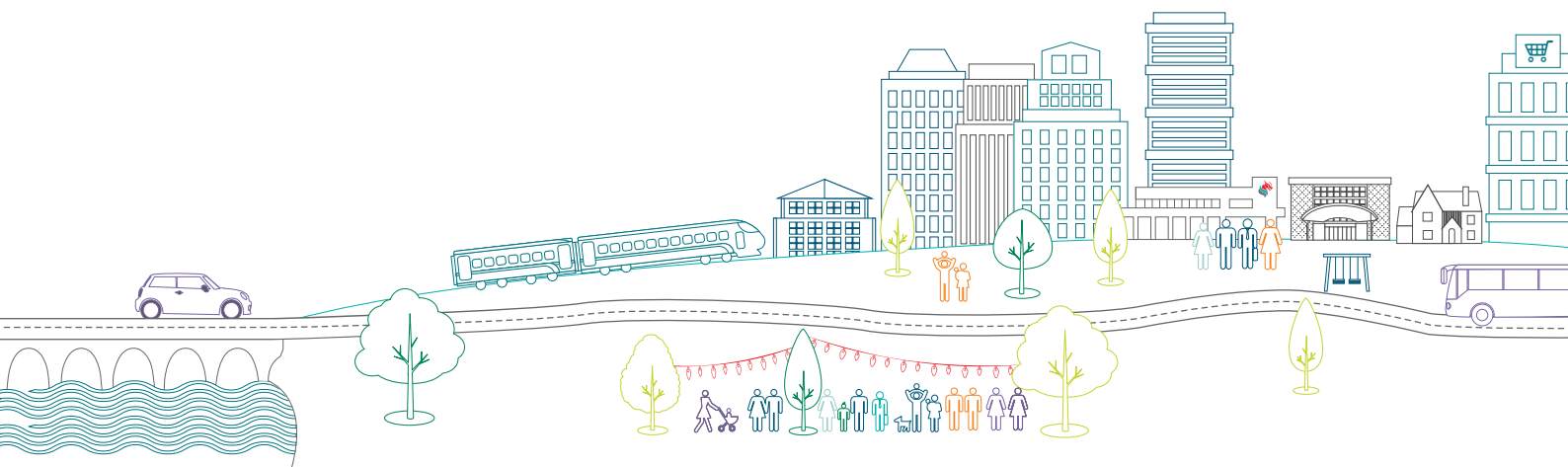




# THE AMALGAMATION JOURNEY

## FINAL REPORT



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# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The amalgamation of two organisations whilst maintaining everyday services is a complex task that requires the involvement of the entire organisation and the support of the community.

Georges River Council has embraced the fresh start that the merge of the former Hurstville City and Kogarah City Councils presented, building the foundations for a strong and sustainable organisation that will deliver outstanding results to our community and city.

Georges River Council was established by proclamation on 12 May 2016, and the new organisation immediately placed a strong focus on harmonising and improving services to deliver benefits to our local community.

To assist with the harmonising and improving of these services, Council established the Transformation and Change Directorate with \$10 million New Council Implementation Fund (NCIF) provided by the NSW Government. This funding contributed to the integration and improvement of systems and technology, strengthening

policies and procedures, improving governance, communications and branding, and for building a culture of customer service among Council staff.

A further \$10 million was provided by the NSW Government under the Stronger Communities Fund (SCF) to deliver priority community infrastructure and services. With these funds, and in partnership with many local community groups, we have improved the liveability of our unique city.

Council staff members have demonstrated impressive resilience, professionalism and

flexibility during this period of change, and continued to deliver excellent services to our customers. It is with this strong team that we work towards our goal of being the best performing council in New South Wales.

This report outlines how Council has successfully delivered benefits to the organisation and the community, aligned with the enduring characteristics of a strong council, defined by the Department Premier and Cabinet (DPC) as: strategic capacity, outstanding service provision, robust community relationships, strong performance and sound organisational health.









# 2. FUNDING CHANGE

The NSW Government provided two grants to assist Council and the community in the transition to a new entity.

The New Council Implementation Fund (NCIF) is a \$10M program used to fund activities that support the implementation of the new Council, including the establishment of a dedicated team to drive change across the organisation.

Council adopted a detailed program budget as part of the Implementation Plan in November 2016. Reporting on the NCIF occurs twice yearly to the Office of Local Government (OLG) and is subject to an independent external audit. The DPC set guidelines for the level of expected community benefit as part of the merger process. Council worked with DPC to refine these targets and measurement tools, and adopted a set of expected community benefits in November 2016.

The Stronger Communities Fund (SCF) was established to provide Council with funding for the delivery of projects that improve community infrastructure and services. The SCF program is divided into two categories:

## 1. COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM

An allocation of \$1million in grants to community organisations for projects that help build vibrant local communities. The applications for these grants were assessed by an independent panel including a probity advisor. These funds have been allocated to 27 community groups, generating projects totalling approximately \$3million.

## 2. MAJOR PROJECT PROGRAM

\$9million was allocated to larger-scale priority infrastructure and services that deliver long-term economic and social benefits to the community.

In July 2018 Council was successful in obtaining a further \$9.5million under the SCF to complete additional infrastructure projects.

The results of the SCF programs will be reported separately at the conclusion of that program.

# 3. DRIVING CHANGE

The achievements made in creating one unified organisation that continues to deliver outstanding results for its community and city would not have been possible without a comprehensive Transformation and Change Implementation Plan, supported by the entire organisation.

The Transformation and Change Directorate coordinated and supported all amalgamation activities across Council, with a view to making Georges River Council the best performing council in New South Wales.

The team was comprised of 14 staff, contracted or seconded for a period of up to two years. The Director Transformation and Change had a direct reporting line to the General Manager and a seat on the Executive Committee. This was a key success factor as it enabled a whole-of-organisation view and the ability to influence strategic direction.







# 4. CREATING A STRONG COUNCIL



# 4.1 THE ELECTED COUNCIL

The Georges River local government elections were held on 9 September 2017 with 15 Councillors being elected across five Wards. Together the Councillors, form the governing body of the Georges River Area. This elected Council will hold office until September 2020.

A comprehensive Councillor Induction Program was undertaken to support the newly elected members in their role. Councillors received extensive training and expert advice in relation to the Code of Conduct, Expenses and Facilities Policy and Code of Meeting Practice. The Councillor Portal, an online and secure intranet site, was also established for Councillors, to provide important information in a timely manner.

## KOGARAH BAY WARD



Councillor Stephen Agius



Councillor Nick Katris



Councillor Leesha Payor

## PEAKHURST WARD



Councillor Kevin Greene



Councillor Rita Kastanias



Councillor Colleen Symington

## HURSTVILLE WARD



Councillor Vince Badalati



Councillor Nancy Liu



Councillor Christina Wu

## MORTDALE WARD



Councillor Con Hindi



Councillor Warren Tegg



Councillor Lou Konjarski

## BLAKEHURST WARD



Councillor Sam Elmir



Councillor Sandy Grekas



Councillor Kathryn Landsberry



# 4.2 ORGANISATIONAL LEADERSHIP

The General Manager is responsible for the administration and day-to-day operations of the Council. Corporate performance is monitored through regular reports to the Council and community.



**Gail Connolly**  
General Manager

**Jenny Ware**  
Director Legal Services

**Roxanne Thornton**  
Executive Manager  
Office of the General Manager

**Rebekah Schulz**  
Director Community and Culture

**David Tuxford**  
Director Business and Corporate Services

**Meryl Bishop**  
Director Environment and Planning

**Laurie O'Connor**  
Director Assets and Infrastructure

**Sue Weatherley**  
Director City Strategy and Innovation

**Marissa Racomelara**  
Director Transformation and Change  
(Temporary Directorate until December 2018)







## 4.3 BUILDING A NEW ORGANISATION

The Transformation and Change Team played a critical role in planning for, and shaping, the strategic goals and future direction of Georges River Council, in line with Department of Premier and Cabinet reporting requirements and the needs of the Executive Team.

Over the past two years we have worked tirelessly to create a leading, people-focused organisation delivering outstanding results for our city and community. In doing so we have met 100% of the State Government amalgamation priorities.

Council is committed to being open and accountable to our local community and ensuring our policies and procedures reflect community goals and aspirations.

