

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to express Council's commitment to implementing organisation-wide risk management principles, systems and processes that ensure consistent and effective assessment of risk in all Council's planning, decision making and operational processes.

2. POLICY INTENT

Council maintains a strong commitment to embedding effective risk management into all activities. Management has the responsibility to evaluate the risk environment, to put in place appropriate controls and to monitor the effectiveness of these controls, as well as communicate the risk management framework, plan and procedures throughout Council. This process is supplemented with a review of strategic risks by the Executive Management Committee (EMC).

Council has developed a risk management framework consistent with Australian Risk Management Standard (AS ISO 31000:2018 Risk Management) to assist to identify, treat, monitor and review risks to its operations and strategic objectives and apply appropriate internal controls.

3. WOLLONGONG 2035 OBJECTIVES

This policy contributes to the Wollongong 2035 Objective 'our local Council has the trust of the community' under the Community Goal, we are a connected and engaged community'.

4. POLICY

4.1 Definitions

For the purposes of Council's Risk Management Framework, the definitions of Risk are in accordance with Australian Risk Management Standard (AS ISO 31000:2018 Risk Management) being:

- **Risk** – The effect of uncertainty on objectives, where an effect is a deviation from the expected. It can be positive, negative or both and can address, create or result in opportunities and threats.
- **Risk Management** – Coordinated activities to direct and control an organisation with regard to risk.

4.2 Council's Risk Management Framework

Council provides critical services and infrastructure to the residents, ratepayers and visitors to Wollongong. Council also has service agreements and contractual obligations with government and non-government agencies and organisations and has its own strategic goals and objectives that it seeks to achieve on behalf of the community.

It is therefore incumbent on Council to understand the internal and external risks that may impact the delivery of these services, contracts and strategic objectives and have processes in place to identify, mitigate, manage and monitor those risks to ensure the best outcome for council staff and the community. It is also our responsibility to ensure the efficient, effective and ethical use of resources and services by ratepayers, residents, staff and visitors.

Council identifies, assesses and manages risk at both an enterprise (top-down') and a business (bottom-up') levels. This process covers the full spectrum of risks including policy, strategic, market, credit and operational risks, including compliance. This Framework aims to achieve the proper identification and oversight of the risks Council faces.

Council's risk management approach comprises the following key elements:

- Risk Management Framework
- Risk Appetite Statement

- Risk Management Plan

This framework is consistent with the accepted Australian Risk Management Standard (AS ISO 31000:2018 Risk Management).

4.3 Risk Management Culture

Risk Management Culture refers to the set of shared values and behaviours that characterize how Council considers risk in its day-to-day activities. Risk Management Culture should be embedded into and not separate from organisational culture.

Council aims to create a positive risk management culture where risk management is integrated into everyday activities and management risks is an integral part of governance, good management practice and decision making at Council. It is the responsibility of every staff member and their business unit to observe and implement councils risk management framework.

4.4 Risk Profile and Appetite

Council seeks to manage its risk profile carefully. This reflects the view that satisfactory fulfilment of its important public responsibilities could be seriously jeopardised if poorly managed risks were to lead to harm to our people, community and the environment or significant impairment of operations, financial losses and/or damage to Council's reputation.

In support of this, Council has developed a risk appetite for Council's most significant risks. This defines the amount of risk Council is willing to accept in pursuit of its strategic goals and will form the basis of Council's approach to managing risk and taking opportunities in day-to-day operational activities as well as strategic decision making.

4.5 Risk Management Plan

A risk management plan will be developed to provide structure for how Council will implement the Risk Management Framework and conduct its risk management activities. The primary purpose of the plan is to ensure that the Council's arrangements for managing risks are clearly understood and practiced, and identifies where, when and how different types of decisions relating to risk are made across the Council and by whom.

4.6 Risk Management Procedures

Risk management procedures shall be developed, where required, to provide a systematic way of identifying, assessing and prioritising risks, deciding how they will be managed, and documenting and communicating this across the Council. All risk management procedures are to be performed in accordance with AS ISO 31000:2018, using qualitative, semi-quantitative or quantitative methods and techniques that best suit the Council's operations, risk management maturity and decision-making needs.

