



DRAFT RESOURCING STRATEGY 2018-2028

May 2018



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About this Strategy

Councils in New South Wales are required under the *Local Government Act, 1993* to prepare a suite of documents that form the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework. The Resourcing Strategy is one of these documents. It details how the strategic aspirations of Ku-ring-gai can be achieved in terms of time, money, people and assets. The Resourcing Strategy spans ten years. Its component parts are a:

- 10 year Long Term Financial Plan;
- 10 year Asset Management Strategy; and
- 10 year Workforce Strategy.

The Resourcing Strategy is the link between the long term Community Strategic Plan (CSP) and the medium term Delivery Program. It is prepared following each Council election. It is developed concurrently with the other plans in the IP&R framework (see diagram below). The Resourcing Strategy is designed to be a living document to reflect changing financial and asset information. Initiatives within the Resourcing Strategy will be reviewed annually to ensure relevance in the changing environment and to incorporate any community feedback.



Council's role

It is Council's responsibility to develop the Resourcing Strategy to show how it will allocate its resources to deliver the objectives and strategies identified in the Community Strategic Plan. Councils do not have full responsibility for implementing or resourcing all the community aspirations identified in the Community Strategic Plan. Other stakeholders, such as state agencies, non-government organisations, community groups and individuals also have a role to play in delivering these outcomes. The Resourcing Strategy process provides an opportunity to quantify what Council's contribution will be.

The Resourcing Strategy is difficult to prepare due to its iterative and integrated nature. The community and Council need basic information about assets and their condition to help inform its priority setting, but the final asset management strategy can't be adopted until the Community Strategic Plan has been finalised. The CSP can't be finalised until financial projections and rating implications have been prepared and discussed with the community. The Long Term Financial Plan will not take on a level of detail until the Delivery Program and Operational Plans are developed. The documents are prepared with the best available information but are designed to be dynamic to reflect changing priorities.

Supporting documents

Council adopted Community Strategic Plan – *Our Ku-ring-gai 2038* is a 20-year blueprint for the future of the Ku-ring-gai local government area (LGA). It is both a process and a document designed to bring together the community to set goals and aspirations for the future and to plan how to go about achieving those goals. It was informed by the current activities of council, future aspirations of residents, businesses, Councillors and State and regional directions. The CSP provides Council with the strategic direction to align its policies, programs and services. It will also act as a guide for other organisations and individuals in planning and delivering services. The plan addresses the community's issues to achieve the long term objectives under the following themes:

1. Community, People and Culture.
2. Natural Environment.
3. Places, Spaces and Infrastructure.
4. Local Economy and Employment.
5. Access, Traffic and Transport.
6. Leadership and Governance.

Long Term Financial Plan

The first part of the Resourcing Strategy consists of Council's Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP). The LTFP is Council's ten-year financial planning document and the emphasis is on long term financial sustainability. Financial sustainability is one of the key issues facing local government due to several contributing factors including cost shifting from other levels of government, ageing infrastructure and constraints on revenue growth. A financially sustainable Council is one that has the ability to fund ongoing service delivery and renew and replace assets without imposing excessive debt or rate increases on future generations. This is an important document, which will test the community aspirations and goals against financial realities. Contained in this plan are:

- assumptions used to develop the plan;
- financial modelling for different scenarios;
- projected income and expenditure, balance sheet and cash-flow statements; and
- methods of monitoring financial performance.

Balancing expectations, uncertainty of future revenue and expenditure forecasts is one of the most challenging aspects of the financial planning process. As such, the longer the planning horizon, the more general the plan will be in the later years. Every effort has been taken to present the most current estimates and project scopes to be included in this plan.

Current state of Council's Finances

Ku-ring-gai Council is in a sound financial position. The Net Operating Result for 2016/17 was a surplus of \$33.14 million after allowing for the depreciation expense on Council's \$1.1 billion portfolio of depreciable assets such as roads, footpaths, drains, buildings and others. If capital grants and contributions are excluded, the operating result for 2016/17 remained in surplus, with a result of \$18.82 million. The available working capital for 2016/17 was \$4.6 million (excluding FAG grant received in advance) which is in line with the target identified in the adopted Long Term Financial Plan.

