



New South Wales  
Treasury Corporation

11 April 2013

The General Manager  
Hunter's Hill Council  
Town Hall, 22 Alexandra Street,  
Hunters Hill NSW 2110

Dear Sir/Madam,

#### **Financial Assessment of NSW Councils**

As part of TCorp's work for the Independent Review Panel chaired by Professor Graham Sansom, New South Wales Treasury Corporation (TCorp) has undertaken an assessment of the financial capacity and sustainability of all 152 Councils in New South Wales. Each Council has received, or is about to receive, a report prepared by TCorp that provides an assessment of the following key areas:

- The financial capacity of the Council to undertake additional borrowings
- The long term sustainability of the Council
- The financial performance of the Council in comparison to a range of similar Councils and measured against prudent benchmarks

In addition, TCorp has also prepared a Financial Sustainability Rating (FSR) and Outlook for each Council. These FSRs and Outlooks have been developed by TCorp to provide an overall position of the sustainability of Councils when compared with each other Council within NSW.

The Appendix attached to this letter provides details of the seven FSR categories and the three Outlook categories that have been used in arriving at the assessed FSR and Outlook of each Council.

The Council has been assessed as:

FSR                      Moderate

Outlook                Neutral

The FSR of each Council has been determined based on TCorp's review and consideration of the historical and forecast financial results and against a set of benchmark indicators. TCorp has categorised the 10 benchmark ratios into four broad categories and then considered the relative importance of each category in terms of a Council's financial capacity and sustainability. The category of financial flexibility has been assigned a greater weighting because it measures two key measures for sustainability, the Council's revenue raising capacity, and its ability to sustain financial



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shocks, which are important factors for sustainability. As a Council's core servicing function and main asset is its infrastructure, its asset renewal and capital works program is an important factor in its long term sustainability. Debt servicing has been given the least weighting because most Councils are lowly geared.

The Outlook is TCorp's assessment of the potential movement of a Council's FSR within the next three years. A Positive Outlook indicates that a Council's FSR is likely to improve in the short term, whilst a Neutral Outlook indicates that the FSR is likely to remain unchanged. A Negative Outlook indicates that a Council's FSR is more likely to deteriorate and is a sign of a general weakening in performance and sustainability.

For example, a Council with a FSR of Moderate and an Outlook of Negative, is assessed as being in a deteriorating position or at risk of being downgraded from Moderate to Weak. As TCorp considers a FSR of lower than Moderate to be at much greater risk of being unsustainable, Councils in this position need to be considering options for addressing the areas of poor performance that are contributing to Council's assessed FSR and Outlook.

The Outlook is TCorp's current assessment of the potential movement of a Council's FSR and will change as a Council undertakes actions to reduce perceived risks, such as completing Asset Management Plans, or obtaining approval for a special rate variation to increase investment in renewal capital expenditure.

TCorp's Report to the Independent Review Panel is expected to be released in mid-April and the FSR and Outlook for each Council will be included in TCorp's Report.

TCorp would be happy to discuss with you any questions that you may have in regard to the assessed FSR or Outlook for the Council.

Yours Sincerely  
New South Wales Treasury Corporation



Kevin Pugh  
Senior Manager Corporate Finance