

Key Elements of Strategic Capacity – Hurstville's Scale & Capacity Outcomes

In its final report, 'Revitalising Local Government' the NSW Independent Local Government Review Panel (ILGRP), October 2013, p 32. 3.2.1, stated that the Scale and Capacity criteria are based on ten key elements and these have now been incorporated into IPART's 'Methodology for Assessment of Council Fit for the Future Proposals'. Our assessment shows that Hurstville City Council satisfies all elements under the Scale & Capacity criteria as detailed below.

1. More robust revenue base and increased discretionary spending

To increase its revenue base Council has taken a multi-pronged approach through improving efficiencies, focusing on high and immediate priorities without losing sight of long-term income generation and seeking Council-only or joint proposals for external sources of funding. The results of our endeavours are significant, eg:

- *Effective Price Setting*

A comprehensive methodology for effectively price setting the services and facilities provided to the community was developed in collaboration with Local Government Learning Solutions. Business Unit Managers were educated and empowered to use economic and marketing principles to optimise the desired outcomes from their Programs. The results in 2014/15 have been outstanding. The 19 fees which were increased by 10% or more delivered additional income of \$430kpa (+21%). The 11 fees which were reduced by 10% or more increased volume by 43% (+725 units) resulting in greater compliance or utilisation. The 29 new charges which were implemented yielded an additional \$100kpa for services already provided with no incremental costs and undesirable behaviour changes.

The Effective Price-Setting training modules developed with Hurstville Council have been delivered to nine other NSW Councils. The methodology was presented to the LGMA National Congress in Darwin in April 2015 and was well received.

- *Stormwater Management Service Charge*

Council identified \$1.43 million of repair and \$7.27 million rehabilitation works to ageing pipelines over the next 10-15 years. In addition to the pipes identified for replacement, a number of stormwater related upgrades were flagged amounting to \$15.39 million.

The rehabilitation works required to maintain the existing stormwater network and prevent pipe collapse and resultant flooding issues will be funded by the introduction of a stormwater management service charge which will generate approximately \$700,000/pa from 2015/16 onwards.

- *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. Specific achievements for Hurstville City Council within this initiative include the development of a Water Sensitive Urban

Design (WSUD) Action Plan and on ground works such as the Webb's Dam Upgrade which was funded by a combination of Council, Environmental Trust grant, and Office of Environment and Heritage (CMA) grant funds.

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

Hurstville Council hosts and leads the Georges River Combined Council's Committee (GRCCC). The GRCCC is very successful at securing grant funding for regional projects due to its wide network of members (9 local government Councils in the Georges River catchment) The GRCCC has secured a \$2 million Australian Government Bio Fund grant to restore large areas of bushland throughout the catchment which also involves the establishment of an Aboriginal Riverkeeper Team.

2. Scope to undertake new functions and major projects

In recent years Hurstville Council has designed and constructed several major projects of significant regional benefit in addition to its normal operations. Council manages additional work, including those passed on to us by State and Federal governments, within existing structures or create new functions and responsibilities when required. Some highlights include:

- *Hurstville Aquatic and Leisure Centre*

The building of the regional Hurstville Aquatic Leisure Centre and expansion was managed and completed by Council for \$15 million. The Hurstville Aquatic Leisure Centre is one of the few council-owned aquatic centres that provide a revenue stream to Council. The Management Agreement for the Centre provides a set income to Hurstville Council for maintenance and utilities plus an additional management fee to Council.

Since its completion in 1995, the Aquatic Centre has undergone various renovations in 2004 and 2012 to accommodate the growing demand. The renovation in 2012 saw the expansion of the gym and car park, the construction of a new crèche, spin room and mind and body studio. In the 2013/2014, the Centre processed over 1 million visitors. This milestone will be achieved once again in the 2014/2015.

- *Hurstville Bus Rail Interchange*

Council managed the completion of the new \$30 million Bus/Rail Interchange and Pedestrian Access Ramp in the Hurstville Central Business District (CBD). The interchange and ramp have improved co-ordination of local buses, and provide easy access to the railway station, Civic Precinct and Westfield, together with better and safer pedestrian activity along Forest Road. Council received State Government funding to create the bus interchange on the same level as the railway concourse, which has made transferring between bus services simpler and safer for commuters.

- *Developer Contributions (s94) Projects*

Council's Section 94 Development Contributions Plan 2012 provides a comprehensive schedule of community facilities, services and open space that will be required to meet both the existing and future community's demand up to the year 2031. The schedule of works in the Section 94 Plan were identified and prioritised from an Open Space, Recreation, Community and Library Facilities Study

undertaken by consultants in 2010 involving consultation with community and sporting groups, and a comprehensive assessment of the LGA existing facilities.

The total value of the works identified in the Plan is \$306 million, of which \$170 million are considered high priority projects and suitable to receive Section 94 funding. Council anticipates an estimated \$83.3 million in Section 94 contributions up to 2031.