Council has :

- Reviewed and updated 52 governance policies, guided by an ethos of simplicity and customer orientation.
- An Internal Auditor has been appointed to ensure good governance, strong management and minimisation of risk.
- Established an Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee and developed an annual audit plan, supported by an adopted Risk Policy and Management

We have commenced, and will continue to undertake, service delivery reviews to ensure we provide the best possible service to our community.

The harmonisation of our two financial systems has led to

significant improvements in financial budgeting and reporting. The implementation of integrated financial and property and rating systems strengthened Council processes including payments, customer requests and regulatory functions, allowing us to deliver services more efficiently to our customers.

A commitment to business improvement has been at the forefront of amalgamation projects. We have closely scrutinised the way we work, and our commitment to continuous improvement has resulted in enhancements to critical functions such as accounts payable, rates, procurement and our after-hours service provision. Our improvement focus has meant the extension of our capability to continue to enhance our service offerings. This has resulted in 89% of residents





reporting satisfaction with Council's performance.

A complete suite of integrated planning and reporting documents has been adopted, guiding the strategic delivery of services and infrastructure across the city. This includes the Community Strategic Plan, developed in consultation with the community and supported by the community engagement platform and framework.

Smart improvements to our regulatory function have seen the implementation of a Regulatory Management and Local Enforcement Officer system. Detailed planning and negotiation for waste collection and disposal contracts have been undertaken. A Local Orders Policy was developed and an Evidence Manual completed.



## 4.4 A FOCUS ON LEADERSHIP

Transformation and Change worked with all staff to define our organisation's Mission and Values. Together with the community's Vision for the City, they guide our decisions and ways of working. To ensure alignment with our values, they have been embedded into our recruitment and performance review processes.

We have worked hard to establish Council as a high performing, influential leader. To benefit our community we have established strategic partnerships including the Australian Smart Cities Association, the Office of Local Government and

the University of New South Wales (UNSW). Working collaboratively on key projects has meant we are able to influence key policy, planning and infrastructure decisions that impact on our local area.

Council participated in industry initiatives to enhance capability across local government and assist us to benchmark our services. These include the Local Government Capability Framework and the 2017 and 2018 Local Government Performance Excellence Programs.





# COMMUNITY VISION STATEMENT

In 2028, the Georges River area is known as a clean, green and welcoming place with beautiful and accessible bushland and waterways.

It offers a diversity of active, connected places and heritage areas that we plan for, in collaboration with our community.

People attend many events and activities, and can access a choice of housing, and a mix of jobs and economic opportunities near where they live.

## IN SHORT OUR VISION IS:

A progressive, environmentally and culturally rich community enjoying a unique lifestyle.

## OUR MISSION

A leading, people-focused organisation delivering outstanding results for our community and city.

## OUR VALUES



### UNITED

We will work collaboratively as one team with common purpose and respect



### PROFESSIONAL

We will act with integrity and seek opportunities to learn and grow



### HONEST

We will be open and truthful with each other and our community



### ACCOUNTABLE

We will own our decisions and actions as we strive for excellence

## 4.5 IMPROVING SERVICE OFFERINGS

### CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

A focus on our customers has been a priority, with 2018 being coined 'the year of customer service'. Our policies and accompanying organisational processes have been transformed to improve our customers experience with Council.

The adoption of our Customer Service Strategy and the Feedback and Complaints Policy have established the framework for outstanding service provision. The ongoing development of our service centres at Kogarah and Hurstville and our two main libraries has supported the integration of day to day, as well as extended hours, services.

Customer Service pop ups in different locations have informed our community of upcoming issues and projects. Much of our transformation work has been about creating equitable access across the city for our customers.

### SERVICE DELIVERY REVIEWS

Service delivery reviews have been a priority and we have completed or commenced 19 of 23 identified reviews that will maximise benefits to the Georges River Community either through savings or service improvement. As part of this, an independent and extensive Customer Experience Service Delivery Review was undertaken. As a result, we are implementing the Customer Experience Transformation Program which includes an increased range of online options, an omni-channel contact centre and the streamlining of Council forms.

The Communications Service Delivery Review identified a range of improvements the organisation can make to better inform and engage our community. Implementation of these actions has commenced, including the extension of our Chinese language capability.

Understanding our customers and being receptive to their changing needs and expectations is a focus that we will continue with into the coming years.

### CUSTOMER SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

In March 2018, Council commissioned an independent Customer Service: Service Delivery Review to conduct focus groups with customers, review Council's customer service offerings, examine how well our current service delivery meets the needs of our community, and identify ways to improve the customer experience. The findings from the external review recommended a program of change for the whole organisation to achieve best practice customer service delivery in alignment with Council's goals and values. As a result, a two year Customer Experience (CX) Transformation Program has been established to achieve best practice customer service delivery.





# MAJOR PROJECTS

## 2016-2018 COMPLETED

- Replacement of Kogarah Library roof
- The installation of 150 square metres of green rubber soffit and a shade structure in Timothy Reserve Hurstville
- Upgrades to the netball courts at Olds Park in Penshurst
- Hurstville Oval Velodrome has been resurfaced, returning the historic venue to a first-class facility for cyclists
- A shade structure was constructed at Carss Cottage Museum, Carss Bush Park providing shade relief for visitors
- Resurfacing of fields at Poulton Park has made the grounds safer for children playing soccer, saved the ground from unnecessary wear and tear and increased the lifespan of the grounds
- As part of the Georges River Aquatic Facilities Refurbishment Program the refurbished Sans Souci Pool now includes a 50metre and toddler pools, a new plant room and new amenities.
- Stage 1 of Gannons Park Stormwater Harvesting & Irrigation Project at Peakhurst Heights

## COMING SOON...

- New public toilet facilities in Oatley Memorial Gardens including an accessible toilet
- New sports amenities buildings at Peakhurst Park, Renown Reserve, Oatley and Claydon Reserve, Sans Souci.

## 4.6 DELIVERING A LIVEABLE CITY

### MAJOR PROJECTS

Since amalgamation, 95% of the scheduled major Projects funded by the SCF have been delivered, resulting in improved community infrastructure and services for our growing community. The establishment of the Project Delivery Team, to replace consultant project managers in April 2017, has increased internal skills and streamlined procurement processes so the focus is on delivery.

# CUSTOMER SERVICE HUBS PROGRAM

Council has delivered community members a fresh, contemporary and more welcoming Service Centre at the Georges River Civic Centre. By ensuring our community has access to quality and responsive services, the planned refurbishment has resulted in a flexible, multi-use space – Customer Service Centre during the day, and a bookable space for the public afterhours and on weekends

There are additional and enhanced meeting rooms which the public can book, equipped with smart boards and internet access, providing a technologically modern space for presentations and events. The two meeting rooms will have capacity for 20 persons and 10 persons respectively.

A vertical garden wall now greets customers as they enter, and a concierge is on hand to triage enquiries and administer a queue management system to minimise customer waiting periods. The new waiting area includes comfortable lounges, informational display monitors as well as self-service computers.



*Image: artistic impressions of Georges River Civic Centre Customer Service Centre (above) and Kogarah Library and Service Centre Customer service area (below).*







## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLACE ACTIVATION

Investing in business development is essential to creating a thriving city, we have begun a series of activities to drive economic development and place activation for the local area. Driven by the Events and Economic Development Strategies, we have delivered initiatives in Hurstville including The Big Wash and Makeover Month as well as Open Air Cinemas, Night Markets and 'Noons with Tunes' in Kogarah.

We have established a program of business networking opportunities to facilitate communication and professional development amongst local businesses. Events included the joint St George Business Chamber and Council business event which attracted 110 attendees and the Business After Five Networking function.

# 4.7 A SHIFT TOWARDS TRANSFORMING OUR CITY

## INNOVATION

In a new partnership formed with the University of New South Wales, Council has invested in smart technology solutions that will lead to improved community spaces. Memorial Square Hurstville and Olds Park Penshurst were chosen for the Smart Cities 'Smart Social Spaces initiative'. A successful funding application resulted in installation of innovative and 'smart' street furniture and the development of a Georges River Smart City platform, where staff and community can access and make decisions based on real-time data.

