energy and environmental performance across all Council Operations. - Silver Standard of Energy and Environment Scorekeeper – 2012/2013

### *Climate Change*

The conveniences of modern life generate increasing energy use and consequently rising greenhouse gas emissions. Council faces the challenge of ensuring that the City grows whilst still reducing its energy and greenhouse gases emissions. Therefore, innovation in energy management and renewable energy sources are essential for Kogarah's future.

Kogarah City Council has always maintained a commitment to sustainable energy management and it has long recognised that climate change is a significant global challenge. Council resolved to implement considerable action against climate change in 1999 through its participation in ICLEI (then known as International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives). At the time, sustainability was not a familiar term and far from becoming mainstream.

Council strongly believes that climate change should be addressed not only through mitigation efforts but also through adaptation strategies. Education and fostering sustainable behaviour is essential in supporting energy management initiatives.

Kogarah is a lead council in solar through its Solar Photo Voltaic (PV) systems. Four sites have been established with solar panels installed, reducing Council's energy consumption by one third per year. These sites are located at the Civic Centre, Kogarah Council Works Depot, Kogarah Town Square Library and South Hurstville Kindergarten.

### *Sustainable Water Management*

Early on and before Australia experienced a long and distressing drought (from 2004 to 2009), Kogarah City Council adopted a holistic, integrated approach to managing its water cycle. Water management is viewed from a complete water cycle perspective, encompassing 'demand' and 'supply'. In recognition of this industry leading role in stormwater management, Kogarah City Council was the recipient of the 2008 International Watercycle Management Award.

Innovative water conservation and water management initiatives that Kogarah City Council has undertaken include:



- In partnership with the local water authority and the Institute of Sustainable Futures at University of Technology Sydney, Kogarah was the first City in Sydney to adopt Total Water Cycle Management (TWCM) principles into its Sustainability Management Plan.
- The Carlton Industrial Sustainable Water Program is an initiative to foster sustainable management of our precious water resource with local businesses and industries. 82% of businesses from the Carlton Industrial Area joined the program.
- Kogarah Smart Irrigation Project promotes sustainable, smart and water wise irrigation in the City. The project improves the irrigation of public open space and sports grounds.
- Council has participated in the Every Drop Counts Business Program, administered by the local water authority, which has enabled it to establish formal water management systems and undertake water efficient practices. In May 2008, Kogarah City Council received the highest ranking (5-star rating) within the program.
- The Beverley Park Water Reclamation Plant (also known as Sewer Mining) taps into the local sewers and treats wastewater to a high-quality. Recycled water is then used for irrigation on public parks and sports fields. 100-kilolitre water tanks have been installed in many of Kogarah's fields, ready to receive reclaimed water for irrigation purposes. The plant, which was the first of its kind in Australia and was a ground-breaking project for all involved, can produce 400,000 litres of water per day.
- The Carlton Industrial Stormwater Reuse Plant is an innovative stormwater harvesting plant designed as a joint initiative between Kogarah City Council and the University of Technology, Sydney
- Schools Rainwater Tank Program assisted primary and secondary schools in the City to install rainwater tanks to reduce potable water use in toilet flushing and irrigating school gardens.
- Kogarah Town Square Water Reuse Project involves stormwater reuse for irrigation and rainwater harvesting for residential toilet flushing and on-site irrigation at Kogarah Town Square.

## **Advanced skills in strategic planning and policy development**

Kogarah City Council has a proven track record in strategic planning. Further, in its Promoting Better Practice review the Office of Local Government identified that Council has a comprehensive suite of guiding management policies. The examples listed below demonstrate the advanced skills that Kogarah City Council possesses in this area and which it continues to develop and expand. Kogarah City Council has the ability to undertake all these critical functions through its highly skilled staff, providing quality outcomes for the community.