Council has prepared a strategy for funding its share of the works in the Section 94 Plan which forms part of Council's 4-year Delivery Program and the 10-year Long Term Financial Plan. For the 2015-2019 period, Council is committing approximately \$22.6 million of Section 94 funds and \$7.6 million of Council and grant funding for a range of projects including a new community centre, new youth centre, Hurstville Central Library – new multipurpose space, upgrade of City Centre public domain areas, drainage works, upgrade and embellishment of existing sporting facilities and open space (including Penshurst Park, Jubilee Park, Peakhurst Park and Central Plaza).

3. Ability to employ wider range of skilled staff

Hurstville Council is continuously looking for opportunities to upskill its staff through training and development. Workforce plans and recruitment strategies are updated to address current and emerging priorities. When vacancies occur the organisational structure is re-assessed. Critical skill areas which are not practical to cover within the existing structure are sourced through panels, consultants or collaborative arrangements. Council does not need to 'own' key skills where it is more efficient to 'rent' or 'share' them.

- **Workforce Planning**

Through effective corporate and workforce planning Council assesses its business needs and strategically aligns its workforce to meet business priorities. Council uses evidence based work force planning strategies, establishment, casual usage and presence of workload peaks and troughs in assessing service needs and human resource requirements. Informed decisions can be made about how best to manage workforce requirements such as through full-time and part-time staff, contracts, consultants, contractors, volunteers, or sharing with other organisations depending on short or long term imperatives.

- **Legal Services Panel**

Management of Council's legal obligations is an important task and Council has implemented industry best practice over several years by engaging a panel of legal service providers ensuring that no matter the issue the interests of Hurstville Council and its residents are protected through sound, practical and cost effective legal advice. Council is able to call upon outstanding legal expertise to cover the whole range of Council's responsibilities including governance, administrative, property, operational, employment, insurance and financial management. Council's current panel comprises four legal service firms and the performance of these firms is reviewed on a regular basis through the tender process.

- **Audit Specialised Services**

Like many organisations needing to work in a resourceful way, Council has recently outsourced its Internal Audit Function to capitalise on engaging specialist auditors to undertake its audit work rather than through the engagement of a generalist in-house auditor. This has provided Council with a process of achieving significant work and business improvements at affordable costs. Outsourcing allows the Council to effectively manage its workforce to current day demands without unnecessarily high employee on-costs being a burden on the community.

- **Volunteer Management**

Hurstville City Council officially launched a structured volunteer program in 2009. Volunteers are provided with opportunities to contribute and gain insight into a range of cultural experiences by assisting in living and working libraries, museums and multi-purpose entertainment centres. Volunteers can assist staff with the work they carry out, services they deliver, and programs they facilitate. With 120 volunteers working on average 280 hours per week across HCC facilities, the volunteer program has enabled HCC to take a more strategic approach to its collection development, programming and forward planning.

Volunteers participate in both behind-the-scenes and front-of-house tasks including shelving and tidying collections in library services, supporting operational processes, assisting with programs and events, customer service projects, operating volunteer-run services such as the Justice of the Peace and the IT Tech Bar help desk - providing library customers with assistance in using a variety of technologies within the library.

Council launched an after-hours service for council transactions (AHCSI) at Hurstville Library service points. The service enables residents and ratepayers to access 13 Council services outside traditional business hours. To offer this service face-to-face service and over the phone renewal transactions needed to be reduced so that freed-up time could be used to answer a more diverse range of customer enquiries.

A Renew campaign was launched using volunteers who informed and assisted customers with online renewals and self-checking of items. Over 900 customers were assisted during the 25 days the campaign across Hurstville and Penshurst libraries which resulted in a 12% reduction in renewal enquiries.

By empowering customers to perform basic transactions themselves, the volunteers have given staff time to assist customers with council transactions such as booking building inspections, paying rates, request a service, apply to remove or prune a tree and registering their pets. Non-library-users are coming to the Hurstville Library for the very first time and joining the library service.

- **Business Process Redesign**

Council's proactive and effective workforce planning has led to timely assessment of service gaps against workforce capacity and capability. These are then followed-up with change management strategies such as job redesign, remuneration assessments, recruitment and selection strategies as well as further organisational development and analysis to improve service provision.

Recent examples, where Council has achieved very good outcomes by adopting this approach are:

(a) Library, Museum and Gallery

The delivery of Hurstville's library services had not changed significantly in the last decade, despite significant changes in technology and customer requirements. Council undertook a strategic business assessment and reviewed its Library, Museum and Gallery functions, services, processes and practices to address current and future service needs of our community. By matching and processing customer needs and being cognisant of current electronic media uptake, these services have the makings of centres of excellence. With this in mind, the Library, Museum and Gallery services were successfully restructured and redesigned to effectively and efficiently deliver on community needs. The quality of Library, Museum and Gallery services continues to improve as they focus on ways to educate, inspire and engage our diverse community through innovative programs and services which foster creativity, celebrate local identity and support lifelong learning.