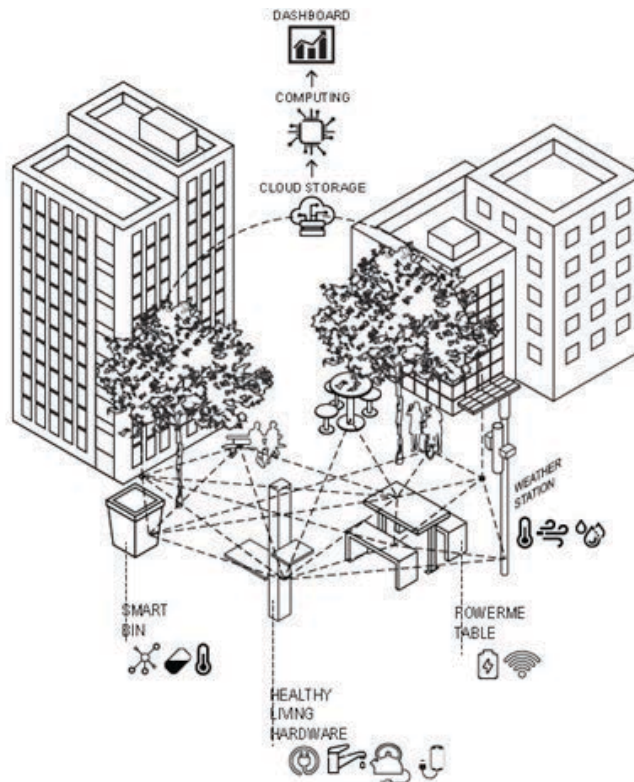
Council's early adoption of smart infrastructure means the community will benefit from innovative

solutions which provide long-term and tangible benefits. The current initiative will provide opportunities to harmonise asset management and behaviour mapping so we can better understand the needs of our community.

A second successful grant application for "Chill Out Spaces" is currently being implemented. In partnership with industry associations and networks, Georges River will become a leader in smart and innovative responses to meet community needs.

This emphasis on new ways of thinking has provided the foundations for an ongoing portfolio of innovation, service excellence and robust, productive relationships

for our city. Over the next year, a new Directorate will focus on positioning the Georges River area and the Council as strong and influential in both the Sydney Metropolitan Region and in New South Wales.





# COOL PLACES: URBAN OASIS

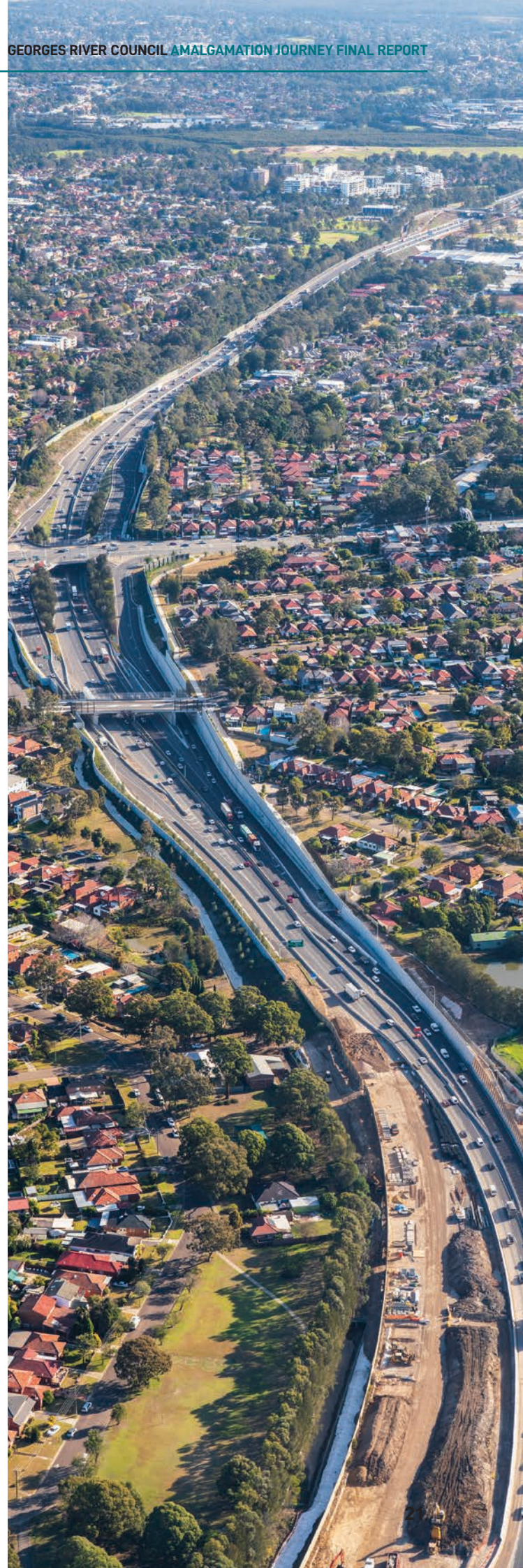
Council has initiated 'The 'Cool Places: Urban Oasis' project which will provide an enhanced tree canopy in our town centres to deliver an improved experience for both residents and local businesses. We have strategically selected town centres to become scenic destinations that drive the local economy. The initiative will improve air quality and see a reduction in urban heat island effect.

To complement this, and further capitalise on smart infrastructure technology, Council received additional grants funds for 'Chill Out Spaces' in three town centres. Smart technology will be used to monitor environmental and social impacts such as temperature.

## 30 YEAR VISION

Developing a 30-year City Vision and a City Reputation Strategy will be a priority. The merge of two strategic centres, supported by a strong council, will transform Georges River over the coming decades, providing an opportunity to reposition the city utilising its unique identity, competitive advantage and community relations.

We have commenced planning to attract investment, business and trade, a skilled workforce, and students and visitors for tourism and events. Work has been done to make the most of the identity and infrastructure of our two main centres - Hurstville as the cultural heart of the city and a vibrant destination, and Kogarah as a premier medical and research hub.







GEORGES  
RIVER COUNCIL

Welcome to  
Biddegal Country





# 5. INFLUENCE AND ADVOCACY

We pride ourselves on our strong and productive working relationships with a wide variety of stakeholders, and our ability to positively inform and influence decision-making at regional, state, national and international levels to benefit our local community. In addition to our networks, Council has committed to a number of formal relationships.

## AUSTRALIAN SMART COMMUNITIES ASSOCIATION

The Australian Smart Communities Association (ASCA) empowers liveable, sustainable, workable smart communities, with citizens, local businesses and stakeholders at the core of its activities. ASCA is the peak industry association in Australia for the rapidly developing digital, sharing and interconnected communities. They are associated with more than 150 local government authorities which collectively represent 12.6 million Australians. Council staff are active in Action Forums which address key enablers and inhibitors for smart cities and maintain a position on the Board of Directors

## PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE NETWORKING COMMITTEE (LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROFESSIONALS)

The Performance Excellence Networking Committee (PENC) was established to promote and facilitate the use of benchmarking and data to inform performance and drive continuous improvement through local governments working together as part of the Local Government Performance Excellence Program. Council has participated in this program since 2017 seeing it as an opportunity to benchmark performance and celebrate success.

## SOUTHERN SYDNEY REGIONAL ORGANISATION OF COUNCILS

The Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (SSROC) is an association of 11 councils spanning Sydney's Southern suburbs, Eastern suburbs, CBD, and Inner West, and covering one third of Greater Sydney's population, approx 1.7m people. SSROC provides a forum through which our Council can interact, exchange ideas and work collaboratively to solve regional issues and contribute to the future sustainability of the region. SSROC advocates on behalf of our region to ensure that the major issues are addressed by all levels of government.

Council has also worked with the Women in Smart Cities Global Network, Infrastructure NSW Smart Places Strategy: Local Government Working Group, NSW Department of Planning – Smarter Planning Working Group, NSW Local Government Smart City Managers Network.

# 5.1 PARTNERSHIPS

## DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The Department of Education and Council have signed a Memorandum of Understanding forming the basis for a cooperative relationship between the two parties to work towards School Asset Planning and Joint Use Projects.

The goals of this partnership include:

- More efficient use of land, thereby reducing the cost of urban development
- Cost sharing of capital, maintenance and management
- Providing a higher quality and better standard of assets through pooling of resources and capital
- Enhanced relationships between schools and their communities.