### *Integrated Planning and Reporting*

Kogarah City Council nominated to undertake the new Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework as a Group One Council and first adopted the suite of documents in 2010. Since the development of the inaugural IP&R documents, Council has been recognised by the Minister of Local Government, the Office for Local Government and through the Promoting Better Practice Review Process as being industry leaders in this area. Council has been recognised for its best practice in community engagement, long-term asset management and long term financial planning.

One of the unique elements to the development of our Community Strategic Plan and associated documents is that the work was entirely completed internally without the need to engage external consultants. Through the luxury of a highly skilled workforce, Council was able to establish a cross functional team internally to undertake this work which then enabled Council to embed Integrated Planning into all aspects of Council's operations and created a greater sense of ownership over the work.

### *Strategic Planning*

Kogarah City Council has a dedicated Strategic Planning team situated in the Planning Department. All of the of strategic planning work undertaken by Council is done in house by staff and has recently involved a number of significant projects including:

- The preparation of the Kogarah 2031 Housing Strategy
- The preparation of Council's New City Plan, which aims to meet the objectives of the State Government's *A Plan for Growing Sydney*
- Development of the Section 94A Contributions Plan
- The preparation of the Community Strategic Plan, Delivery and Operational Plan, Long Term Financial Plan, Asset Management Strategy and Workforce Plan

In addition, members of this team are often sought to participate on representative panels and advisory committees in both the region and the state.

### *Asset Management*

The OLG in 2013 undertook an audit of councils in NSW and provided an assessment measure on how each council is managing their infrastructure and addressing the infrastructure backlog. Council received a 'Strong' Infrastructure and Management Assessment rating.

Local Government and financial services consultants, Morrison Low, also undertook a recent review of Council's asset management systems and confirmed that Council is particularly strong in the areas of asset accounting and valuation.

Additionally, Council:

- Employs a full-time staff member responsible for ongoing asset condition assessment.
- Is working with the Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils on a project to develop consistency in the calculation of depreciation.
- Has a framework to respond flexibly to future infrastructure pressures.

#### *Participation in Sector Development*

As part of the local government reform process, LGMA NSW coordinated a number of Working Groups, each assigned a number of actions to explore and report back on.

Kogarah City Council staff were part of Working Group 1E which was convened by General Manager, Paul Woods. This Group was tasked with 'Developing and implementing strategies to increase the diversity and skill range of council staff'. The Working Group focused on identifying and fleshing out the strategies for increasing the diversity and skill range of staff. The Group considered the latest 2011 census data for demographic information of the population of NSW as well as current research on the skill profile of the sector. It also considered gender, age, disability, race and other factors, especially considering the huge demographic variations that exist in different local government areas. The Group considered strategies for each of the following categories:

- a) Outside of the Local Government Sector
- b) Within the Local Government Sector
- c) Within individual Councils

The Working Group's paper, principally researched, authored and edited by Kogarah City Council staff, provided valuable input into this aspect of the work undertaken by the ILGRP.

## **Effective regional collaboration**

Kogarah City Council has worked collaboratively with neighbouring councils and other SSROC councils for many years. The regularity, intensity and benefits of this collaboration have increased exponentially over time. Such collaboration is now a routine method of operation which is exercised to achieve the optimal outcome for our community.

Below outlines a range of examples where Kogarah City Council has been a party to, and in many cases, pivotal to achieving effective regional collaboration.

### *St George Region of Councils Collection Contract*

Kogarah City Council is committed to providing the highest quality waste collection service to the community and local business. In 2011 Council entered into a joint contract with Rockdale City Council and Hurstville City Council for the collection of waste across the three LGA's. This has resulted in significant savings for residents and a reduction in the number of truck movements in each council area each week, with savings over \$46 million across the region and a \$10 million saving to Kogarah residents.

Council's waste staff worked collaboratively with staff of Hurstville and Rockdale Councils in the development of the tender and contract documents and in the detailed tender assessment process that was also independently arbitrated.

