

### Attachment 3:

## Summary of Rockdale's ability to meet the 10 Key Elements of Strategic Capacity

The Independent Local Government Review Panel lists the 10 key elements of strategic capacity for Councils (*ILGRP Final Report, page 32, Box 8 - numbered 1-10*). Rockdale City has grouped these key elements into three recommended themes (*OLG Fit for the Future Bootcamp*) and provide highlights of our achievements in each area:

### **Theme: Resource Flexibility and Resilience**

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

Rockdale City Council's long term financial plan, successful special rate variation applications and annual budget demonstrates our sound financial position in the short, medium and long term. Council has demonstrated satisfactory revenue generation and our ability to reduce discretionary expenditure and service efficiency while meeting the seven Fit for the Future benchmarks.

This performance will be further improved when Council successfully implements the actions in our Improvement Plan, in particular efficient contract and procurement management, increased revenue from the Sydney International Airport and reduced operating costs.

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

Rockdale is a modern, progressive Council meeting the services, strategic planning and future requirements of our community in an effective and efficient way. Council currently provides for the needs of over 100,000 residents, with an 86% satisfaction rating, and is well prepared to meet the demands of a population currently planned to almost double by 2036. Rockdale has a number of initiatives currently underway that demonstrate the strategic capacity, capability and effectiveness of the organisation now and into the future.

Rockdale City Council's major renewal projects currently underway demonstrate existing strategic capacity to implement infrastructure improvements to meet community demand. Rockdale City Library is currently on track to open in 2016, while the Aquatic Centre and Youth Centre (with a private partner) have progressed to signed contracts for work commencement.

Council has also built significant project delivery capability, demonstrated through three current major infrastructure projects, and improving our capital works delivery capability over the past 3 years— our annual capital works program growing from \$9.1 M in 2011/12 to \$15.2mil in 2013/14.

Council has excellent governance frameworks around major projects including risk assessment and probity processes. We also have well developed enterprise risk management practices which enable the Executive Team to proactively implement integration strategies and actions to deal with such risks.

Our planning capability is reflected in State Government engagement with Council leading to the recent declaration of three priority precincts, with a potential fourth precinct at Kogarah West. These significant growth areas require solid strategic planning and infrastructure development skills, the ability to collaborate with State Agencies and consult with existing communities.

## 9. Resources to cope with complex and unexpected change

Rockdale City Council is an industry recognised leader in the application of ePlanning technology and processes. Council introduced a staged approach towards a fully electronic development application process in 2012. This complex change process was nominated as a finalist in the 2014 NSW LG Professionals Australia "Excellence Awards."

Council is a leader in technology and business improvement, recently bringing our computer systems to industry leading levels. Rockdale has been annually audited by SAI Global Australia since 2007, successfully receiving an annual Registration of Certification in International Quality Standards.

## Theme: Strategic Relationships

### 6. Effective regional collaboration

A very successful collaboration at the regional level is the **St George Regional Waste Contract** (contract value \$100M+) between Hurstville, Kogarah and Rockdale City Council. This regional collaboration is delivering the following outcomes:

- \$46 million in Savings over the life of the Contract
- Annual savings to each household of \$60.00
- Significant operational, financial, and environmental benefits continue to be provided
- Autonomy of each Council maintained in managing their contracts
- Collection split between Councils over the week

#### **The Lower Georges River Sustainability Initiative (LGRSI)**

The LGRSI involved the rehabilitation of the popular recreational waterway, the lower Georges River using a \$1.9 million grant from NSW Environmental Trust. Hurstville, Kogarah, Rockdale and Sutherland Shire Councils collaborated on the project to restore riverside vegetation and habitats and increase community awareness about environmental sustainability.

#### **Georges River Combined Council's Committee (GRCCC)**

The GRCCC has 9 member Councils in the Georges River Catchment. The GRCCC has secured funding of \$2 million from the Australian Government Bio fund to restore large areas of bushland throughout the catchment which also involves the establishment of an indigenous Riverkeeper Team.

Other projects with Hurstville and Kogarah Councils include St George Design Review Panel and RID Squad. Regional collaborations with inner west councils include catchment management projects and collaboration with Marrickville Council on Sydney International Airport issues.

Further mutual cooperation currently operates between Councils with Metropool and United Independent Pools in managing our insurance requirements, along with a shared Internal Audit resource.

**7. Credibility for more effective advocacy**

Reflected in our 2013 Customer Satisfaction Survey, there is high community satisfaction (86%) with Rockdale City Council services and advocacy. Government agencies are heavily involved with Council in planning for priority precincts such as Cooks Cove which involve complex land use; transport; environment and development issues.

**8. Capable partner for State and Federal agencies**

Rockdale City Council's capability to partner effectively with the State Government is reflected in the recent declaration of three priority precincts at Arncliffe, Banksia and Cooks Cove with the potential for an additional precinct at Kogarah West. These significant growth areas require solid strategic planning and infrastructure development skills, the ability to collaborate with State Agencies and consult with existing communities.

The ongoing management and amenity of the F6 corridor, Botany Bay foreshore and the Airport requires Rockdale City to work effectively in partnership with many State and Federal Government Agencies, and respond rapidly to challenging and complex issues.

**Theme: Organisational Resourcefulness****4. Ability to employ a wider range of skilled staff**

Rockdale City Council's adopted Workforce Plan continues to allow for the employment of a broad range of diverse and multi-skilled staff. In addition, we believe in collaborative working evidenced through our organisation values developed by staff in 2014. Attracting and retaining skilled staff has not been an issue for Council given the nature and importance of the work undertaken and positive workplace culture.

Council contracts in highly specialised skills where required for example in specialised areas – such as the preparation of our Biodiversity Strategy and property development and investment.

**3. Knowledge, creativity and innovation**

Rockdale City Council acknowledges that new approaches are needed. We have examined our core function of development assessment and continue to make inroads with technology to improve service delivery for applicants and neighbours to developments. Our efforts have been shared with our peers through collaborative networking inviting NSW Councils to attend a ½ day session to hear about our journey with electronic development applications and the lessons learned along the way. This project has been recognised as a finalist in the 2014 NSW LG Professionals Australia "Excellence Awards."

**5. Advanced skills in strategic planning and policy development**

Rockdale City Council's continued focus on effective strategic planning and policy development has been demonstrated through the previous examples of priority precincts and nationally significant environmental and transport facilities (including the Botany Bay foreshore, wetlands and Sydney International Airport).

**10. High quality political and managerial leadership**

Council is well placed to deliver Fit for the Future through our highly qualified, experienced and professional leadership team. The Executive Team is recently formed and has senior management experience at various local government agencies. Our elected Councillors provide a diverse representation and successfully advocate on behalf of our community. Council is currently engaged in an organisational wide climate survey which will be followed by 360 degree management assessments and individual action planning. Council staff are actively involved in industry forums and professional networks.