## REALISE BUSINESS

Realise Business is a not-for-profit enterprise, funded by both State and Federal Governments, delivering business advisory services across the Sydney area including the St George area, Sutherland Shire, Inner West, Eastern Suburbs, North Shore, Northern Beaches and Sydney CBD. Georges River Council continues to grow its relationship with Realise Business, with representation on Council's Economic Development Advisory Committee and ongoing event collaboration.

## NSW SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSIONER'S HOME BASED BUSINESS COUNCIL REFERENCE GROUP, AND NSW SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSIONER'S LOCAL PROCUREMENT COUNCIL REFERENCE GROUP

The NSW Small Business Commissioner's Office created two reference groups to work collaboratively with councils to draw on expertise and ensure any guidelines developed represent best practice and appropriately address all the areas that councils consider should be addressed. It is also a forum for them to hear first-hand about any regulatory issues that need addressing and discuss recommended solutions.

Georges River Council is an active participant in both these reference groups, preparing to embark on our own Local Procurement initiative and also having significant input into the initial Home Based Business Reference Group discussion, recommending a Guideline be considered rather than a Policy and providing solid advice and feedback.

## UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES (UNSW) SMART CITIES SMART SOCIAL SPACES PROJECT

In a new partnership formed with the University of New South Wales, Council has invested in smart technology solutions that will lead to improved community spaces. Memorial Square Hurstville and Olds Park, Penshurst were chosen for the Smart Cities 'Smart Social Spaces' initiative. A successful funding bid as part of the Smart Cities and Suburbs Program meant we could install innovative and smart street furniture, as well as start the development of a Georges River Smart City platform, where staff and community can access and make decisions based on real time data.



## 5.2 AWARDS

### TOP 50 WOMEN IN PUBLIC SECTOR 2018

In 2018 Gail Connolly, General Manager, was recognised as one of the Top 50 Women in Public Sector. These awards are organised by Davidson in partnership with NSW Government and SEEK. The aim of this initiative is to shine a light on the dynamic and inspirational female leaders working in the Public Sector. These awards further highlight exceptional female leaders building high performing teams and transforming their communities.

### MINISTERS AWARDS WOMEN IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT 2017

In 2017 Gail Connolly, General Manager and Marissa Racomelara, Director Transformation and Change, both received a Highly Commended Ministers Award for Women in Local Government. The awards celebrate the contribution of women to local government in NSW. In addition to recognising the significant contribution of Award winners, the Awards aim to encourage more women to take on leadership roles in local government in NSW.

### LG EXCELLENCE AWARD SPECIAL PROJECT INITIATIVE 2018

In 2018 Georges River Council received the LG Excellence Award for Special Project Initiative for the re-branding of Georges River Council. The LG Excellence Award Special Project Initiative recognises leadership where an individual, team or council has developed a concept or practice that significantly improves the business in which they work, development of processes or practices that has had a major impact on the organisation or its customers.



# PART 2: TRANSFORMATION AND CHANGE PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Whilst the Transformation and Change Team was established to assist in program management, culture change and capability building, the entire organisation worked towards this goal. The collaboration and hard work from across Council has ensured the success of the program.

## 6.1 CHANGE MANAGEMENT

The organisation committed to a series of Change Principles:

1. We will focus on our relationships with the community and staff
2. By focusing on the needs of the new entity we will move away from past silos
3. The information we provide is factual
4. We do what is best for Georges River Council
5. We are one unified team, sharing openly and honestly towards a common purpose
6. We establish a clear, transparent and collaborative decision-making approach.

## 6.2 GOVERNANCE

Council established a program governance structure to guide and facilitate the amalgamation program. Program oversight was provided externally by the DPC and OLG, and internally by the Executive Team and Steering Committees.

The Executive Team provided strategic guidance for decision-making, while Steering Committees monitored individual project progress and provided expert advice. The Director of Transformation and Change had the responsibility for leading project implementation and ensuring benefits realisation.

## 6.3 PROJECT DELIVERY

Transformation and Change worked with all teams across the organisation to undertake project planning, initiation, execution and closure milestones, using agile project methodology tools and techniques.

Projects that facilitated the integration of former Councils' services and standards were led by both business area managers and Transformation and Change project leads. Complex cross-organisational projects were delivered through Transformation and Change project leads in close consultation with impacted business areas.



## 6.4 QUALITY AND ASSURANCE

The management of quality assurance and control was critical to the program meeting its strategic outcomes. The Director of Transformation and Change had overall responsibility for the quality of the program, supported by a strong governance framework.

A formal change management methodology was adapted for local use. This included:

- Standard tools and templates
- Review and approval of key deliverables for each project stream
- Implementation of a risk management approach
- Development of a monitoring and reporting framework
- Dedicated change management and variation control processes
- Regular review of project-based registers for issues, risks, decisions and stakeholder management.

## 6.5 COMMUNICATIONS MANAGEMENT

During a transition process it is important to maintain clear, factual and consistent communication with the community and staff. Council developed Communication and Engagement plans for community and internal use. To support these plans, the Executive Team endorsed the Communications and Media Management Policy and a Social Media and Communications Device Policy.

The Transformation and Change program was guided by the following communication principles:

- Communication should be succinct, timely and relevant to the audience
- There should be a clear statement of purpose for what is communicated eg for action, information or comment
- The style should reinforce our developing culture and seek to close any perceived internal communications gaps
- We should be open and transparent to the greatest extent possible
- Communication aims to reinforce our commitment to the success of the Transformation and Change program

## 6.6 RISK AND ISSUE MANAGEMENT

The program utilised a purpose-built risk management framework based on international risk standards (ISO 31000:2018), best practice project management methodologies and internal risk management procedures. Program risks were managed by the Program Coordinators and Expert Advisory Panel member for Legal and Risk.

## 6.7 KEY PROGRAM RISK AND LEARNINGS

The Transformation Program followed the principle of continuous improvement. To support the organisation in managing change initiatives in the future, both positive and negative experiences were captured in a 'lessons-learned' register. Some of the more frequently identified learnings were:

- Clearly defined scope
- Focus on culture change
- Clear consistent communication
- Use of subject matter experts and past projects to allocate budget

# 7. PROGRAM RESULTS

## 7.1 MILESTONES

The Transformation and Change program consisted of two key project areas:

- Integration and harmonisation of the former Councils' functions, policies and procedures
- Organisation-wide transformation and improvement projects and programs

Combined, this equalled 792 individual milestones.

In two years Council completed 93% of integration milestones and 85% of transformation, averaging 90% for the total program. The completion of the remaining projects has been scheduled for the 2019 calendar year and will be undertaken by the relevant Council Directorate.

## 7.2 COST BREAKDOWN

The program was established by service stream, with the NCIF allocated to each, based on the indicative costs of major projects identified for building a strong Council. Interest from the grant was reinvested, resulting in a total program expenditure of just over \$10.8 million. This allowed Council to refine the budget as costs expand the number of transformation projects. Income and expenditure statements are provided below.



## INCOME STATEMENT

Description	16/17 Actuals	16/17 Actuals	18/19 Actuals	Income
Grant	10,000,000	0	0	10,000,000
Other Income	94,313	9,398	0	103,711
Interest Income	326,547	305,176	79,886	711,609
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,420,860</b>	<b>314,574</b>	<b>79,886</b>	<b>10,815,320</b>

## EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

Project Stream	16/17 Actuals	16/17 Actuals	18/19 Actuals	Total Grant Expenditure
NCIF - Program	1,662,333	2,566,874	312,009	4,541,216
Services - Communications	77,958	115,500	21,460	214,918
Services - Customer Service	6,476	330,988	301,897	639,361
Services - Operations	23,530	366,614	114,923	505,066
Services - Place Services	11,777	98,210	240,825	350,812
Services - Community Services	86,982	214,560	61,229	362,770
Services - Regulatory Services	5,311	92,670	0	97,981
Governance - Finance	373,397	221,607	76,940	671,943
Governance - Governance	225,950	303,851	41,234	571,034
Governance - Info Management	1,085,093	254,007	0	1,339,099
Governance - People and Culture	512,501	584,468	358,387	1,455,355
Governance - Risk and Legal	14,080	51,685	0	65,765
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,085,387</b>	<b>4,712,837</b>	<b>1,528,903</b>	<b>10,815,320</b>