4.7 Risk Management Framework – Continuous Review

Council is committed to continually improving its ability to manage risk. This will be achieved by ensuring that:

- any approved risk treatment plans have performance targets and timelines that can be measured against goals and objectives, and
- A methodology is implemented to obtain the data needed to measure the impact of the Council's risk management framework.

The ongoing monitoring and review of the information gathered from Council's risk management processes will be undertaken by the Enterprise Risk Management Committee (ERMC) to ensure the risk management framework is up-to-date and relevant.

The ERMC will undertake an annual assessment that provides assurance that Council's strategic risk register and risk profile are current and appropriate. The results of this review will also be communicated to the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee (ARIC).

In addition to the annual assessment undertaken by the ERM, Council maintains the flexibility to address emerging significant risks as they arise. Where an emerging risk is assessed as having strategic significance, the Executive Management Committee (EMC) may approve its inclusion in the Strategic Risk Register outside the annual review cycle, either temporarily or permanently. Such changes will be monitored through Council's risk governance arrangements and reported to the ARIC as appropriate.

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 Council

The elected Council is responsible for establishing the foundational elements of the Council's Risk Management Framework and setting the tone at the top. This includes approving the Risk Appetite Statement and Council's Risk Management Framework.

5.2 General Manager

Consistent with the General Manager's role under section 335 of the *Local Government Act 1993* to conduct the day-to-day management of the Council, the General Manager has ultimate responsibility and accountability for risk management and the implementation of Council's risk management framework. This includes:

- Approving the Council's Risk Management Plan and Strategic Risks.
- Ensuring sufficient resources are allocated to implement the council's risk management framework and deliver the internal controls needed to ensure council's risks are appropriately managed.
- Overseeing the Council's risk management framework and ensuring it is effectively communicated, implemented and reviewed regularly.
- Ensuring council operates within its risk appetite.
- Promoting and championing a positive risk culture.
- Assigning authority and accountability for risk management at the appropriate levels and to appropriate staff in the council and ensuring they are held accountable for these responsibilities.
- Annually attesting that Council's risk management framework complies with statutory requirements and remains contemporary and in line with best practice; and
- Approving the Council's implementation of corrective actions recommended by the Council's internal audit function, external audit and ARIC.

5.3 Directors and Divisional Managers

Risk Management is a core responsibility for Directors and Divisional Managers at Council and they are responsible for:

- Ensuring all staff manage their risks within their own work areas. Risks should be anticipated and reasonable proactive measures should be taken in response.
- Encouraging openness and honesty in the reporting and escalation of risks.
- Ensuring all staff have the appropriate capability to perform their risk management functions.
- Reporting to the General Manager or ERM on the status of risks and controls.
- Identifying risks that will affect the achievement of the Council objectives and monitoring the effectiveness of risk treatment and internal controls.
- Identifying and communicating improvements in council's risk management practices to the Governance and Risk Manager.

5.4 Ensuring Council staff are implementing Council's risk management framework as developed and intended and performing their risk management responsibilities.

5.5 Governance and Risk Manager

The Governance and Risk Manager leads the Risk Management Unit and is responsible for the day-to-day activities required to implement the Council's Risk Management Framework and provide specialist risk management skills and knowledge. Responsibilities include:

- Supporting the General Manager by coordinating and providing clear and concise risk information, advice and/or reports that can be used in planning and decision-making.
- Coordinating the various activities relating to risk management within the council.
- Helping to build a risk management culture within the council, including facilitating and driving risk management at the strategic and operational level within the council and ensuring consistency in practice.
- Ensuring there are easily accessible systems and processes in place to enable all staff to conveniently undertake risk management in their day-to-day work.
- Ensuring risk management processes are applied consistently across the council.
- Developing and maintaining a risk reporting framework to enable regular advising/reporting of key risks, and the management of those risks, to the general manager or their delegate.
- Supporting council staff with their risk management obligations and providing staff with advice and tools to ensure risk management compliance.
- Assisting in implementing effective risk management communication mechanisms and information systems/s.
- Establishing and maintaining an ongoing monitoring system to track the risk management activities undertaken within the council and assessing the need for further action.
- Assessing risk management information for completeness, accuracy and consistency (for example, risk registers, risk treatment plans), and
- Preparing advice or reports for the ARIC and attending Committee meetings where requested.