### *Southern Sydney Region of Councils (SSROC)*

As part of our ongoing collaboration with other councils in the region, Kogarah City Council has participated in over thirty (30) SSROC tenders. This participation has delivered significant cost savings in a range of categories including:

- Waste services
- Electricity
- Asphalt resurfacing
- Operating plant
- Stationery
- Road and traffic equipment
- Library services

In the last year not only has Kogarah City Council actively participated in these contracts, it has also been part of the evaluation panels on many contracts, as well as taking the lead on new initiatives in tenders such as print services and extending the industrial footwear contract to encompass other related areas such as personal protection equipment.

Council's dedicated and highly skilled and experienced procurement specialist actively attends and presents to the region in the supply group meetings that are held bi-monthly. Kogarah City Council is very proud to have introduced innovative initiatives that are attracting interest in the region. These include a supplier engagement program via Council's website and an e-procurement website.

### *Planning and Development*

Kogarah City Council actively partners with adjoining councils on joint projects, including the development of the Master Plan and DCP for the Ramsgate Town Centre with Rockdale City Council, working together with Hurstville and Rockdale Councils to develop a regional Employment Lands Strategy, and the development of the TMAP for the Hurstville Centre and a joint traffic study with Hurstville Council.

Council was instrumental in establishing the St George Design Review Panel, creating the selection criteria and appointing the relevant panel members. This panel now provides very effective and efficient services for the region.

Council also makes its research and innovation available to other local government areas and has strong links with educational institutions such as Sydney University. Council's strategic planning staff engages with other councils through the Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils, and work collaboratively in advocating on behalf of local government on state and regional matters and those directly affecting the City of Kogarah.

### *Environmental initiatives*

Council is an active member of the Georges River Combined Councils Committee (GRCCC). The role of this regional group is to protect, conserve and enhance the Georges River Catchment. This is achieved by developing programs and partnerships between councils, providing technical support, building council staff capacity, actively seeking external funding for projects, lobbying all levels of government and other stakeholders, and coordinating activities within the catchment.

The GRCCC is able to align its program of works to meet Local, Federal and State Government Natural Resource Management (NRM) objectives, as well as the objectives of the State Plan and relevant Catchment Management Plans. Current State and Federal funding is also directed to meeting these objectives. As this funding is more generally granted to partnership organisations with a regional focus, the GRCCC provides an ideal medium through which member councils can better access such funds.

Kogarah City Council was an active member of the Lower Georges River Sustainability Initiative, which also involved Hurstville City Council, Rockdale City Council, Sutherland Shire Council and Greater Sydney Local Land Services. The project assisted these councils to build their capacity to adopt sustainable policies and practices. Through a focus on sustainable urban water management, Council staff have developed awareness and technical skills needed to design and build water-sensitive developments.

Kogarah City Council collaborates each year on research projects to advance sustainable water management through a Research Partnership with the University of Technology, Sydney. The partnership includes an undergraduate 'Capstone' Program, postgraduate research, professional development and training of Council staff. The partnership has been in place for over 10 years.

## *Waste Initiatives*

Kogarah City Council has recently joined the Regional Illegal Dumping (RID) Squad to adopt a regional approach to tackle illegal dumping, and to share, distribute and collate information on instances of dumping in the LGA. This will enable Council to focus on educational campaigns, reduce the occurrence of illegal dumping and deter dumpers. Economic benefits of the RID Squad will reduce Council's clean-up costs and increase the number of fines issued.

Kogarah City Council is also involved with a number of waste initiative projects combined with SSROC, Rockdale and Hurstville Councils and the NSW Environment & Protection Authority (EPA). These include:

- Regional Organics Grant – Compost Revolution
- Multi-Unit Dwelling (MUD) working group – tackling contamination in the recycling bin through assessment of infrastructure and education with SSROC Councils.
- St George Recycling Centre – combined with Hurstville and Rockdale City Councils to build, develop and implement a recycling hub for residents to dispose of their hazardous material and large bulky household items.
- Household Asbestos Removal Scheme – providing residents with an easier option to properly dispose of Asbestos. A joint initiative with Hurstville, Sutherland and Willoughby Councils.
- SSROC Regional Waste Audit – combined with 14 other councils to conduct residential waste audits. Kogarah City Council has been involved at a regional level with SSROC to conduct residential waste audits since 1999.