# 7.4 INTEGRATION STREAM RESULTS

Integration Stream: Risk and Legal	
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	\$65,765
<b>Goal</b>	Respond and manage all business risks through a detailed risk register and policy, meeting WHS requirements, ensuring strong asset management and a responsive legal strategy
<b>Key Projects</b>	
<p>WHS program with guiding policy, procedures and cultural change program</p> <p>Business Unit Risk Registers</p> <p>Risk Management System implemented</p> <p>Adoption of Enterprise Risk Management Strategy</p> <p>Business Continuity Plan</p> <p>Review of all workers compensation claims</p> <p>Internal Audit Program created and implemented</p> <p>Audit Plan 2018-2021 finalised</p> <p>Emergency Management Procedures</p> <p>Asset Management Policy and Plan</p> <p>Asset data, valuations and depreciation schedules integrated</p> <p>Develop and Implement training plan for staff gathering evidence</p> <p>Review of Legal Services</p>	
<b>Outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction in workers compensation premium and claims management</li> <li>• Streamlined legal service delivery</li> <li>• An innovative staff owned WHS program with a strong cultural change focus</li> <li>• Comprehensive internal audit program including the appointment of an Internal Auditor</li> <li>• Reinvestment of funds saved from the reduction external legal fees</li> <li>• Increased quality of evidence gathering across the organisation</li> </ul>
<b>Learnings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A process of direct briefing Counsel has contributed to Council's success in Court and resulting in lower legal costs</li> </ul>
<b>Future</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate Work, Health and Safety (WH&amp;S) processes, systems and procedures and implement effective controls to manage WH&amp;S risks</li> <li>• Continue fraud and corruption prevention programs</li> </ul>



**Integration Stream: People and Culture**

**Total Expenditure** \$1,455,355

**Goal** Building the capacity of staff to meet the needs of the community through dedicated HR systems, specialised recruitment and a strong organisational culture with a focus on customer service

**Key Projects**

- Organisational Restructure effective from February 2017
- Staff Cultural Change Program (exChange Engagement Program, Tackling Change workshops, River Run Conference)
- Corporate Mission and Values developed
- Finalise a Job Evaluation System
- Develop and Implement Workforce Transition - VR, Redeployment and Retraining Guidelines
- Rewards and Recognition Program
- Skills and Performance Review Framework
- Recruitment policies and procedures
- Organisation Development and Capability Program
- Deliver an all staff conference (River run)
- Employee relations policies and procedures
- Implementation of HR business partners
- Procurement of a Human Resource Information System (HRIS)
- Delivery of the Work Force Strategy

**Outcomes**

- \$1.6 million from senior management staff salary savings reinvested in operational and specialised staff.
- A successful cultural change program
  - An increase of 80% in staff that feel valued and enjoy coming to work
  - 90% of staff committed to Councils success
  - 130% increase in staff who would recommend GRC as a place to work
- Organisation Development and Capability program supporting re-training options, new corporate systems and processes and professional development opportunities
- Strong culture of service supported by HR business partners

**Learnings**

- It is essential for a merged organisation that establishment data is accurately maintained to ensure salary data is correct and there is a record of positions changes.
- A long-term organisational culture and leadership program has resulted in a workforce that embraces service, performance and continuous improvement.

**Future**

- Implement the GRC Workforce Strategy
- Implement Performance Excellence and People Capability strategies and programs.
- Continue to refine and improve our 'Ready, Set, Grow' Learning and Development Program.
- Enhance our Workplace Health and Safety System to support a well and safe workplace.

## Integration Stream: Information Management

**Total Expenditure** \$1,339,099

**Goal** Creation of a robust ICT platform to support service delivery including telephony, records management, property and rating, corporate reporting and office systems.

### Key Projects

Property and Rating integration  
 ICT Strategy  
 Intranet development (Rivernet)  
 Intra map system roll out  
 Consolidation and upgrade of records management system including archives  
 Information security framework established  
 Active Directory  
 Council reporting system including councillor portal

<b>Outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Centrally located workforce with hardware and software</li> <li>All staff access to a responsive helpdesk</li> <li>Delivery of a new website and intranet to support access to information</li> <li>Enhanced neighbourhood mapping services providing online access for the community</li> <li>The implementation of a Councillor Portal, an online and secure Intranet site for Councillors to provide important information in a timely manner</li> <li>Harmonisation and improvement of Council systems to support the organisations ability to deliver services to the community</li> </ul>
<b>Learnings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategy as the driver for the ICT program</li> <li>Best results are achieved when system and subjects matter experts work together to create a solution.</li> <li>Importance of data maintenance</li> <li>Essential to have tried and tested business continuity plan in place</li> </ul>
<b>Future</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued work on digitisation including the adoption of a Digital Strategy.</li> <li>Council's assets and resources are managed responsibly and with accountability</li> <li>Streamline and maintain a complete and integrated data system to effectively fulfil our functions and store information in a safe and accessible way</li> </ul>



## Integration Stream: Finance

**Total Expenditure** \$647,839

**Goal** Maintaining accurate and best value financial data and reporting – Enterprise budgeting, financial systems consolidation, asset condition valuation

### Key Projects

Develop, test and deliver harmonised financial management and reporting systems  
 Property and Rating integration  
 Review Chart of Accounts and Management Reporting Structure  
 Appoint Insurance brokers  
 Review grants provided to Council and document any impact on funding  
 Commence Auditing of Financial Reports for Georges River Council  
 Consolidation of Fees and Charges  
 Delivery of Long Term Financial Plan  
 Reporting of Savings, Expenditure & Efficiencies Register  
 Alignment of payroll processing cycles (from 3 to 1)  
 Procurement policies, templates and register  
 Restructure of Finance Unit

**Outcomes**

- Voluntary pensioner rebate extended to 3,300 pensioners with the cost absorbed by savings from the merger.
- Council adopted a savings target of \$8.9 million to be achieved by September 2017 and, at 30 June 2017, had reached \$9.91 million in identified savings and efficiencies. Over \$5 million in savings have come from materials and contract efficiencies such as a reduction in:
  - legal costs due to improved delegations and processes (\$416,000)
  - advertising costs in the local newspaper (\$28,000)
  - reduced insurance premiums (\$436,000)
  - consolidation of information technology systems (\$201,000)
- The establishment of a transparent organisation supported by the reporting of returns on all commercial properties and revenue from the public domain and other property leases and licenses.

**Learnings**

- Strategy as the driver for the ICT program
- Best results are achieved when system and subjects matter experts work together to create a solution.
- Importance of data maintenance
- Essential to have tried and tested business continuity plan in place

**Future**

- Refine the Long-Term Financial Plan to incorporate proposed new projects and programs and to facilitate financially sustainable decisions.
- Incorporate the review of Council's Asset Management Plan, including asset life, depreciation and maintenance costs, into Council's Long-Term Financial Plan.
- Review Council's Investment Strategy and procedures and appoint an investment adviser.
- Continue to improve management reporting to increase access to relevant financial information by senior management.
- Refine critical financial processes through clear documentation of policies, procedures and training

## Integration Stream: Governance

**Total Expenditure** \$571,034

**Goal** To establish a strong Council with sound organisational governance policies, framework and procedures to support

### Key Projects

Key policies, codes and practices established 45 in total including Code of Conduct, Expenses and Facilities Policy and Code of Meeting Practice.

GIPA access to information Policy

Statement of Business Ethics

Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee and three year program

Integrated Reporting and Planning documents

Councillor support program – Councillor Portal, Induction program and extensive training

Integration of Council meetings and business paper procedures

Delegations reviewed and harmonised

Info council consolidated and integrated across the organisation

Webcasting of Council meetings

Planning proposal for new city plan – Blakehurst and Kogarah Bay Wards

Preparation of an Employment Lands Study

### Outcomes

- A complete suite of integrated planning and reporting documents have been adopted guiding our strategic delivery of services and infrastructure across the city.
- Empowered capable Council of elected members
- An open and transparent organisation supported by good governance, strong management and minimisation of risk
- Prepare and implement a three-year risk-based Audit Plan

### Learnings

- Our community has told us that they value leadership and transparency; we have learned to develop policies that are customer focused and easy to understand.

