

# Chapter 1 Introduction

About our first Annual Report





Our first Annual Report covers an extended period of almost 14 months, from 13 May 2016 (post-amalgamation) to 30 June 2017. It has been prepared in accordance with the Local Government Act 1993.

The purpose of the Annual Report is to provide assurance to the community that the delivery of services, infrastructure and projects has continued in an ethical and transparent manner while the new Council was being established.

The NSW Government proclaimed Northern Beaches Council on 12 May 2016. The three former Councils of Manly, Warringah and Pittwater were merged into one and all 1,800 employees transferred to the new organisation.

The proclamation by the NSW Government (Local Government (Council Amalgamations) Proclamation 2016) appointed an Administrator, Dick Persson, to fill the role as elected Council until the elections in September 2017. Chief Executive Officer (formerly General Manager), Mark Ferguson, was appointed to manage the day to day operations of Council.

To assist the Administrator, and to make sure that decision-making appropriately reflected the diverse views of the community in a balanced and fair way, a formal committee structure was established almost immediately following the Proclamation:

**Implementation Advisory Group (IAG)** - comprised six members (former Mayor's and Councillors) and was established to provide advice to the Administrator on implementing the new Council. The IAG met on twelve occasions.

**Local Representation Committee (LRC)** - initially comprised 22 members (former Councillors) however was reduced to 21 members. This committee was established to provide input into local views and issues. The LRC held 10 meetings.

**Strategic Reference Groups (SRG)** - 11 groups comprising 192 members. Each group met on at least six occasions and helped shape the draft Community Strategic Plan and prepared a range of strategic papers.

### **Delivering tangible benefits to the community**

The new Council has the capability to deliver major projects while maintaining long-term financial sustainability. The merger has made the following capital investments and community programs possible through NSW Government infrastructure funding (Stronger Communities Fund) and Council's efficiency savings (Northern Beaches Merger Savings Fund):

- **Connecting the Northern Beaches:** This \$32.6 million infrastructure program is being delivered in partnership with the NSW Government and includes a spectacular world-class coastal walkway and cycleway stretching from Manly to Palm Beach as well as the 'Connecting All Through Play' program that features a regional network of inclusive accessible playgrounds, sporting facilities, and surf lifesaving clubs
- **Community cohesion and wellbeing:** Funded through the Merger Savings Fund, which quarantines efficiency savings to deliver tangible community benefits, this program invests a total of \$5.64 million over the next four years into four different outcome areas: Arts and Cultural Program; Youth Program; Environment Program; and a Community Events program.

### Integrated Planning and Reporting

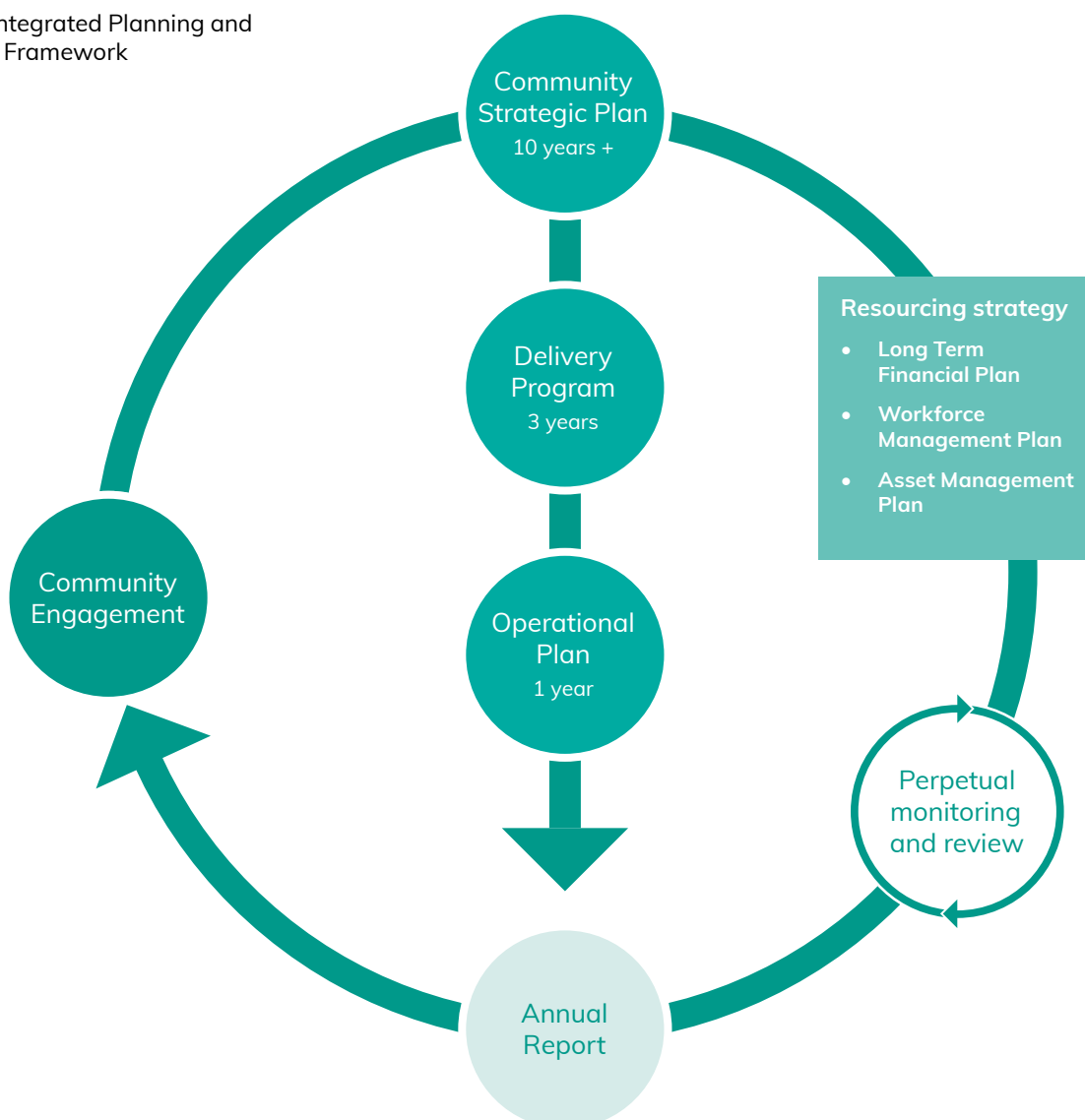
The Annual Report is part of our Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework (see Figure 1 below). It documents our performance against the 2016/17 Operational Plan. The Operational Plan was adopted by Council on 7 July 2016 and brought together the existing operational plans from each of the three former Council's – Manly, Pittwater and Warringah.