(b) Tree Crew

Council identified a significant increase in requests for tree removals and initiated a review to assess best practice in the delivery of tree management services. Maintaining an in-house service with increased staffing to cope with additional work load and outsourcing were considered. The result was that outsourcing would lead to better tree removal services. Further existing in-house resources could be used to manage contractors and provide assistance in other maintenance areas, including drain repairs. Outsourcing has not only proven to be financially successful for Council but has mitigated significant risks.

(c) Customer Service and Records

Council assessed how best to increase levels of efficiency in customer and records services to both internal and external customers. The result was a restructure and job redesign that improved record keeping and provided faster access to accurate business information and more effective use of public resources by avoiding retention of unnecessary data. Council has now streamlined its information processes and is providing credible, effective and timely services to the community.

(d) Children Services Preschool and Family Day Care

Council conducted a business review following the withdrawal of Federal Government funding for preschool and family day care services to assess whether it was still financially viable to maintain these services in-house following the loss of the funding or to replace with long day-care. The current situation was not financially viable. Council has more than five hundred families on the Council's centre waiting lists which would benefit from long day-care without compromising on the centres' financial viability. . Council closed its preschool and family day care functions and will be reopening long day care centre rooms in 2015/16 and redeploying its current staff. Successful redesigning of its business functions show that Council can easily adapt to change and ensure positive and continuous improvement even as a consequence of external pressures.

4. Knowledge, creativity and innovation

Council promotes continuous improvement through the OLG's established Integrated Planning and Reporting process and when seeking annual budget bids. Council encourages and motivates staff seek creative and innovative opportunities including chances to win annual awards in areas including team, customer focus, professionalism, safety, excellence and innovation. A number of significant projects undertaken by Council demonstrate creativity, innovation and knowledge sharing as shown below:

- **Customer Service After-Hours**

Hurstville City Council launched a new and innovative after-hours customer service initiative (AHCSI) at Hurstville City Library enabling residents and ratepayers to access Council services outside traditional business hours. The service is available 5.00pm to 9.00pm weekdays, and 9.30am to 4.00pm on weekends extending on Hurstville Council's current service hours. The AHCSI enhances the overall customer experience by offering the community an additional 33 hours per week of face to face and telephone customer service for Council enquiries and transactions. Customers have access to 13 Council services including booking a building inspection, assistance in applying for a Section 149 planning certificate, paying rates, requesting a service, applying to remove or prune a tree, obtaining information about waste services, registering pets and even purchasing a worm farm or compost bin. The expanded service is provided by existing library staff specifically trained in Council customer service enquiries. It was successfully implemented on 25 August 2014, with no ongoing cost to Council or the community and making it a sustainable initiative.

The AHCSI service has broadened customers' perspective of what libraries offer and encouraged more residents to utilise library facilities 7 days a week. Since implementation, staff have assisted with 661 after-hours transactions and a resolution rate of 87%. Library staff are competent and able to resolve vast numbers of Council enquiries autonomously, with only a small percentage (9%) are referred to Council's customer service team.

This initiative is unique in the local government arena because it demonstrates value for money for ratepayers through the expansion of existing services at no ongoing cost. As a result of AHCSI, Council has seen a reduction of 38.9% in call volume and a 31.4% reduction in service costs from Council's external out-of-hours service provider. The defining factors of the initiative's success are its considered research, careful planning, committed leadership and a compelling change and engagement strategy for not only library and customer service staff but the rest of the organisation.

This initiative sets the standard for other councils to 'do more with less' as local government services need to be redesigned with the customer at the centre of the process, not at the end. During an age of expanding online services and self-service, AHCSI provides for customers that choose to transact in person or over the phone, without additional cost to ratepayers.

- **Industrial Stormwater Harvesting for Golf Course Reuse**

Council's Peakhurst Light Industrial Stormwater Harvesting and Reuse Scheme received widespread industry recognition within the engineering, stormwater and environmental sectors including numerous awards. The \$2.6 million dollar project was jointly funded by Council in partnership with the NSW Governments WaSIP program, the NSW Climate Change Fund and the Australian Governments National Urban Water and Desalination Plan – Water for the Future Initiative.

The project involved the installation of stormwater harvesting, treatment and reuse infrastructure to provide a non-potable source of water for irrigation at Hurstville Golf Course. The system will harvest approximately 50 million litres of stormwater water annually and reduce potable water use by a minimum of 21 million litres. In addition to securing a future water supply for the golf course the scheme will significantly improve water quality and reduce the quantity draining to Lime Kiln Bay and the Georges River.