The 2018/19 budget forecasts an operating surplus of \$26.9 million after allowing for depreciation. If capital grants and contributions are excluded, the operating result remains in surplus, with a result of \$6.6 million. This is consistent with Council's LTFP which provides a framework to achieve continued operating surpluses and maintain healthy levels of working capital and reserves. Loan borrowing is moderate, and manageable and will be substantially repaid over the life of the plan from identified sources of repayments in line with Council's new funding strategy.

Asset Management Strategy

The second part of the Resourcing Strategy deals with asset management planning, in particular the Council's:

- Asset Management Policy (AMP); and
- Asset Management Strategy (AMS).

The Asset Management Strategy is supported by Asset Management Plans for each asset class. Together, these documents and our processes, data and systems (including asset registers and technical databases) make up Council's Asset Management Framework.

The revised Asset Management Strategy 2018-2028 included in this document has been developed with input from Council and the community. The Strategy demonstrates to Ku-ring-gai residents and stakeholders how Council's asset portfolio supports the service delivery needs of the community both now and into the future (10 years). The revised Strategy also includes an Asset Management Improvement Plan to ensure that organisational practices and procedures are continually improved.

The Strategy establishes the current condition and value of all assets; the preferred condition and level of service of all assets; and the systems, resources, processes and financing options to achieve the preferred condition and level of service.

Asset Portfolio

The replacement value of Council's Infrastructure assets is \$1.1billion¹. The carrying amount (written down value) is \$669 million. Infrastructure assets include:

- roads and transport (roads, footpaths, kerb and gutters, car parks, road structure and street furniture and bridges);
- buildings (non-specialised and specialised I);
- stormwater drainage; and
- recreation facilities (sports fields, parks, bushland).

¹ *Ku-ring-gai Council's Annual Report 2016-2017 – Financial Statements – Special Schedule No. 7 – Report on Infrastructure Assets*

Workforce Management Strategy

The third and final part of the Resourcing Strategy is the Workforce Management Strategy (WS). An effective Workforce Management Strategy provides a systematic framework for developing organisational capability in order to meet emerging needs and effectively respond to unexpected change.

Council's Workforce Management Strategy provides a link between operational and strategic objectives and considers the associated workforce implications. In addressing the workforce requirements for Council's Delivery Program, this strategy spans ten years and considers potential resourcing and knowledge requirements.



Gordon Library

About Ku-ring-gai

The Ku-ring-gai local government area (LGA) is 85 square kilometres and located 16 kilometres from Sydney CBD. Our 'Ku-ring-gai' name is derived from the Guringai people, the traditional owners of the land. The area is predominantly residential with 27% of the dwellings being medium or high density, compared to 44% in Greater Sydney.

The area's unique natural landscape differentiates Ku-ring-gai from other parts of Sydney as there are significant areas of park and bushland with very little commercial, and no industrial, land use. Ku-ring-gai has a unique natural setting and diverse fauna and flora. The extent of bushland and biodiversity of the area is unique for a local government area situated so close to the centre of Sydney's central business district. The established tree canopy in Ku-ring-gai is a defining characteristic.

Historically, Ku-ring-gai's urban areas developed as a series of villages along the main ridgelines, each with their own identity, and always bounded by or close to large tracts of natural bushland and national parks. Over time subdivision and residential development have connected the villages into larger suburbs, although their distinct characteristics still largely remain intact. The nine distinct suburbs are Gordon, Killara, Lindfield, Pymble, Roseville, St Ives, Turramurra, Wahroonga and Warrawee.

Today, with the increasing population and redevelopment of established areas, there is a greater focus on defining and preserving those visual landscapes and built characteristics that make Ku-ring-gai unique and attractive to residents and visitors.

The former Sydney Metropolitan Strategy (2036) and North Subregion Strategy (2008) set a target of 10,000 additional dwellings in Ku-ring-gai by 2036. Council accommodated this growth in its Local Centres and Principal LEPs.

A Plan for Growing Sydney, the new metropolitan strategy, was released by the NSW Government in December 2014. Then in November 2016, the Greater Sydney Commission put on public exhibition the forty year vision, *Towards Our Greater Sydney 2056*, and the first ever twenty year draft District Plans, one for each of Greater Sydney's six Districts. Ku-ring-gai is located in the North District.