## *Community Services*

Council's Community Services Department works collaboratively with both government and non-government human services agencies across the region. Council has strong community networks and is an active member of a range of interagencies and committees across the St George and wider Southern Sydney region. Participating in these networks allows Council to support effective service planning and partnerships across the region to meet the needs of the local community.

A range of community development projects are delivered in partnership with neighbouring councils, key State Government agencies and local community service organisations. A partnership approach allows for greater resources and expertise to inform projects, and for projects to reach across wider areas where this is in line with community need. Partnership projects also strengthen relationships between organisations and allow for ongoing and effective engagement, which in turn improves community strategic planning processes.

Community Service collaborations and partnerships include:

- Council is an active member of regional interagency groups including the St George and Sutherland Disability Interagency, St George Mental Health Interagency, St George Domestic Violence Committee, St George Home and Community Care Forum, St George Multicultural Network, St George Youth Network, St George Community Drug and Alcohol Team and the St George Child and Family Interagency.
- Council is an active member of local government networks that support collaboration, resource sharing and improved planning and delivery of services including the SSROC

Community, Culture and Recreation Network, SSROC Library Network and the Local Government Multicultural Workers Network

- Council has implemented community development projects in partnership with neighbouring councils including projects such as Youth Week, senior's education seminars, community safety initiatives and multicultural education resources. These projects address specific community needs where a partnership achieves better outcomes and builds connections and capacity across local communities
- Council has played a lead role in developing and implementing a regional communications tool for the human services sector across the St George and Sutherland area. The SGS E-news project has facilitated comprehensive and efficient communication amongst community service providers which supports effective service planning and delivery across the region.
- Council has taken a lead role in establishing working groups of Government and non-government stakeholders to facilitate a collaborative approach to addressing community issues. An example of this was the establishment of a Community Drug and Alcohol Working Group with senior representatives from NSW Health, NSW Police and local MPs to address community concerns over drug and alcohol services in the local area.

## **Credibility for more effective advocacy**

Typically referred to as the sphere of government closest to the people, Local Government as an industry has a long-standing reputation for its ability to be an effective advocate on issues affecting its local community, and Kogarah City Council is no exception to this. Kogarah City Council boasts high levels of credibility in terms of reliability, responsiveness and transparency, and with this outstanding reputation has shared a deep level of trust and faith with the community. Kogarah City Council regularly advocates for its community at both the State and Federal Government levels, as well as working with key businesses and institutions present within our Community.

Kogarah City Council has a high level of local representation and our Councillors have a strong commitment to advocating for their constituents.

Below outlines examples where Kogarah City Council uses its credibility to advocate on a regular basis on issues affecting its local community.

### *Community Strategic Plan*

Council's Community Strategic Plan 'Bright Future, Better Lifestyle' identified a number of issues that were important to the local community, but were not necessarily within the realm of responsibility of local government. Highlighting these issues alone in the Community Strategic Plan has brought them to the attention of many State and Federal Government Departments and stands as an effective tool for advocacy. Council continually advocates on behalf of its community on these issues including, but not limited to:

- Increased stock of affordable and adaptable housing in the community
- Improved public transport facilities for our community
- Parking issues in the Kogarah CBD
- Supporting local community organisations so that they can continue to deliver vital services to our community
- Working alongside and in partnership with other levels of government and local organisations to identify and develop solutions to address social needs
- Access to services and facilities, particularly health, education and services for the ageing population
- Access to health services that are responsive to the needs of our community