Council presented papers on this project which were well received at:

- *The Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia, Sustainability in Public Works Conference in July 2014*
- *The 2014 National Urban Stormwater Conference – Stormwater 2014*
- *The Institute of Public Works Engineering International Public Works Conference – June 2015*

Hurstville Council received or was nominated as a finalist for the project at several award ceremonies:

- *2014 NSW Green Globe award - Water Conservation Category – 1 of 3 Finalists*
- *2014 Winner - Keep Australia Beautiful - Sustainable Cities Award – Sustainable Water Award*
- *2014 LGNSW Environmental Excellence Award - Water Conservation Category – Finalist.*

- **Riverwood Boardwalk**

Council recently upgraded the deteriorated decking on the boardwalk around Salt Pan Creek at Riverwood with a recycled plastic product which resulted in 3,407,500 plastic bags or 45 cubic meters of plastic waste being saved from landfill and produced a more durable boardwalk which is better suited to the marine environment and more resistant to the splintering and cracking compared with the old timber decking.

- **Online Services**

Council is committed to improving online services to the community giving customers the freedom to communicate with Council at a time convenient them. Council automated a number of services including Section 149s and 603 certificates. This has meant that customers no longer need to come to Council or make extra payments for urgent services and thereby freeing up customer service staff and others to focus on delivery of services and tackling other complex issues. This has resulted in savings in staff time and quicker receipt of payments.

- **Customer Satisfaction**

Council conducts a random monthly telephone survey of 20 customers whose Service Requests were completed in that month. Hurstville is the only Council out of the adjoining 3 Councils who is continually self-assessing. In the last twelve months customer satisfaction rating has ranged from 75 to 90%. Feedback from customers is reviewed and actions taken to ensure ongoing improvements. Every year a Mystery Shopper survey is undertaken by an external provider. Unbeknownst to staff and posing as genuine customers they request information or service. The results of the total transaction together with ratings comparing us against other Councils are provided including recommendations for improvement. Council is continually seeking ways to improve our service delivery to the community.

- **Museum of Contemporary Art ‘Begin Again’**

‘The Begin-Again’ was a joint project developed by C3West (Museum of Contemporary Art) and Hurstville City Council, by Australian artist Angelica Mesiti. ‘The Begin-Again’ was in response to the Hurstville Community Strategic Plan 2021. The streets of Hurstville came to life with four video installations and a live performance and invoked the architecture of Hurstville as a backdrop to the stories of the area. The poetic and visually arresting display addressed the concerns such as the increase in high-rise development, traffic congestion and increased population and how these concerns affect Hurstville’s sense of connectedness. Council received, together with the Community Strategic Plan 2021 a ‘highly commended’ LGMA Management Excellence Award in Engaging and Serving Communities.

- **Platform Urban Art Prize – Public Art Program with Developers**

The aim of Platform is to provide a springboard for emerging and established artists to showcase their work in the St George region. Artists are annually invited to submit proposals for high quality urban artworks to be displayed within and surrounding the bustling Hurstville Central Shopping Centre. The theme Platform strives for thought-provoking, creative and entertaining urban artworks. Artists were encouraged to use the blank canvas of Hurstville Central Shopping Centre as inspiration to create a striking and unique artwork representing the vibrancy and colour of our wonderful city.

5. Advanced skills in strategic planning and policy development

Council has completed a number of plans, planning studies and policies to inform planning decisions in the Hurstville LGA, through zoning and development standards. The plans guide the form and location of new developments, and protect open space and environmentally-sensitive areas. These documents align with standards set by the NSW Government to ensure councils across the State use clear and consistent planning language. A number of significant projects show that Council has the requisite advanced skills in strategic planning and policy development.

- **Community Strategic Planning**

The Hurstville Community Strategic Plan 2021 was the long-term vision for Hurstville City developed for the community by the community. Community inputs were received through 1650 responses either through statistically validated telephone surveys, on-line or a hard copy surveys. Council received ‘highly commended’ LGMA Management Excellence Award in Engaging and Serving Communities. Council works effectively with other councils, Federal and State governments, other stakeholders and the community in achieving the Community’s Vision.

Council’s annual rolling 4-year Delivery Program and 1-year Operational Plan together with 10-year Resourcing Strategies articulate how Council gives effect to the Community Strategic Plan.

A review of the Hurstville Community Strategic Plan 2021 involving telephone interviews was conducted recently by Woolcott Research with 400 residents and 100 businesses. The results showed high satisfaction with Council by both the residents (82%) and businesses (80%) and up by 4% and 6% respectively from the last survey. The findings revealed that the ten issue categories identified as priorities in 2011 are still considered to be the main priorities in 2014. As previously the community’s

concern are parking, traffic flow and increasing population. Council is clearly delivering the community priority requirements.