Our Greater Sydney 2056 - North District Plan establishes 0-5 year housing targets for each of the local councils in the North District. Ku-ring-gai's target is 4,000 dwellings, which is

already built into Council's planning instruments as a consequence of previous obligations to meeting metropolitan planning dwelling targets. Beyond this, the Greater Sydney Region Plan – A Metropolis of Three Cities sets a district 20 year strategic housing target of 92,000. All councils in the North District are required to develop 6-10 year housing targets which will contribute to this longer term target

The goal of these Plans is to have well-coordinated, integrated and effective planning for land use, transport and infrastructure. The District Plans set out the opportunities, priorities and actions, and provide the means by which the Greater Sydney Region Plan, *A Plan for Growing Sydney* can be put into action at a local level. At a local planning level it is anticipated that this will result in even more growth in medium and high-density development, particularly centred around the rail corridor.

Ku-ring-gai's local government area is comparatively well educated and affluent with high levels of employment. Housing choice and affordability are key social issues. Ku-ring-gai was ranked Australia's most advantaged local government area according to the 2016 Census of Population and Housing data (SEIFA)² with residents being well educated, affluent and having high levels of employment. Housing choice and affordability continue to be key social issues for the area.

Key demographic features of the area include:

- Ku-ring-gai's estimated resident population was 123,143 in 2016, up from 120,978 in 2014;
- the projected population by 2038 is expected to be 144,085 which is a project increase of 17%;
- the area is predominantly residential with 72.4% in detached dwellings, 19% in high rise dwellings and 8.4% in medium density dwellings;
- cultural diversity is also increasing consistent with trends across Greater Sydney. New residents are mainly from Chinese and Korean backgrounds along with residents from the United Kingdom, South Africa and Europe;
- there is 27.7% of the population speak a language other than English at home and 38.9% of residents are born overseas;

² Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) is a product developed by the ABS that ranks areas in Australia according to relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage. The indexes are based on information from the five-yearly Census.

- Ku-ring-gai's demographic profile shows a fairly unique age profile for Sydney with substantial numbers of older people (higher than Greater Sydney 2016) and families with children aged 0 -17 years compared to the average for Greater Sydney;
- there is a significantly smaller proportion of young working age (25-34 years) at 8.2% compared to 16.1% in Greater Sydney; and
- there are more couple families with children at 46%, compared with 35% in Greater Sydney.



Ku-ring-gai Twilight Concert, 2017



Angophora hispida buds, David Wilks

Key assumptions

In order to project future resource requirements, Council has to make assumptions about the key impacts and drivers that will influence Council's finances, assets and workforce into the future. High level assumptions over the 10 year period include:

- the number of rateable properties in Ku-ring-gai is expected to increase from 42,464 to approximately 48,284 by 2028;
- business as usual – services and service levels will remain at similar levels unless otherwise identified;
- efficiencies – Council must continually investigate and adopt service delivery and process efficiencies so that rates remain within capped levels;
- strategic direction – the broad themes and aspirations in the Community Strategic Plan - *Our Ku-ring-gai 2038* will be regularly reviewed but are unlikely to change significantly over time;
- external funding – fixed term external grant funding such as the Waste Less, Recycle More (Waste and Resource Recovery Initiative) or our Environmental Special Rate Variation (SRV) may cease in the future at which point delivery of the associated programs may finish. However, Council's intention is to apply for a permanent continuation of the Environmental Levy which is detailed in the Long Term Financial Plan under scenario planning.
- infrastructure – we must prioritise funding for asset renewal based on community consultation and technical assessment; and
- financial sustainability – Council seeks to be financially sustainable, which means that it must achieve a fully funded operational position, maintain sufficient cash reserves, have a fully funded capital program and maintain its asset base.

