

Strathfield Council employs a number of cost containment and efficiency strategies and actions to ensure that the Council operates effectively and efficiently and delivers cost effective services and operations. Cost containment has been a long-term strategy of Strathfield Council. Council's Community Strategic Plan 'Strathfield 2025' sets the following goals and strategies under the theme of Responsible Leadership:

Strathfield 2025 Goal 5.3 - Council is efficient, sustainable and delivers value for money services

- Strategy 5.3.1 – Deliver high quality and efficient customer focused services
- Strategy 5.3.3 - Promote efficient and effective business practices with community, customers and partnerships
- Strategy 5.3.3 - Maintain and improve financial sustainability of Council.

Council's Delivery Program and Operational Plan set out programs and actions to meet the goals and strategies of Strathfield Council, which include efficiency and service reviews and cost containment actions.

Council has already implemented the following efficiency and cost containment actions:

- Review of advertising costs for recruitment resulting in purchasing cost effective packages with online service providers
- Event management – Council seeks sponsorship for events to offset costs in accordance with Council's Sponsorship Policy
- Childcare services – services are delivered by licencing to non-profit providers in Council facilities. Services offered include long day care and out of hours care services in four council facilities.
- Energy and water use – actions implemented to curtail costs through Council's Water and Energy efficiency plans. Billing is monitored on a quarterly basis and investigations are initiated for unexpected peaks in billing.
- Introduction of charges to offset merchant charges on credit cards
- Introduction of library membership fees for applications for non-resident/non-reciprocal membership
- Establishment of insurance charges for non-insured hirers of facilities
- Projects such as returfing of Hudson Park Golf Course with drought resistant turf to reduce water costs as the Golf Course has the highest water use of any council facility.
- Installation of Cloudmaster system at major sportsgrounds to manage and monitor water and energy use. This system uses sensors to detect when soil requires water, which controls watering.
- Promotion of hiring of community and recreational facilities

- Virtualisation of Council's servers has enabled Council to reduce the number of physical servers and provides a test and development environment without large investment in hardware and has reduced support and maintenance overheads.
- Upgrade of WAN link has enabled migration of phones to IP technology, which treats calls as data and reduces billing for phone calls.

In 2014-2015, the following initiatives have been undertaken:

- Service reviews were undertaken in Council's operational areas, resulting in changing practices such as more efficient scheduling and use of equipment
- Structural review resulted in Council's changing its organisational structure from three departments to two departments. This reduced number of Directors from three to two with resultant salary savings.
- A review of Council's plant and equipment was undertaken in 2014 and a full stocktake of all plant and equipment was conducted in early 2015. This has resulted in reductions or disposal of underutilised plant and equipment which will take full effect in 2015/16.
- Since 2014, Council has levied a Stormwater Management Charge. Revenue raised is being directed fully into funding improvements to drainage assets. In the 2015/16 budget, the charge will be applied fully to business for large sites, which will increase expected revenue.

Council's process of review is continuous and oversighted by the Executive Management Team and reported through progress reviews of the Delivery Program. In 2015/16, Council will undertake the following:

- Review of community and recreational facilities charges, uses and cost recovery
- Plant and equipment rationalisation
- Organisation structure review

Initiatives from reviews will be implemented and/or incorporated into the 2016/17 budget.

This is a continuous program and reviewed on an annual basis.