- **Strategic Planning Hurstville Local Environmental Plan 2012**

Council has completed a comprehensive review of its planning controls and prepared a new Local Environmental Plan (LEP) for the Local Government Area in accordance with the State Government's Standard Instrument LEP program. The Hurstville LEP 2012 was completed on time and was made by the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure on 7 December 2012. As part of this work, Council undertook additional, non-statutory consultation with the community in the form of discussion papers (based on land use zones). These discussion papers informed the preparation of the new planning scheme and supplemented the formal public exhibition of the LEP which was undertaken in January and February 2012.

- **Hurstville Community-Based Heritage Study Review**

Council was advised by the NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure to undertake a comprehensive Heritage Review of Hurstville LGA and incorporate its outcomes as an amendment to the Hurstville LEP 2012. Council along with a heritage consultant and Heritage Study Working Group prepared a Community-based Heritage Study Review (Heritage Review) over 2011-2013 in accordance with the Guidelines of NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (Heritage Office).

Council prepared a Planning Proposal to update Schedule 5: Environmental Heritage and the Heritage Maps of Hurstville LEP 2012 and undertook public exhibition of the Planning Proposal from 18 July to 16 August 2013. On 16 October 2013, Council adopted the Community Based Heritage Study and Planning Proposal to include 31 new heritage items and remove two existing heritage items from the heritage list of Hurstville LEP 2012.

Council worked closely with the Department on finalising Hurstville LEP 2012 (Amendment No.2) which was made on Friday, 4 April 2014.

- **Hurstville Employment Lands Study**

On 23 September 2014, Council engaged consultants to prepare the Hurstville LGA Employment Lands Study. The Study will determine the strategic direction for Hurstville's employment lands into the future and is reviewing all employment lands zoned B1 Neighbourhood Centre, B2 Local Centre and IN2 Light Industrial under the Hurstville LEP 2012.

The Study is being undertaken in two stages and is due for completion in September 2015.

- **Local Planning Panel**

Council's Manager Strategic Planning, Ms Carina Gregory, was appointed in 2011 by the former Minister for Planning, the Hon. Brad Hazzard MP, as a Local Government representative to the Local Planning Panel. The Minister established a Local Planning Panel to increase local government involvement in the plan-making process and improve the flexible delivery of the Standard Instrument Local Environmental Plan (SILEP) program.

- **St George Design Review Panel**

Hurstville Council is involved in the joint management and funding of the St George Design Review Panel comprising of renowned architects and landscape architects. The Panel members review major Development Applications, LEPs and Planning Proposals within the Councils of Hurstville, Kogarah and Rockdale; with the aim to provide consistent guidelines on these matters. The Panel is jointly funded by the three (3) Councils and each Council shares the management role. It meets monthly or more regularly if the need arises, with the Panel venues rotating between the Councils. It demonstrates a collaborative approach to major development matters within the St George Region, and results in clear and consistent advice to the public/developers within that region.

- **Strategic Asset Management Plans**

Council holds a significant portfolio of community infrastructure assets under its care and control. These infrastructure assets have a replacement value exceeding \$620 million and form an integral part of the services provided to the Hurstville community. A large proportion of these assets, including roads, footpaths, stormwater drainage, parks and recreation and buildings, have been in existence for many years. As these assets continue to age and reach the end of their useful life their subsequent renewal presents a financial challenge for Council.

Council's strategic asset management planning is a comprehensive process to ensure that assets are managed and maintained in a way that enables affordable services from infrastructure to be provided in an economically optimal way. Council's Strategic Asset Management Plan assists in improving the way it delivers services from infrastructure and fits with Council's vision for the future as outlined in the Hurstville Community Strategic Plan 2025. The SAMP demonstrates that Council is well placed to maintain current service levels for the next ten years at forecast funding levels.

In accordance with the IPWEA NAMS.PLUS Asset Management model, a series of individual asset plans were developed for key asset areas including Buildings, Parks & Open Space, Stormwater and Transport. The plans detail information about infrastructure assets including actions required to provide an agreed level of service in the most cost effective manner. To ensure that these plans are based on community expectations, a series of community feedback sessions were conducted in 2015 to benchmark the community's satisfactory level of service for each asset class. On the whole it demonstrated that ratepayers felt that all of the services provided by Council's infrastructure assets are important and they were generally satisfied with the current condition and service provided.

- **Recreation Needs Study**

Council has recently prepared an Open Space, Recreation, Community Facility and Library Strategy which provides Council with a framework for the planning and provision of open space, recreation, community facilities and libraries to the year 2031 in order to be able to respond to the increase in population expected in the Local Government area.

The Strategy also informs the development of a Section 94 Development Contributions Plan that will enable Council to Levy contributions for both Hurstville City Centre precinct and the remainder of the Hurstville LGA.