More specific income and expenditure assumptions are listed in the LTFP. Key income assumptions include:

- inflation (CPI) of 2.4% per annum is applied across all years;
- the annual rates increase is limited to the rates pegging amount of 2.3% for 2018/19 and 2.5% (set by Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART)) across all other years. Council's dependence on rates and annual charges is approximately 52%;
- rates growth is expected to increase by 0.7% per annum across all years through increased development;
- user charges and fees are expected to increase by an average of 2.4% per annum. Council derives approximately 13% of total income from user charges and fees;

- total income is forecast to increase by an average of 3% per annum;
- new infrastructure to support population growth will be funded by s94 contributions where possible;
- proceeds from asset sales over future years will be used in part to fund future assets renewal program. Assets sales are also required to fund Council's co-contribution for developer contribution funded works;
- current outstanding loan will be discharged over time from net revenue generated from leasing out the new operational building.

Key challenges

Rate pegging

Council's ability to align funding with expenditure is restrained by 'rate pegging', which means that the annual increase in rating revenue is determined by an external body, namely the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART). Over half of Council's income is dependent on rates.

Special rates variations

There are two Special Rate Variations (SRV) projected in the LTFP. These are:

1. The SRV – Infrastructure: In 2014, Council successfully obtained a continuation of the SRV for Infrastructure in perpetuity. Based on the result of the community engagement a resounding 81% of ratepayers supported continuing the SRV for local roads improvements.
2. The SRV – Environmental (Environmental Levy): Ku-ring-gai Council's Environmental Levy program, in place since 2005, funds the annual delivery of approximately \$2.8 million of environmental initiatives and programs within the Ku-ring-gai local government area (LGA). This has enabled delivery of new and enhanced environmental programs and initiatives that would not otherwise be possible within Council's ordinary budget. The Environmental Levy is due to expire 30 June 2019, at which time the environmental programs and initiatives reliant on Levy funding will cease, if the Levy is not renewed. At its Ordinary Meeting of 13 June 2017, Council resolved to prepare a Special Rate Variation application under section 508(2) of the Local Government Act 1993 for the permanent continuation of the Environmental Levy at the amount currently paid by Ku-ring-gai ratepayers. This amount is a rate of five (5) per cent above the ordinary rate, if successful would continue from 1 July 2019. Council's intention is to seek renewal of this SRV.

Detailed scenarios have been developed in the LTFP to model and analyse the impact of continuation of the environmental levy.

Growth

With population growth, there will be an increasing demand for new and enhanced assets and services. Council spends in the range of \$14 to 18 million (excluding the Local Centre Major Projects) each year on upgrading and creating new assets. This is predominantly funded through development contributions. These assets will require maintenance and renewal in future years, and as cultural diversity and our ageing population increases, there will be competing demands for services, programs and access to community facilities.

Condition of our Assets

Maintaining our infrastructure assets to an acceptable condition was a key challenge for Council. In 2014 community consultation identified roads, footpaths and stormwater drainage as the main Council service areas in need of additional resource allocation, with community building, parks and playgrounds also mentioned as priorities.

Since obtaining the SRV for roads Council has been able to invest heavily into local roads and has seen great results with a reported 73% of roads assets in condition 3 or better³.

Throughout 2017/18 Council staff with the assistance of an independent consultant revised the technical and financial infrastructure data to review the condition of our assets and to ensure that adequate funding was being allocated to maintenance and renewal.

Infrastructure backlog

Funding shortfalls for infrastructure asset renewal is a well-documented problem facing local government.

In 2016/17 Council's Special Schedule 7 reported the infrastructure backlog for all assets classes at \$27 million. As a result of the review and changes to asset conditions and investment of additional funding into asset renewal the revised forecast backlog by end of 2018/19 will have reduced to \$16 million.

Council staff have undertaken further work and are formulating new funding strategies and renewal and maintenance programs to achieve further reductions in the infrastructure

³ Ku-ring-gai Council Annual Report 2016/2017 – Special Schedule 7

backlog. The strategies and how Council proposes to fund these programs are detailed in the Long Term Financial Plan and the Asset Management Strategy.

Infrastructure renewal and maintenance funding

The review of Council's asset information and infrastructure backlog has led to an internal review of capital and operational expenditure. As a result, additional funding has been allocated to improving our existing assets, whilst operational expenditure has also been reviewed and additional funding is allocated towards asset maintenance.