### Future

- Continuously improve procurement policy and practice through the Local Government Procurement Program.
- Maintain online public registers as required under the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (GIPA) including contracts, gifts and benefits and Councillor disclosures of interest returns (Section 449 of the LG Act).
- Implement a Councillor training program to improve decision making, facilitate better communication with the local community and assist Councillors to acquire and maintain the skills needed to perform their role.



**Integration Stream: Customer Service**

**Total Expenditure** \$639,961

**Goal** Ensuring an improved customer experience through Service Centres, after-hours access, contact centres knowledge bases and a strong customer oriented culture.

**Key Projects**

- Customer Service Strategy
- Customer Complaints and Feedback Policy and Framework
- Kogarah Customer Service relocation to Library
- Service Centre refurbishment
- Omi-channel contact centre
- Integration and improvement of the after-hours service
- New single website for Council – easy to update, lower cost, more information for the community
- Harmonisation of electronic forms
- Team restructure

- Outcomes**
- Improved customer oriented culture embodied by staff exemplified by our Customer Service Commitments
  - Improved access to customer service and specialised staff
  - Expanded service delivery options to meet our growing community needs
  - Refurbishment of customer service centres
  - Alignment of KPIs to service offer

- Learnings**
- The Customer Service Delivery Review highlighted the need to focus on getting the fundamentals right. Customers were frustrated by unresponsive service and lack of feedback. The Customer Experience Transformation Program 2018- 2020 will focus on addressing these issues as well as implementing projects aimed at improving the customer’s experience.

- Future**
- Expand online services and payment options, including mobile applications, public Wi-Fi and self-service kiosks.
  - Increase automation of processes to increase efficiencies.
  - Improve the DA lodgement processes and pre-lodgement advice, including new NSW Department of Planning and Environment guidelines.
  - Implement the Customer Experience Transformation Program

## Integration Stream: Communications

**Total Expenditure** \$214,918

**Goal** Develop a strong communications and engagement platform including Brand and Image, website development and community engagement tools.

### Key Projects

Develop a Staff Engagement Strategy  
 New single website with improved online functionality  
 Development and roll out of Logo and visual brand including signage, publications and uniforms  
 Community engagement Strategy and electronic platform and tools  
 New intranet to ensure internal access to corporate knowledge  
 Communications and Media Management Policy  
 Community Engagement Strategy  
 Event Strategy  
 Establish additional social media presences

<b>Outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation and promotion of Council brand and Logo</li> <li>• Review and improvement of internal communication channels</li> <li>• Increased communication between Council and Community</li> <li>• A framework for the strategic management of Council and community events for the greatest social, cultural, economic and environmental benefit to the GRC community</li> </ul>
<b>Learnings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The positioning of Communications within the Customer Service and Events team was impacting on the perception of their role at Council and limiting the ability to be strategic and proactive.</li> </ul>
<b>Future</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be more responsive to the external communication needs of the community – including engaging with diverse groups</li> <li>• Work more closely with individual business units to meet the specific needs of functional areas</li> <li>• Raising the profile and professionalism of the Communications Team across the organisation</li> <li>• Build stronger relationships with local businesses, industries and State agencies to maximise sponsorship of local events.</li> <li>• Implement the Communications Service Delivery Review recommendations</li> </ul>



**Integration Stream: Operations**

**Total Expenditure** \$505,066

**Goal** To integrate and harmonise operational service offerings across the Local Government Area whilst ensuring there is no operational impact on customers.

**Key Projects**

- \$50m Capital program
- Operational Service Levels implemented
- Graffiti and Posters Policy
- Operational procedures harmonisation
- Emergency Management Plans
- Rapid Response and Disposal of Illegally Dumped Asbestos Supplier Panel
- Work Health and Safety Cultural program tailored for Depot staff
- Directorate restructure, harmonisation and co-location
- Service Delivery Review Projects Including Stores Management, Light Vehicle Fleet Phase 1 and Field Mobility Pilot
- Resume direct management of Jubilee Oval and Carss Park War Memorial Pool including supported by asset maintenance and renewal budget

**Outcomes**

- Engineering operations restructure and harmonisation
- Embedding a culture of safety and increasing accountability in relation to safe work practices.
- Best value contracts
- Long term sustainability by aligning services and service levels to community needs and ensuring we are efficient in their delivery.

**Learnings**

- Colocation results in operational and cultural improvements
- Engagement methods need to directly respond to needs of stakeholders

**Future**

- Complete Plans of Management for all sporting fields in the Georges River LGA.
- Develop and implement the annual infrastructure works program, including a Town Centres Public Domain Program.
- Review essential services to improve building security, compliance and certification.
- Forward plan, and investigate funding for, major rollouts of sustainable materials.

## Integration Stream: Place Services

**Total Expenditure** \$350,812

**Goal** Providing place based approaches to our community needs such as art and museum venues, strong economic development polices cultural events and timely and consistent development assessment.

### Key Projects

- Small Business Friendly Councils' Charter
- Development Application process review
- Footpath Trading review
- Continued support for St George Business Chamber
- Economic Development Committee and Economic Development Strategy
- Easy to do Business Project
- Jubilee Stadium Master Plan
- Community Art Gallery program consolidated
- Smart Cities Smart Social Spaces project partnership
- Promotion of parks, sports grounds and recreation facilities
- Capital Projects with environmental outcomes:
  - Lime Kiln Bay – bank restoration and stabilisation
  - Carss Park Flats sea wall reconstruction
  - Gannons Park stormwater harvesting & irrigation
  - Myles Dunphy bush regeneration
- Riverwood Wetlands restoration

**Outcomes**

- Formal economic development and place management program developed to drive economic development across the LGA
- DA determination times improvement
- Focus on enhancing our natural environment
- Consistent development assessment practices
- Establishment of Smart Cities Strategic Partnerships

**Learnings**

- Requirement to focus on stakeholder consultation, management of expectations, detailed project management. In-house skills need to reflect these.

**Future**

- Local businesses are supported to help protect jobs and create employment opportunities.
- Outcomes from an Employment Lands Study ensure sufficient land is available for future employment growth .
- The ambitions for Hurstville and Kogarah as strategic centres are realised.
- Commence reviews of high priority actions identified in the Plans of Management review program.
- Develop parks and open space design principles to promote resilience
- Complete LGA-wide foreshore review
- Implement the 2018-19 Heritage Building Grants Program

## Integration Stream: Community Services

**Total Expenditure** \$362,770

**Goal** Meeting community requirements for services such as community development, library and information and children's services

### Key Projects

Implementation of Library Management System and RFID services  
 Procurement of public computers and printers to harmonise service offerings  
 Children's services policies and procedures  
 Integration of Child Care waiting list management practices  
 Review of exiting plans, strategies and align with CSP  
 Sister Cities Policy  
 Historical Markers Policy  
 Public Space CCTV Policy and program  
 Implementation of new grants program  
 Increase in Community Grants from \$147,000 to \$400,000 per year  
 Expanded graffiti removal services  
 Sustainability and waste minimisation education programs

**Outcomes**

- Increased events and programs delivered to the community
- Digitalisation of Library services
- Improved Customer service options at the library
- Increase in Community Grants from \$147,000 to \$400,000 per year
- Gains have been made through the harmonisation of services in events

**Learnings**

- Larger service offering not always the focus of the customer eg childcare waiting lists
- Community consultation and true engagement is necessary to decision making
- Costly integrations (such as CCTV Systems) require extensive planning and investment

**Future**

- Work with SSROC to advocate for regional-level community facilities
- Develop and sustain community partnerships that result in improved social participation programs.
- Undertake community analysis and consultation to better understand the needs and aspirations of the community
- Review and assess the impact of CCTV cameras across the LGA.
- Facilitate meetings with the community and Local Area Command to address community safety issues
- Re-establish Alcohol Free Zones and Alcohol Prohibited Areas in the LGA.
- Improve the quality of child care digital services.
- Integrate Council's Children's Services Strategy into each service's Quality Improvement Plan.
- Conduct community and customer consultation to establish the need for, and interest in, establishing a 24/7 child care service.
- Research and evaluate contemporary library service delivery models.
- Develop a Technology and Digital Access Plan.