Council has already begun implementing this strategy by providing \$800,000 from S94 funds to match the \$200,000 secured from the State Government to build a cycle/walking track at Gannons Park in 2015/16 and the preparation of a Plan of management for Penshurst Park to build a Youth Centre, Synthetic playing fields, playgrounds, basketball Courts and an indoor cricket Centre at an estimated cost of \$9M to be commenced in 2015/16.

6. Effective regional collaboration

Collaboration with other councils is the key to delivering innovative, cost-efficient services to the community. Council strikes a careful balance between accomplishing economies of scale through local government alliances and providing accessible, responsive and relevant services at the grassroots level. Collaborative initiatives include:

- **Joint Waste Contract**

A notable example of collaboration is the joint regional waste contract between Hurstville, Kogarah and Rockdale Councils which will save each jurisdiction around \$1.6 million annually or \$60.00 per household per annum or more than \$12.2 million over the 7.7 years of the Contract. This translates to a 35% reduction on previous costs. This contract was the first of its kind and has been showcased at conferences in Sydney, Singapore, Coffs Harbour and Melbourne, as well as, winning an International Quality and Productivity Centre Alliance (IQPC) for Excellence in Services/Operations/Maintenance Alliances Award and the Local Government Sustainability Award.

- **Recycling Centre**

The Community Recycling Centre to be constructed in Hurstville will be the first in Southern Sydney. It will collect and dispose of paints, oils, batteries and light globes in addition to the current chemical and e-waste collection. This will significantly increase Council's diversion rate and has the potential to become a regional facility.

- **Technology to Promote Consistent Practice**

Hurstville Council advocates for consistent practice through the provision of technology. Hurstville is one of the first Councils in Australia seeking a demonstrated integrated enterprise system to drive a proven practice approach. The implementation of this integrated system will save thousands of dollars and time creating work-arounds, linking less-compatible platforms and customisation. By integrating Technology One and other compatible systems together with streamlining business processes Council is achieving higher efficiencies and effectiveness. Other Councils can now benefit from our experiences at lower costs.

- **Georges River Combined Councils Committee (GRCCC)**

Hurstville hosts and manages the Georges River Combined Councils Committee (GRCCC) which is an incorporated association of 9 local government councils within the Georges River Catchment. It co-ordinates and manages regional environmental programs most with a significant on-ground work component. Participation and support of the GRCCC delivers important economies of scale for Council. Eg. Riverkeeper Program large scale rubbish collection (over 120 tonne per annum) and bush regeneration works. GRCCC co-ordinates weekly the work of 12 regional Green Army, 7 Corrective

Services labour and Aboriginal Riverkeeper teams. The Aboriginal Riverkeeper Program has delivered multiple benefits including environmental outcomes on the ground and social/cultural development through regional engagement with local Aboriginal Land Councils and councils' Aboriginal Advisory Groups.

- *The GRCCC's Riverhealth Program*

The GRCCC's Riverhealth Program undertakes water quality monitoring and macro-invertebrate sampling and vegetation assessments at over 50 sites across the councils and several of them are within the Hurstville LGA. The data is used to determine the health of the River at key locations and informs management action. For each Council to run its own program would collectively cost much more than contributing to one program administered by the GRCCC at Hurstville.

- *Other Collaborations*

Other collaborations include:

- *Partnership with the University of Wollongong – Internship project, Consortia and Intercept survey with 6 other public libraries across NSW.*
- *Boundary adjustment between Canterbury City Council and Hurstville City Council in October 2011, bringing approximately 30 new residences into the local government area and refining Council's boundary along the M5 Motorway.*
- *Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils' joint tender for 17 Councils via Procurement Australia for Electricity and Street lighting which is saving the Council \$90k annually.*

7. Credibility for more effective advocacy

Council may advocate on its own or joins with other Councils, SSROC, adjoining authorities, etc as and when required. Some of ways Council has influenced decisions are:

- *Local Government Roads and Maritime Services Liaison Committee*

Council's Director Service Delivery is the Chair of the RMS/Local Government Liaison Committee which discusses the distribution of RMS funds for the Repair, Rehabilitation and Enhancement Programs each year.

- *Georges River Combined Councils Committee (GRCCC).*

Hurstville Council hosts and leads the Georges River Combined Councils Committee. GRCCC Programs such as the Riverkeeper Program, River Health Program, Estuary Management Program are informed by cross -council cluster groups comprising professional staff from each of the 9 Councils with specific relevant technical skills to develop regional advocacy positions for significant environmental issues, for example, NSW Governments 10/50 Vegetation legislation review, reviewing EIS submission to the Department of Planning on Moorebank Intermodal Terminal, submission to the EPA on Sydney Water license reviews and preparing a submission to the Australian Senate inquiry into the importance of Stormwater Harvesting.

8. Capable partner for State and Federal agencies

Council has been able to obtain grants and work effectively with both State and Federal agencies as can be seen from the some of the projects described above and below.