### *Kogarah CBD Taskforce*

The Kogarah CBD Taskforce was established in 2009 and meets regularly to discuss issues impacting on the development of Kogarah CBD. The aim of this Taskforce is to seek input from the key stakeholders in the Kogarah Town Centre to investigate ways that Council can build upon the strengths of the Kogarah business precinct. Examples of advocacy that the CBD Taskforce has been involved in include:

- St George Bank to remain and grow in the Kogarah CBD which will deliver a further 2,000 additional jobs in the Kogarah CBD prior to the end of 2015/16.
- Additional funding for St George Hospital to develop the new emergency department
- Recent changes to the Kogarah train timetable
- Free shuttle bus service around the Kogarah CBD
- Opportunities for additional car parking in the Kogarah CBD



## **Capable partner for State and Federal agencies**

Local Government is the level of Government closest to the community and is in a unique position to be able to engage with residents on a range of issues and be the conduit to State and Federal Government agencies to ensure programs are implemented effectively. Kogarah City Council's effective community engagement processes facilitate local needs analysis that is capable of being undertaken on a suburb by suburb basis, using a range of qualitative data in addition to quantitative data. This level of community engagement cannot be achieved by other levels of government and therefore provides the source of valuable data that benefits State and Federal Government bodies in their partnerships with local government.

The below examples highlight Kogarah City Council's proven ability to be capable partners for both state and federal agencies:

### *Emergency Services*

Council has strong connections and an established partnership with the St George Local Area Police command and is an active member of the Safety Precinct Meetings. Council has provided the Police with support in their operations when requested, including street closures, traffic control at crash sites or other emergency situations, providing traffic control when requested, petrol and diesel clean up at crash sites etc. Council also provides regular support to Combat agencies such as SES, Police and Fire Brigade through the provision of excavators, loaders, backhoes and other plant, in addition to personnel.

Council supplies full service provision to NSW SES, including but not limited to the building headquarters, garage for plant and equipment, and maintenance of these assets and plant. Recently Council funded construction of a new garage/training area at Harold Fraser Reserve for the Kogarah SES.

### *Roads and Maritime Service (RMS)*

The Kogarah LGA comprises Local, Regional and State roads. All roads are managed in partnership with the RMS. The partnership across all road classes is most commonly exercised through the operation of the Kogarah Local Traffic Committee where decision making about traffic and parking matters is considered by committee members amongst whom the RMS representative is a key voting member.

In addition, Council works in partnership with the RMS to deliver a range of infrastructure projects through its funding assistance programs for roads in a number of areas including;

- Annual Traffic Facilities grant for minor structures, signs and lines on Local and Regional roads.
- Annual Road grant for maintenance on Regional Roads.
- Black spot funding for projects related to road sections with high accident history.
- Repair program for specific road resurfacing and repair projects.

## *Community Development*

Kogarah City Council plays a pivotal leadership role in supporting non-government community organisations and service providers in our area. Kogarah City Council provides a range of affordable accommodation options from small groups such as the local playgroups, toy libraries and Italian, Greek and Chinese friendship groups, through to larger organisations such as 3 Bridges and Kogarah Community Services who deliver a range of social support programs that are both State and Federally funded. These organisations are providing vital state and federal government human services in the region, many of which have no accommodation components built into funding agreements which is then subsidised by Council.

Another key example of where Council partners with State and Federal agencies to deliver services locally is through joint funding of project staff. Council's Aged and Disability Community Development Officer position is currently jointly funded by Council and the NSW government. The role of this position in Council is designed to reflect and support the older people and people with disabilities and their carers. It aims to support people to live independently and to participate in their local community. The benefits of increased participation and supporting people to live independently at home are well known and represent a saving to government.

Council actively partners with State and Federal Human Service departments to deliver community events locally that highlight State and Federal priority areas or celebratory events of recognition, such as Seniors Week, Youth Week, International Women's Day, Harmony Day, Australia Day and NAIDOC Week. Without Council participation many of these events could not be provided at a local level.