**Integration Stream: Regulatory**

<b>Total Expenditure</b>	\$97,981
<b>Goal</b>	Ensuring community safety is maximised via parking and ranger services, building compliance and environmental services such as waste collection and sustainability education.

**Key Projects**

- Enforcement Policy
- Companion Animals management integration
- Local Approvals Policy
- Waste Management contracts
- Review of Clean up services
- Service function harmonisation
- Alcohol free zones and alcohol prohibited area procedures and sites established
- Regulatory Management System
- Graffiti and Bill posters policy

<b>Outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role responsibilities reviewed and aligned to improve service delivery</li> <li>• Regulatory Management System and Local Enforcement Officer System procured and implemented.</li> <li>• Increased efficiency of all waste collection</li> </ul>
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<b>Learnings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harmonisation of outdoor staff is complex and costly</li> <li>• Waste contract management requires careful consideration and expert advice to ensure value for money and environmental outcomes</li> </ul>
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<b>Future</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an Energy Management Plan for Council's top 10 energy using sites</li> <li>• Develop an Urban Forest</li> <li>• Implement a new contract for Strategy the processing and disposal of general waste for the former Hurstville Council area.</li> <li>• Implement a new contract for the processing of garden organics for the Georges River LGA.</li> <li>• Implement a new contract for the collection and disposal of waste from park and public litter bins for the former Kogarah Council area</li> <li>• Develop a program to educate the community on reducing energy consumption and protecting the environment.</li> <li>• Research the effects of climate change on foreshores and coastlines.</li> </ul>
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# 7.4 TRANSFORMATION PROJECT RESULTS

Transformation Project: Project Fusion	
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	Captured in Operational Projects Stream
<b>Goal</b>	Co-locating two workforces in the one location and updating open plan workspaces to encourage cross-collaboration and team cohesion
<b>Key Deliverables</b>	
<p>Communication plan and establishment of staff advisory committee</p> <p>Construction plans review</p> <p>Clean out of former space – all staff review, file and plan</p> <p>Movement of teams from Hurstville to Kogarah to enable construction</p> <p>Construction of new offices, purchase of new equipment</p> <p>Movement of teams from Kogarah to Hurstville</p> <p>Hardware and software roll out, desk provisioning.</p> <p>Staff celebration and networking (First Birthday Celebrations)</p>	
<b>Outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All administration staff located in a single venue.</li> <li>• Ability to equip teams to work together and respond to the new organisation structure</li> <li>• Reductions in cultural and communication barriers</li> <li>• Refurbished facility with new equipment supports staff engagement</li> </ul>
<b>Learnings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff involvement in decision is vital</li> <li>• There is never enough communication</li> <li>• Although not everyone will be happy, transparent decision making and equity in provisions supports satisfaction with the process</li> <li>• Car parking is the main issue from a staff perspective</li> </ul>
<b>Future</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of the number of meeting rooms to ensure adequate provision (included in customer service are refurbishment)</li> <li>• Directorate restructure may result in further changes however these are unlikely to be major</li> </ul>

**Transformation Project: Service Delivery Reviews**

<b>Total Expenditure</b>	Captured in Operational Projects Stream
<b>Goal</b>	Review and prioritise services for transformation and change which will maximise benefits to the Georges River Community
<b>Key Deliverables</b>	
<p>Service Portfolio                  Service Statements                  Service Audit                  Service Delivery reviews:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communications Review</li> <li>• Customer Service Review</li> <li>• Insurance Review</li> <li>• Fleet review (light vehicle) phase 1</li> <li>• Accounts Payable review</li> <li>• Revenue Review</li> <li>• GST Review</li> <li>• Rates reconciliation and Methodology review</li> <li>• Fringe Benefits Tax review</li> <li>• Stores Management</li> <li>• Legal Services</li> <li>• Staff on boarding and exiting</li> </ul>	
<b>Outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of all Council Services with baseline service delivery information</li> <li>• Opportunity to respond to changing customer priorities and needs</li> <li>• Align services to Councils vision</li> <li>• Efficient use of resources that allow for the reinvestment of savings for example \$416,000 of legal costs due to improved delegations and processes</li> <li>• Clear strategic direction facilitated by implementation plans e.g. improved customer experience and strategic elevation of communications service</li> </ul>
<b>Learnings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service Delivery Reviews will often result in an extensive change program e.g. the Customer Experience Program is will last 24 months</li> <li>• Service reviews can be undertaken internally or externally. It is important to consider resource availability, cost, internal expertise and time when making this decision.</li> <li>• Contracts may have to be terminated if work is not being delivered eg Library Services review</li> </ul>
<b>Future</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service Delivery reviews have been a proven method of continuous improvement and will continue under the portfolio of the Director City Strategy and Innovation</li> </ul>



**Transformation Project: Property and Rating Consolidation**

<b>Total Expenditure</b>	Captured in the IMT and Finance Stream costs
<b>Goal</b>	All Property and Rating data captured, stored and utilised in one single system. The removal of duplicate processes of the two former Councils which were still in use post merge.
<b>Key Projects</b>	<p>Licencing and system purchasing                  Data cleansing and migration                  External communications (including rates notice redesign)                  Organisational communications and training</p>
<b>Outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistency across the LGA with respect to the way Council receives and responds to service, rates, and regulatory requests.</li> <li>• Decreased call handling time at the counter and over the phone.</li> <li>• Improved service with quick and easy access to the same information.</li> <li>• Increased online service functionality for former Kogarah residents requiring Section 149 Certificates (with 95% being able to meet customer expectation of 2 business days across the Local Government Area, an improvement from the previous 5 day period).</li> <li>• Rates payments, service requests, regulatory functions and development assessment supported by the same data and streamlined workflows.</li> <li>• The move to one system has delivered direct recurring annual savings of \$225,000, incorporating a \$75,000 saving on annual licencing maintenance fees.</li> </ul>
<b>Learnings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The use of in-house resources for P&amp;R has meant an internal investment in the success of the outcome with staff working on ensuring data accuracy and process improvements. The organisation has been able to capitalise on the knowledge and skill of staff, whilst building organisational capacity, capability and cross collaboration. A targeted and timely communications plan is critical to success</li> <li>• The importance of data accuracy cannot be overstated</li> </ul>
<b>Future</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rates harmonisation project to ensure equitable rates distribution across the Local Government Area and between rating categories.</li> </ul>

## Transformation Project: Innovation and Smart Cities

### Total Expenditure

Smart City Round 1  
 Commonwealth Government Funding \$296,943  
 UNSW \$334,299  
 Georges River Council \$26,500 NCIF  
 Total project \$657,742  
 Smart City Round 2  
 Commonwealth Government Funding \$380,507  
 UNSW \$151,081  
 Street Furniture Australia \$119,000  
 Georges River Council \$228,750

### Goal

- Early Development of partnerships and strategies to position the Georges River Area and our Council as a strong and influential entity in the innovation space.
- Begin building a culture of innovation by motivating Council staff to seek out new solutions to old problems.

### Key Projects

Smart Social Spaces  
 ChillOUT: Smart Social Spaces Creating Connected Green Places  
 Digital Committee  
 Cool Places Urban Oasis Program  
 NSW Smart Places Strategy Local Government Working Group  
 NSW Dept of Planning Smarter Planning Advisory Group  
 Australian Smart Communities Association membership (ASCA)

### Outcomes

- ASCA board membership
- Digital Maturity Index
- First Smart Cities Project, followed up by a successful round 2 application
- Strong partnerships with research and industry as well as other Councils at different stages of their smart city/ innovation journeys'
- Councils reputation in smart cities space has seen us approached by leaders in the space to speak at conferences, publish articles and be involved in multi-million dollar research initiatives.

### Learnings

- The merger created an environment of change for both staff and customers; this provided a platform for GRC to explore innovative ideas and projects.
- Leveraging engaged, creative staff is critical to achieving outcomes.
- There is important ground work that needs to be completed to support innovation for example changes to procurement.

### Future

- The new City, Strategy and Innovation directorate in collaboration with internal stakeholders will continue to deliver new innovative initiatives to deliver the best possible outcomes for the city as well as advance our reputation in the space.
- Develop an innovation strategy
- Seek out funding opportunities
- Continue to grow Councils partnerships and influence.