The Governance and Risk Manager will allocate responsibility for the implementation of some of the above functions as appropriate and as required by other members of the Risk Management Unit.

5.6 Staff

All Council staff are to be responsible for identifying and managing risk within their work areas:

- Being familiar with and understanding the principles of risk management.
- Complying with all policies, procedures and practices relating to risk management.
- Alerting management to risks that exist within their area, and
- Performing any risk management activities assigned to them as part of their daily role.

5.7 Dual Responsibilities

It is important that the risk management function is independent of line management to reduce the potential for management influence on the risks that are reported on, and to ensure independence.

Where risk management oversight or facilitation activities are performed by council staff with other council responsibilities, the council will put safeguards in place to limit any bias. These safeguards could include:

- any potential issues or conflicts of interest arising from other roles being communicated to ARIC
- risk management staff being prohibited from undertaking risk management evaluations and reviews in relation to the council operations they are responsible for, and/or
- ARIC regularly assessing that the safeguards put in place are effective.

5.8 Enterprise Risk Management Committee (ERMC)

The Enterprise Risk Management Committee (ERMC) oversees Council's overall risk management practices and is responsible for ensuring that Council's risks are identified, assessed and effectively managed in accordance with this Policy. The ERMC also reviews and monitors existing and emerging corporate risks, possible improvements and business continuity arrangements. The ERMC will undertake an annual review of Council's strategic risk register which will be reported to the ARIC.

5.9 Internal Audit

The Internal Audit function develops and implements a risk-based audit program to provide assurance that risks are identified and key controls to mitigate these risks are well-designed and working effectively and that overall good governance is evident. Internal Audit reports are reported to EMC and to the ARIC to ensure independent oversight of the effectiveness of controls and any recommendations that are made for improvement.

5.10 Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee (ARIC)

The ARICs role in relation to risk management is to support the Council and the General Manager to ensure that the Council's risk management framework is appropriate and operating effectively.

The breadth and depth of the assurance role is determined by council. This is addressed as part of the ARIC Terms of Reference and the ARIC four-year strategic workplan.

To ensure the Council and General Manager make informed budget decisions, the ARIC is to advise of the resources it considers that the council needs to effectively implement its risk management framework, having regard for any budget constraints facing the council operational environment.

6. REVIEW

This Policy will be reviewed at least annually by management to ensure it continues to meet the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1993*, the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021* and by Council every three years from the date of each adoption of the policy, or more frequently as required. This policy will be reviewed within one year of any significant restructure or change to Council's operating environment.

If the annual management review does not identify any material changes, the Manager, Customer and Business Integrity is authorised to endorse the review as complete.

7. REPORTING

The General Manager will publish an attestation statement in the Council's Annual Report indicating, for the prior financial year, whether Council has complied with its risk management requirements.

To ensure the risk management framework remains effective, relevant and complies with the Risk Management Standard, Council will provide quarterly reporting to ARIC and ERMC on the Risk Management function and activities.

8. RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Risk management is a fundamental component of decision making in all Council activities. As such all policies and procedures of Council should be guided by this Framework and the Risk Management Plan to maintain appropriate risk management considerations at the heart of all decisions and processes.

This policy and council's risk management approach are informed by the Risk Management Guidelines (AS ISO 31000:2018) issued by Standards Australia.

APPROVAL AND REVIEW	
Responsible Division	Customer and Business Integrity
Date adopted by Council	
Date/s of previous adoptions	26 June 2023, 31 August 2020
Date of next review	
Responsible Manager	Governance + Risk Manager