
**AUDIT, RISK AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE MURRAY ROOM, GRIFFITH ON
WEDNESDAY, 7 MAY 2025 COMMENCING AT 5:00 PM**

PRESENT

Stuart Heffer (Chair) (Community Representative), Helen Brill (Community Representative), Dorian Radue (Community Representative), George Youssef (Community Representative via Zoom), National Audits Group, Stephen Prowse (Zoom), NSW Audit Office, Nicky Rajani (Zoom)

Quorum = 3

STAFF

General Manager, Brett Stonestreet, Acting Director Business, Cultural & Financial Services, Max Turner, Senior WHS & Risk Coordinator, Raymond McCloy and Governance Manager & Minute Secretary, Leanne Austin

1 APOLOGIES

An apology was received from Director Economic & Organisational Development, Shireen Donaldson.

2 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RECOMMENDED on the motion of Stuart Heffer and Helen Brill that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 April 2025, having first been circulated amongst all members, be confirmed with an amendment on page 3 as follows: "Ms Brill enquired if Council intends to review high risk areas on an annual basis", not Ms Radue as printed.

3 BUSINESS ARISING

Nil

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Pecuniary Interests

There were no pecuniary interests declared.

Significant Non-Pecuniary Interests

There were no significant non-pecuniary interests declared.

Less Than Significant Non-Pecuniary Interests

Members making a less than significant non-pecuniary interest declaration may stay in the meeting and participate in the debate and vote on the matter.

George Youssef

Reason – Mr Youssef owns several properties in the Griffith region.

5 ITEMS OF BUSINESS

CL01 EMAIL FROM NSW AUDIT OFFICE

Mr Stonestreet stated his concerns regarding the inclusion of Council in the 2024 Local Government Auditor General's Report and the fact that Council's commentary explaining its liquidity position was not included in the publication.

Mr Rajani explained that the positions of councils at 30 June 2024 were consistently applied across the board and no commentary was included, however this approach may be reviewed in future.

Mr Stonestreet advised he would be meeting with the Auditor General and raised the issue of the ongoing treatment of RFS red fleet assets. A recent State Government paper "Inquiry into ability of local governments to fund infrastructure and services – NSW Government Response" states that this matter is still being considered and the RFS assets may be vested in the State Government in future.

Mr Rajani confirmed that the Audit Office's position had not changed and the treatment of the RFS assets was a materiality opinion.

Mr Turner advised Council's liquidity position has improved as the Griffin Green project has now been finalised and revenue increased through the special rate variation. Council is reviewing its position on a quarterly basis.

RECOMMENDED on the motion of Stuart Heffer and Dorian Radue that the information be noted.

CL02 RISK IMPROVEMENT PLAN - CIP

RECOMMENDED on the motion of Dorian Radue and Helen Brill that the Committee note the information provided.

CL03 UPDATE FROM COUNCIL'S SENIOR WHS AND RISK COORDINATOR

Mr McCloy provided an update in relation to progress being made with Council's Risk Management system. Once documents have been finalised, training will be rolled out to all staff. Risk assessments will be required for all departments and these will be registered and monitored.

Mr Prowse advised he would contact Mr McCloy in relation to progress made as this will inform work being done on the WHS audit.

Mr Stonestreet stated that the finalised documents will be presented to the Committee at a future meeting date.

RECOMMENDED on the motion of Stuart Heffer and Dorian Radue that the Committee note the information provided.

Mr McCloy left the meeting the time being 5:30 pm.

CL04 SECOND QUARTER PERFORMANCE REPORT 2024/25

Mr Turner provided an overview of the second quarterly review report noting that the third quarterly review will be presented to Council later this month. The latest data indicates an improved position.

Mr Stonestreet advised that in the recently published “Inquiry into ability of local governments to fund infrastructure and services – NSW Government Response”, changes to the special rate variation application process have been proposed. Under the proposal, special rate variation applications for operational issues would still be assessed by IPART however the final decision would come back to Council for determination. The paper will be considered in more detail at the next Committee meeting in August.

RECOMMENDED on the motion of Stuart Heffer and George Youssef that the information be noted.

CL05 AGENDA FORWARD PLAN

RECOMMENDED on the motion of Helen Brill and George Youssef that the report be noted.

CL06 INVESTMENTS REPORT

Mr Turner provided an overview of Council’s investment results as at February 2025.

RECOMMENDED on the motion of Helen Brill and George Youssef that the report be noted.

CL07 REVIEW TERMS OF REFERENCE AND CHARTER

The Committee discussed and made changes to the Terms of Reference document. Ms Radue offered to review the Charter in more detail. This will be considered at a future Committee meeting.

RECOMMENDED on the motion of Dorian Radue and George Youssef that:

- (a) Changes be made to the Terms of Reference as discussed.
- (b) The Terms of Reference and Internal Audit Charter be presented to a future meeting for adoption.

CL08 REVIEW STRATEGIC WORK PLAN AND ANNUAL WORK PLAN

Ms Radue sought clarification regarding the high risk rating for the Water and Sewer Operations audit and whether this has changed following the Asset Management review. Mr Prowse advised the assessment of risk needs to be considered with relevant staff. This was taken on notice.

Ms Radue requested that the Core Requirements checklists are to be included as a separate Agenda item for each Committee meeting.

RECOMMENDED on the motion of Dorian Radue and Helen Brill that:

- (a) The Strategic Work Plan as attached to the report be endorsed.
- (b) The Annual Work Plan for 2025/26 be as follows:
 - Fleet / Plant Management

- Project and Contract Management
- Airport Operations
- Depot and Stores Management.

Mr Rajani left the meeting at 6:45 pm.

CL09 ANNUAL ASSESSMENT - INTERNAL AUDIT AND ARIC FUNCTION

The Committee discussed the layout of the draft Annual Assessment. A Workshop is to be held following the August Committee meeting to work on the content and format of the document.

6 OUTSTANDING ACTION REPORT

Mr Heffer requested that updates to the Outstanding Action Report be presented in red text to make them easier for the Committee to read.

RECOMMENDED on the motion of George Youssef and Stuart Heffer that the report be noted.

CL11 SERVICE REVIEWS UPDATE

Mr Stonestreet advised that Council would be considering a report on 13 May 2025 regarding the recently conducted gym survey. Following the Council Meeting, recommendations presented in the service review will be able to be progressed.

RECOMMENDED on the motion of George Youssef and Stuart Heffer that the report be noted.

7 GENERAL BUSINESS

Nil

8 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee is to be held on Wednesday, 6 August 2025 at 5:00 pm.

There being no further business the meeting terminated at 7:06 pm.