Other programs that are supported by Kogarah City Council on an ongoing basis that require a partnership between levels of government and funding agencies include:

- Before and after school care
- Community transport
- Aged services
- Disability services
- Youth services
- Migrant Resource Centre
- Healthy ageing and well-being activities

## *Children's Services*

Council has over many years taken a leadership role in children's services in the Kogarah local government area by directly providing services and setting quality standards in a competitive local market environment. Kogarah City Council owns and operates three childcare services - two long day care services and one preschool service. Council services operate within the National Quality Framework (NQF) and continue to maintain quality standards which have been verified through formal assessment processes. One service has gained 'Exceeding National Standards' while another has attained 'Meeting National Standards'. Council's third service has completed the Quality Improvement Plan (the first stage in formal assessment) and awaits formal assessment.

Council through its planning and community development processes plays an active role in working with the not for profit childcare sector and commercial childcare providers to ensure appropriate opportunities are available for the future development of childcare places to meet community needs.

#### *Planning and Development*

Council's Planning and Development Department work closely with the State Government to ensure our obligations to respond to metropolitan growth demands are met and are planned and coordinated with adjoining Council partners and relevant State agencies. Council is working closely with the State to ensure pathways for application lodgement and processing are streamlined. For example, Council was recently an active participant implementing the Electronic Housing Code. Council also worked with the State Government to implement and actively promote the on-line DA Tracking System.

Council has worked closely with the State Government to develop its New City Plan. The draft proposal responds to a need to address the NSW State Government's Metropolitan planning objectives, which are outlined in *A Plan for Growing Sydney* and the *Sydney South Subregional Plan*, which is currently being prepared by the State Government. A recent release of statistics from the State Government's Department of Planning & Environment indicates an estimated growth of 17,400 residents who will seek housing in the City of Kogarah up to 2031. The New City Plan aims to accommodate that growth.

#### *Economic Development*

Council partners with a range of State and Federal departments to support Economic Development in the region, including hosting the Small Business Bus, participating in working groups for regional projects such as the recent Southern Sydney Manufacturing Agglomeration Project and working collaboratively to deliver local seminars.

In addition Council has provided financial support since 1999 to Southern Sydney Business Enterprise Centre to underpin their infrastructure costs such as rent, administration and business networking events. These costs are not covered by the funding received from either the state or federal governments.

## ***Resources to cope with complex and unexpected change***

As previously noted, Council has a proven record of best practice and sound financial management which will equip Council to successfully cope with any complex or unexpected change in the future. Detailed below are some of the key resources in Council's possession to assist in ensuring that Council is prepared to adequately and appropriately respond to such change.

### *Financial Framework*

Kogarah City Council has a strong financial policy framework in place to grow its revenue base over time and utilise all outperformance in a financially sustainable way.

Currently Council has a low level of external debt and this external borrowing capacity is very important should any unforeseen large infrastructure costs arise in the future. Council has the ability to fund future infrastructure replacements from external loans should funding not be available from other sources.

Dedicated reserves, available funding sources, efficiency dividends and extremely low external debt combined to ensure that Council has the capacity to cope with any unplanned financial challenges it may face in the future. Council's financial policy framework has ensured the financial discipline is implemented to deliver the strategic outcomes within its integrated planning documents. Council is currently in a sound financial position and is confident of remaining so over the long term.

Council has a proven track record of tackling the tough financial and asset management challenges councils face and will continue to be proactive in dealing with them in the future. This has resulted in Council having a very robust revenue base and facilitated the growth in discretionary spending over time that will allow Council to confidently respond to and resource any complex and unexpected change that may arise in the future.

### *Business Continuity Management System*

Kogarah City Council has implemented a Business Continuity Management System (BCMS) to manage incidents that may threaten Council's ability to deliver critical services. The BCMS is a framework that includes clearly defined roles and responsibilities, key contact information and high level instructions. The framework supports Council's capacity to ensure critical services continue to be provided in the event that key resources are not available for a period of time. The BCMS is constantly tested and reviewed to remain relevant and provide an effective means of returning to business as normal from operationally disruptive incidents.