**Transformation Project: Leadership and Performance Excellence**

<b>Total Expenditure</b>	Captured within the People and Culture Stream NCIF allocation
<b>Goal</b>	Capable engaged staff across all levels who drive continuous improvement and deliver results.

**Key Projects**

- Capability Framework
- Transforming Leadership Program
- Certificate IV leadership, Project Management and WHS
- Councillor Induction Program and online portal and tools
- Local Government Performance Excellence Program
- Executive Committee Member – Performance Excellence Networking Committee
- Process Mapping and Improvement
- Management Challenge participation
- Organisational development – FTE, Captains Collective, Captains Circle, River Run

<b>Outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our improvement focus has meant the extension of our capability to continue to enhance our service offerings.</li> <li>• This has resulted in 89% of residents being satisfied with Council's performance.</li> </ul>
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<b>Learnings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data accuracy is imperative to benchmarking and performance management</li> <li>• Staff value training and investment when they can see clear links to their value in organisational strategy</li> <li>• Role clarity is often assumed however can be lacking</li> </ul>
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<b>Future</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regularly review the learning needs of our workforce and commit to upgrading their skills so that we can successfully adapt to the changing environment, increased demands and ever-expanding functionality of Council.</li> <li>• Persistently attract, recruit, hire and retain the most talented and superior employees available, regardless of age or diversity, and provide opportunities for continuous development.</li> <li>• Constantly strive to improve our processes and services in accordance with industry standards to achieve customer centricity, increased productivity and the capability embrace new developments or technologies</li> <li>• Continue participation in the LG performance Excellence Program</li> </ul>
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**Transformation Project: Organisational Culture**

<b>Total Expenditure</b>	Captured within the People and Culture Stream NCIF allocation
<b>Goal</b>	United, professional, honest and accountable staff committed to delivering outstanding results to our city an community
<b>Key Projects</b>	
<p>Organisation Mission and Values and behaviours                  Whole of Organisation Conference – River Run                  Hogan Profiles                  Rewards and Recognition program                  Skills and Performance Reviews                  Refreshed intranet                  1st Birthday Celebrations and Directorate Open House                  Service Awards                  Johnny Warren and Les Murray Memorial Soccer Cup                  GRC Touch football competition</p>	
<b>Outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant improvements to staff culture resulting in improved results for our community:</li> <li>• 80% increase in staff that feel valued and enjoy coming to work</li> <li>• 90% of staff committed to Councils success</li> <li>• 130% increase in staff who would recommend GRC as a place to work</li> </ul>
<b>Learnings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being mindful of the sub cultures of former Councils as well as new staff allowed a cultural program to be developed and implemented that was able to break down silos and create a GRC culture.</li> <li>• Culture change takes time and investment, and needs to be lead from the top</li> </ul>
<b>Future</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to proactively encourage a positive culture through engagement with staff and the community.</li> <li>• Motivate our workforce through feedback mechanisms, role clarity and a rewards and recognition program.</li> </ul>

## 7.5 KEY LEARNINGS

Situation description	Impact	Key learning
<b>Project Management</b>		
Unclear scope, time and cost	Quality of work is constrained by lack of clarity on projects budget, deadlines and scope.	Essential that project manager is able to clearly define all constraints and manage trade-offs as necessary
Suppliers/ business units not delivering on defined scope	End product does not provide a solution to the defined problem and reason for the project.	Clearly defined scope developed with the assistance of subject matter experts.
	Budget implications caused by change in requirements	Hold suppliers/ business units to account when delivering, this can be assisted through record keeping and escalation
Defining the project schedule milestones and key deliverables	Project delay caused by the delay of milestones and deliverables impacting on	Advice from subject matter experts to inform key milestones and build in slack into the schedule.
	Quality	Use of a Work Breakdown Structure to account for all key deliverables.
Benchmarking	Unable to measure changes	Ensure project base lines are measured to help determine scope, what's in and what's out.
<b>Budget</b>		
Allocating project budgets within a short timeframe	Over and under spends	Use subject matter experts and research all costs involved using similar projects and historical information
Inaccurate budget management	Over/ under spends and loss of grant funding	Use the appropriate escalations to monitor spending. Removal of funds early to allow for re allocation if there is a risk of not spending

Resourcing		
Over allocation of resources	Project delay, change fatigue, loss of project confidence	Engage responsible officers early to ensure capacity to deliver at all points of delivery. Where appropriate seek advice from the business and key stakeholders to understand if outsourcing is a viable option.
Lack of subject matter knowledge	Poor project scheduling, project delays	Investigate assigning project managers with experience in that area. Alternative is to engage subject matter experts heavily in the scoping phase.
Leave implications	Project delays	Open communication between project manager and team, all significant leave requests should be discussed with project manager so alternative arrangements can be made
Change Management		
Volume of change	Under achievement of outcomes	Forward planning of change projects using tools such as a change heat map to relieve pressure on the organisation and community
Lack of project management skill and a single methodology across the organisation	Conflicting and potentially ineffective project outcomes	Introduction of consistent and documented project management practices agreed to by the organisation facilitated by training, documentation and escalation practices
Lack of willingness to change	Culture issues and inefficient business decisions	Focus on cultural side of change management and the change management techniques and practices



Staff engagement		
Lack of ownership by working group members	Staff informed of projects but didn't feel any responsibility over actions due to the high volume of stakeholders.	Smaller more focused group may create better ownership over outcomes.
Stakeholder identification and management	Stakeholders with high power but low interest	Clearly define key stakeholders and those to only be kept informed. Too many people in the high category with differing opinions can cause conflict and impact the project.
		Ensure ET buy in before project kick off and enforce the project is ET endorsed.
Communications		
Lack of or inconsistent communication	Low levels of project take up	Create and action a tailored communication plan focused on key messages
Over communication	People switching off because there is too much information about everything T&C	Create and action a tailored communication plan focused on key messages
Communications ignored	Information not read by stakeholders because of lack of commitment to organisation or relevance attributed to communications content	Lack of accountability to be addressed with supervisor
Closure		
Document control	Missing information	Ensure all required project documentation and evidence is located in records management system. Project methodologies can be forgotten over period of time.
Handover		
Projects not completed once handed back to business	Project outcomes not realised	Handover document agreed to by both parties which establishes clear responsibilities and ongoing reporting requirements.

## 7.6 RISK MITIGATION

Risk	Mitigation strategy
Knowledge– access to appropriate information is not available or forthcoming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rollout of corporate search system and records management support to access information</li> <li>Key staff consulted and where required engaged in working groups</li> </ul>
Resources – appropriate resources to undertake project are not available or unable to be accessed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effective management of NCIF</li> <li>Manager engaged in the release of staff/ time spent on projects and resources formally committed</li> <li>Executive Team leading resource sharing</li> <li>Funds committed in budget areas</li> <li>Contingencies built into project tendering.</li> </ul>
Change resistance – stakeholders actively resist change processes delaying the implementation of the project plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Genuine staff engagement, benefits communicated, ownership and empowerment</li> <li>Change resilience training and individual intervention as required</li> <li>Scheduling to allow for recovery between resource intensive periods</li> <li>A commitment to celebrate success</li> </ul>
Documentation – project documentation is handled poorly resulting in poor project governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear reporting requirements, peer review of framework, Council quarterly reports, CFO involvement in budgeting, Executive Team review of plans and progress.</li> </ul>
Scope changes – changes to scope result in unattainable project goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Steering committee, Program Manager, Director and Executive Team review of project progress.</li> <li>Commitment of funds and resources prior to implementation</li> </ul>
Assumptions – decision making is impacted by incorrect or omitted assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working groups consisting of subject matter experts.</li> <li>Communication plans with keys messages developed and agreed to.</li> </ul>
Stakeholders – conflicting views and methods negatively influence progress or lack of engagement reduces benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff engagement in process, benefits communicated ownership and empowerment in various projects.</li> </ul>
Integration and alignment – failure to align with program goals reduces long term benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive to monitor program goals and ensure alignment through decision making</li> </ul>
Benefits – program benefits are not achieved resulting in community dissatisfaction, cost increases or service reduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open and transparent reporting.</li> <li>Project review process and a program of continuous improvement implemented.</li> </ul>







# THE AMALGAMATION JOURNEY FINAL REPORT

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