Asset Sales

Council will fund specific civic and community projects through the sale of under-utilised or surplus assets (property). These projects are intent on delivering new civic and community assets and infrastructure either through the acquisition and development of new facilities and/or through Council's co-contribution to deliver facilities and infrastructure identified in the Ku-ring-gai Contributions Plan 2010. The Contributions Plan works program for the next 10 years requires a co-contribution from Council of \$11 million which has been included in the LTFP.

The reasoning for Council to divest of these assets is to ensure that Council meets the future needs of the community by providing purpose built facilities and maintaining financial sustainability. The LTFP identifies asset sales as a short, medium and long term funding strategy which relies in part on the future reclassification of land from Community to Operational.

Where Council plans a large scale "community hub" type projects such as the Lindfield Village Green, the Community Hubs in Lindfield and Turramurra, and the Gordon Civic Precinct it is expected that these projects should be commercially feasible in their own right such that they do not require long term borrowings, or a drain on ordinary rates revenue.

Further, where feasible, such projects will be expected to produce a dividend for Council above and beyond the community facilities incorporated in the precinct. Planning for these projects should consider the inclusion of commercial opportunities of sufficient return to cover ongoing operational costs of the public spaces in the precinct.

The delivery of major civic and community projects will therefore require current and future Councils to implement the strategies identified in the LTFP

Major Projects & Property Development Funding

Council is planning for three major revitalisation projects over the next ten years, being in the local centres of Lindfield, Turramurra and Gordon that will provide civic improvements and community facilities. It is assumed in the Long term Financial Plan that these projects are funded by a combination of developer contributions along with the return from retail and commercial development on the sites. Critical to the success of these projects and Council's financial sustainability is to ensure that Council has sufficient funds in reserve to insulate against the financial risks of development. As such Council has established a Property Development Reserve in the Long Term Financial Plan, accumulated from the proceeds of asset sales. As an added benefit of establishing this reserve, it is assumed that interest earned on these funds is allocated to renewing Council's infrastructure assets, thereby contributing to financial sustainability by looking after existing assets as well as facilitating the provision of new community facilities..

Sustainability Roadmap

Following several years of uncertainty with forced amalgamations and the proposed merger of Council, then the election of a new Council a renewed vigour to concentrate on the future of Ku-ring-gai Council ensued. Throughout 2017/18 Council senior staff initiated a process to review services, identify opportunities for savings, efficiencies and additional revenue within the organisation.

There were a number of drivers that instigated the review. Council staff spent a considerable time assessing the long term financial impacts of many important projects including the local centre major projects in Lindfield, Turramurra and Gordon, along with day-to-day operational requirements, and improving the condition of existing assets to reduce our infrastructure backlog. Additionally, Council faces further challenges associated with:

- A low rate of revenue growth not keeping pace with cost increases
- Overall demand for services is growing as the population increases and changes
- The asset portfolio is growing which increases depreciation, maintenance and renewal
- FFTF benchmarks remain in force, and are being used as a basis for the state government to issue performance improvement orders.

This culminated in two key organisational focus areas being conducted;

1. Horizontal Service Review (HRS) – the HRS engaged the leadership team to identify savings within their relevant service areas. The process focussed on collecting information about what we do and opportunities for cost savings and additional revenue. As a result \$23m⁴ was identified from the HSR over the next 10 years of the Long Term Financial Plan which has been allocated to infrastructure renewal.
2. Strategic Service Review (SSR) – the SSR has commenced to consider the delivery of services over the longer term. This involved reviewing the provision services to ensure they best meet the needs of the community. This review process will continue in coming years and will involve further planning and service level reviews with the elected Council and in consultation with the community.

Workforce challenges

Ku-ring-gai Council is facing a number of challenges, both now and into the future. These are predominantly related to the nature of Local Government, the diversity of our organisation and expectations of the community. Many of these challenges will have an impact on the workforce.

The key issues that have been considered in the development of the Workforce Management Strategy include; the ageing workforce, leadership capability, skill shortages, the multigenerational workforce, workforce sustainability and continuous improvement.

Local Government Benchmarks

All NSW councils are required to meet a number of financial and infrastructure benchmarks and ratios. The key financial indicators are industry accepted measures of financial health and sustainability. A summary of these indicators and benchmarks are provided below.