- *Hurstville Bus Interchange*

Council managed and completed the new \$30 million Bus/Rail Interchange and Pedestrian Access Ramp in Hurstville Central Business District. Council worked closely with State Government, Sydney Rail, RMS and Kogarah Council to deliver this project. The interchange and ramp have improved co-ordination of local buses, and provide easy access to the railway station, Civic Precinct and Westfield, along with better and safer pedestrian activity along Forest Road.

- *Jubilee Park Development*

In 2012, Hurstville City Council applied for the Local Infrastructure Renewal Scheme loan to facilitate the construction of a new community centre at Jubilee Park, Mortdale. The \$5 million loan has ensured that Council construct a new community centre (including child care) and public hall to house Mortdale Community Services who occupied a smaller Council owned building nearby. The loan has also secured funds to undertake extensive improvement works on the neighbouring parkland that includes a children's adventure playground, walking and bicycle tracks, BBQs, shelters and outdoor fitness equipment.

- *Lily Street Bridge*

Traffic flow at the Lily Street Bridge over railway corridor has been operating at capacity during morning and afternoon peak periods for almost two decades and was confirmed in 2012, when traffic around Hurstville City Centre was modelled. Further traffic modelling has demonstrated that widening the Lily Street Bridge over railway corridor to accommodate three southbound lanes and one northbound lane would improve traffic conditions within the Hurstville City Centre by reducing traffic congestion. This in turn will reduce potential safety risks and enhance the reliability of the road network. The estimated cost of this project is \$13 million. Following extensive representations to the State Government, Council successfully secured funding in the 2013 State Budget to widen the Lily Street Bridge. Accordingly, Sydney Trains in partnership with Hurstville City Council, Kogarah City Council and Roads & Maritime Services has commenced construction works on this project. The widening of the bridge is scheduled to be completed by the end of June 2016. On completion, the bridge will facilitate three southbound traffic lanes and one northbound lane.

- *Coastal Zone Management*

GRCCC and Hurstville Council as co-hosts led the development of a Coastal Zone Management Plan (CZMP) for the Georges River by 7 Georges River Councils (Hurstville, Liverpool, Bankstown, Rockdale, Sutherland, Kogarah, Liverpool and Fairfield) in partnership with state agencies. The plan has been formally adopted by all 7 Councils and was certified by the NSW Environment Minister in 2015. The plan will guide agreed actions by Councils to restore and protect the estuary over the next 5 years.

- *Improvement Projects by Nine Georges River Councils*

Hurstville Council as host council to the GRCCC is facilitating the submission of on-ground water quality improvement projects by 9 Georges River Councils to be included in the IPART submission currently being prepared by Sydney Water for the development of a Georges River Improvement Plan. If approved by IPART, Sydney Water will receive \$18 million dollars to fund joint projects with participating Georges River Councils.

- *Peakhurst Light Industrial Stormwater Harvesting Project*

Hurstville Council has partnered with State and Federal Government agencies to fund numerous large scale water quality improvement projects including the \$2.6 million Peakhurst Light Industrial Stormwater Harvesting Project which since its completion has negated the need for potable (mains) water for the irrigation of the golf course. It is now entirely irrigated by treated stormwater.

- *Rain Gardens*

Hurstville Council partnered with the Federal Government and Cooks River Alliance (a partnership of 8 councils in the Cooks River) and GRCCC to fund several large rain gardens throughout the local government areas including Bundara Reserve and the soon to be constructed Butler Reserve Raingarden in the Hurstville LGA.

- *Restoration Works at Lime Kiln Bay at Oatley*

Hurstville Council has received several grants from the NSW Government, Greater Sydney Local Land Services and Environmental trust (totalling \$170,000) to assist Council to undertake wetland restoration works at Lime Kiln Bay at Oatley. Apart from constructing the wetland to treat stormwater it will be a highly valued community recreation area.

9. Resources to cope with complex and unexpected change

There have been many instances when Council has coped with complex and unexpected changes and some of which have been as a result of cost shifting and others arose or can arise from adverse economic impacts. They include:

- *Collateral Debt Obligations (CDOs)*

The Global Financial Crisis in 2008 was a major and unexpected event which significantly impacted Hurstville City Council's investment portfolio. Collateralised Debt Obligations made up \$18 million of Council's funds at the time of the Lehman Brothers bankruptcy. Through a series of hold-to-maturity and divestment decisions coupled with legal actions, the realised loss on these CDOs was limited to \$11 million. Following the successful IMF-funded class action legal suit against Lehman Brothers Australia, liquidators PPB are about to release a recovery to claimants of an estimated 40 – 50 cents on the dollar of admitted losses. Throughout the ensuing years from the GFC until now, Hurstville City Council was able to maintain all on-going services, facilities and projects without access to these monies or recourse to borrowing for operational needs. Managing the various investment decisions and legal actions was undertaken by Council staff in consultation with independent advisors, CPG Research & Advisory, without incurring additional costs for external consultants and lawyers.