### *Council's Workforce*

Kogarah City Council values the skills, knowledge and capabilities of its longstanding and experienced workers. For several years, Council has been developing and implementing strategies to support and retain these workers through proactive work initiatives. In addition there are higher grade duty opportunities for employees to act in more senior positions within the organisation, temporary appointments, professional and leadership development programs and informal and formal mentoring programs. Planning for the future

is an important component of the workforce strategy and implementing programs to develop our people and retain the knowledge of the existing workforce is critical.

### *Emergency Planning*

Kogarah City Council has actively participated in, and assumed the lead in, key emergency planning projects within the region. These projects, as follows, required input from multiple stakeholders (such as police, Utilities, SES, etc.) and professions (Engineers, GIS, Planners, etc.) with the result being a suite of documents/ resources that will be relied upon in the event of local emergency situations.

- Emergency Risk Management Report for all of the St George District identifies the key “disaster” risks and provides mitigation measures for these risks
- The St George Disaster Plan defines combat agency and local agency relationships, disaster prevention and mitigation measures, as well as deployment of resources
- Creation and maintenance of an Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) on Council premises which is available for use if needed by NSW Police.
- Electronic Vulnerable Facilities Map that shows all hospitals, child care centres, churches, aged care centres etc.
- The provision of spatial information from Council, Utilities, and Department of Lands through a mobile digital interface for use by Combat Agencies in an emergency.

## High quality political and managerial leadership

Council has a strong history of stable political and managerial leadership. Successive Mayors, Councillors and the Executive have combined to guarantee a productive culture of team work and common purpose for the benefit of the community. This is evidenced by Council's ability to progress a range of community and planning issues in an environment of fiscal restraints and complex regulatory constraints, coupled with increasing community expectations and changing community needs. This functional nature of Kogarah City Council's elected body is also reflected in the fact that there have been no Code of Conduct complaints submitted.

In its 2014 Promoting Better Practice Review the Office of Local Government noted that Council's Senior Management displays "... a genuine commitment to building trust in relationships internally with managers and staff, and with the elected Council" and that "... a strong rapport within the Executive Team, between the Executive Team and management, and between the Executive Team and the Mayor was apparent". Sound meeting and reporting practices that allow Councillors to focus on strategic decision making were also highlighted in addition to strong support for Councillors on a day to day basis at an Executive level.

It is highlighted that in the 2014 Promoting Better Practice Review the Office of Local Government also stated that Council has procedures in place which reflect a strong commitment to support and develop councillors to undertake their roles over the past decade. This support includes:

- Councillor induction process
- Access to professional development
- Training and briefings on particular issues that are important to the administration of Local Government, for example Code of Conduct, IP&R processes.

Council's Executive encourages employees to develop their careers while at Kogarah City Council. A number of programs to support high quality managerial leadership have been implemented for example:

- In partnership with St George TAFE, Council developed a specific leadership and strategic planning management course to support the implementation of the IP&R process. Each member of the Executive and all Managers attained an Advanced Diploma of Management.
- The opportunity to pursue managerial qualifications is offered to staff to develop their management skills. For example, many aspiring staff have participated in the Frontline Management Certificate course in partnership with St George TAFE.
- Council offers employees the opportunity to participate in the Australian Local Government Management Challenge. The Management Challenge is Australia and New Zealand's premier forum for current and emerging local government leaders. It is program designed to deliver personal, team and organisational professional development. In 2013 Kogarah City Council team was placed third in NSW.

- Council provides employees with the opportunity to participate in formal mentoring programs as a strategy to develop leadership capacity in the organisation. Examples include the LGMA Mentoring Program and the LG NSW Springboard Mentoring Program. In addition, Kogarah City Council Executive and Managers have participated in formal mentoring programs in order to provide support to local government professionals in other councils as a way of supporting the sector.