In addition to the standard “Fit for the Future indicators” a new assets ratio has been included “Cost to Agreed Service level”. This new ratio is prescribed by the Office of Local Government (OLG) and provides a meaningful snapshot of the proportion of outstanding renewal works compared to the total infrastructure assets portfolio. The impact and performance of this ratio is discussed in detail in the Asset Management Strategy and the Long Term Financial Plan.

⁴ 2017/18 prices.

Key Financial Indicators	Purpose of indicator	Benchmark
▼ SUSTAINABILITY		
▼ Operating Performance Ratio (Operating revenue excluding capital grants and Contributions-operating expenses divided by Operating revenue excluding capital grants and contributions)	<i>To measure Council's ability to contain operating expenditure within operating revenue</i>	<i>>=break-even average over 3 years</i>
▼ Own Source Revenue Ratio (Total operating revenue less grants & contributions divided by total operating revenue)	▼ <i>To assess the degree of Council's dependence upon grants and contributions</i>	<i>>60% average over 3 years</i>
▼ Building & Infrastructure Renewal Ratio (Asset renewals expenditure divided by depreciation, amortisations & impairment expenses)	▼ <i>To assess the rates at which assets are renewed relative to the rate at which they are depreciated (consumed)</i>	<i>>100% average over 3 years</i>
▼ INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICE MANAGEMENT		
▼ Infrastructure Backlog Ratio (Estimated cost to bring assets to a satisfactory condition (from Special Schedule 7) divided by total infrastructure assets)	▼ <i>To measure the proportion of assets backlog against total value of Council's infrastructure assets</i>	<i><2%</i>
▼ Cost to Agreed Level of service (Estimated Cost to bring to agreed level of service divide by Gross Replacement Cost of infrastructure assets)	▼ <i>To measure proportion of the gross replacement cost of Council assets that have reached the intervention level set by Council based on the condition of the asset</i>	<i>Condition 1</i>
▼ Asset Maintenance Ratio (Actual maintenance expenditure divided by required annual asset maintenance)	▼ <i>To assess the actual asset maintenance expenditure relative to required asset maintenance</i>	<i>>100% average over 3 years</i>
▼ Debt service ratio (Net debt service cost divided by revenue from continuing operations)	▼ <i>To assess the impact of loan principal and interest repayment on the discretionary revenue of Council</i>	<i><20% average over 3 years</i>
▼ EFFICIENCY		
▼ Real Operating Expenditure per capita (Operating expenditure divided by total population)	▼ <i>To assess real operational expenditure per capita</i>	<i>Decreasing</i>

Within the Long Term Financial Plan and the Asset Management Strategy there is demonstrable evidence on how Ku-ring-gai Council is meeting and/or will meet the benchmarks established by the NSW Government over the next 10 years.



Echo Point Walking Tracks

Our options - scenario planning

The Resourcing Strategy considers two options or 'scenarios' to address the key challenges facing Council. The two scenarios are explored in detail to determine the impact on Council's funding, workforce and assets. The two scenarios are outlined below and are discussed in more detail in the Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP) and Asset Management Strategy (AMS).

- **Scenario 1 Base Case Scenario without the special rate variation (SRV) for Environment (Environmental Levy)**
- **Scenario 2 - Scenario with the continuation of the special rate variation (SRV) for Environment (Environmental Levy)**

Our proposal

Council's optimal scenario is Scenario 2 which assumes continuation of the current SRV for Environment (Environmental levy). This scenario is based on the continuation of the current levy and continuation of the environmental projects that this funds. This scenario provides the best balance between contributing to the priorities of the community as identified in the Community Strategic Plan and the quality of life and amenity of Ku-ring-gai and ongoing financial sustainability.

Council considers that the continuation in the level of funding is required to undertake much needed work on Ku-ring-gai's bushland, waterways and urban environment and meet community expectations in regards to sustainability. A detailed scenario has been developed to model and analyse the impact of continuation of the environmental levy and is further discussed in the LTFP.

Contact Us

For assistance or information regarding any of Council's services or facilities please contact us.

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