- **Business Continuity Plans**

Hurstville Council maintains the currency of the Business Continuity Plans as a way of ensuring that in the event of disasters Council is able to get back to business as usual within a minimum of time and service disruptions. Council continues to meet with other councils to discuss and explore key design elements which would promote a consistent approach across LGAs.

- **Stormwater Harvesting Schemes**

Hurstville's strategic approach to water management and the introduction of stormwater harvesting schemes at key recreational areas (Hurstville Golf Course, Evatt Park and Gannon's Park) will secure a long term reliable non-potable water supply to irrigate these key recreational areas, conserving water, saving significant money and protecting the environment.

10. High quality political and managerial leadership

Report cards on Hurstville Council together with streamlining business and decision making processes, and tailored Council-based training show that Council has a high quality political and managerial leadership.

- **Office of Local Government Better Practice**

The Office of Local Government (OLG) undertook a recent review of Council practices and stated "Overall, the review team finds that Hurstville City Council is a well-managed and efficient local government authority". It goes onto say "Council appears to have a good track record in working with its diverse community to plan and deliver services. A clear vision has been set....". In conclusion the report states "Hurstville City Council has had an overarching plan to become an Employer of Choice and effectively manage its employees since 2007. Its workforce is diverse and appears to be representative of the broader community it serves." There were 15 areas where the OLG identified Council as "exceeding good practice". Council appears to take a strategic and integrated approach to managing its finances and assets. Overall, the review team observed staff members to be enthusiastic, dedicated and skilled in their area of expertise. The key findings stated that Council operates professionally and has demonstrated a number of areas where it is considered 'best practice' in the industry including the Community Strategic Plan 2021, Leader for Success Program and its Customer Service Charter.

- **Councillor Development**

Since being awarded the LGMA Governance Excellence in Local Government in 2009 for the Councillor Induction Program, Council has continued to develop and refine a comprehensive induction program and supporting information, quickly developing newly elected Councillors and keeping returning Councillors up-to-date with Local Government changes. Council's annual Strategic Planning weekend, an intensive review of Council's projects, priorities and emerging issues has been invaluable in keeping Councillors conversant with and connected to the Community Strategic Plan. Councillors are regularly provided with internal workshops through which they can develop their knowledge across areas such as Planning and Finance, allowing them to make informed and considered decisions.

- **Councillor Portal**

The Councillors' Portal, a confidential intranet for the Councillors, allows Councillors to be immediately appraised of emerging issues, provide background and is a ready, on-going resource. The Portal also allows Councillors to submit Notices of Motion, Rescission Motions and Questions with Notice as well as access to the Agenda, Business Papers and past Minutes. The Portal has negated the requirement for paper deliveries to Councillors and maintains the confidentiality of Council information. In 2009 Council received a Local Government Managers Australia Management Excellence Award for Governance Excellence in Local Government. The Award specifically recognised Council's work in its Enabling Councillors for Fully-Informed Decision Making Project. The then Division of Local Government (DLG) recognised Councils achievement as a "Better Practice". The program received much interest across the local government sector and still is a leading example of how to undertake the nurturing of Councillors elected to represent their community in an efficient, effective and progressive framework in working in an electronic age.

- **Electronic Council Chambers**

In 2014, Council's electronic Council Chambers was shortlisted for the LGMA NSW Management Excellence Awards. Paper is not used within the Council Chambers as Councillors and staff use computers to access the Agenda and Business Papers. The digital setup allows information to be immediately shared with Councillors, and allows staff to access information with ease. The Motion under debate is projected onto 4 screens around the Chambers, which has been well received by the public and provides clarity in decision-making. An electronic voting system has continued the theme of clarity and transparency, as everyone can see the outcome of a vote and this is automatically recorded and can be later referenced.

- **Quarterly Program Reviews**

Quarterly reviews are a way to ensure that Council is on track in delivering its annual programs. Program Managers complete their progress report at the end of each quarter for that period against the Community Strategic Plan, Delivery Program and Budget. The Corporate Planning portal was setup in SharePoint to report in a fully integrated way on the three tiers of reporting and obviating the need to enter information more than once. The achievements, challenges and outlook from each Program Manager are reviewed by the General Manager, Directors, Finance and Corporate Planning and the Full Year Financial Forecast updated as the Current Budget. A number of Councils have shown interest in this process and have visited Hurstville Council to understand the technical system and the business processes underpinning the management model as a planning and reporting tool.

- **Executive Committee Focus**

The Executive Committee meets twice a month, with a rotating roster of focus throughout the year. The focussed meetings, which include Customers & Communication; Governance & Risk; Projects & Processes; Strategic Asset Management; Corporate & Financial Performance; and People & Leadership allow the Executive and key staff for the area of focus to explore the topics, be briefed on emerging issues and provide strategic guidance and direction.