The development of the Operational Plan 2016/17 was guided by the Community Strategic Plans of each of the former Councils. A uniting theme through these and the new draft CSP for the Northern Beaches is the community's desire to protect its extraordinary natural environment and our unique lifestyle. This underlying theme is strongly reflected in the Operational Plan 2016/17 and hence also this Annual Report.

The incoming Council will finalise the CSP and the Delivery Program which will combine to set the long term vision and direction for everything Council does during the term of the new Council. Both documents must be finalised by June 2018.

A quarterly financial and management report (September, December and March) tracked progress against the actions in the 2016/17 Operational Plan.

Figure 1: Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework



## Good Governance

Good governance is about the processes for making and implementing decisions. It is about being able to demonstrate that the community's interests are at the centre of all decision-making and that a rigorous process for making those decisions was followed.

Good governance practices are embedded throughout the new Council's operations; making sure that Council not only has clear policies, processes and standards in place (e.g. Code of Conduct, Complaints Management but also ensuring that Council actively nurture and support a corporate culture that facilitates ethical conduct and genuine community engagement. This includes providing ethics and code of conduct training for staff, 'recruiting values, not just skills', providing support and training regarding Integrated Planning and Reporting requirements, and providing the appropriate induction for staff and contractors.

Good decision-making processes, and therefore good governance, share several characteristics. All have a positive effect on various aspects of local government including strong executive leadership; clear consultation policies and practices; meeting procedures; service quality protocols; Councillor and Officer conduct; values-based recruitment, role clarification and good working relationships (Good Governance Guide, VIC Government 2016).

These characteristics, and how they have been applied to establishing the new Council, can be briefly summarised as follows:

### ✓ Good governance is accountable

Council reports on decisions publicly as part of its corporate governance practices (e.g. making Council Agenda and Minutes available online and webcasting Council meetings). We also engage with the community throughout project delivery and make sure that decisions are explained clearly, honestly and on the basis of best available information.

### ✓ Good governance is transparent

Council provides regular and formal reports on our performance through our Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework as well as through project-specific information. Community members are able to see how and why a decision was made – what information, advice, consultation and legislation Council considered in the process.

### ✓ Good governance follows the rule of law

Our decisions are consistent with relevant legislation, namely the *Local Government Act 1993*, *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*, and the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.

### ✓ Good governance is responsive, equitable and inclusive

Through our Community Engagement Framework and policy, we work to ensure that we are responsive to the needs of the entire community while balancing competing interests in a timely, appropriate and responsive manner.

### ✓ Good governance is participatory

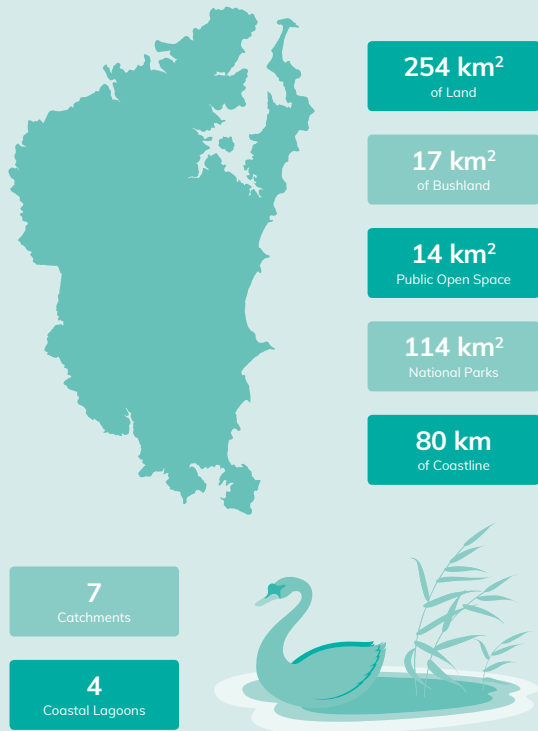
We make use of a variety of consultation methods to make sure that our engagement approach does not exclude anyone from participation.

### ✓ Good governance is effective and efficient

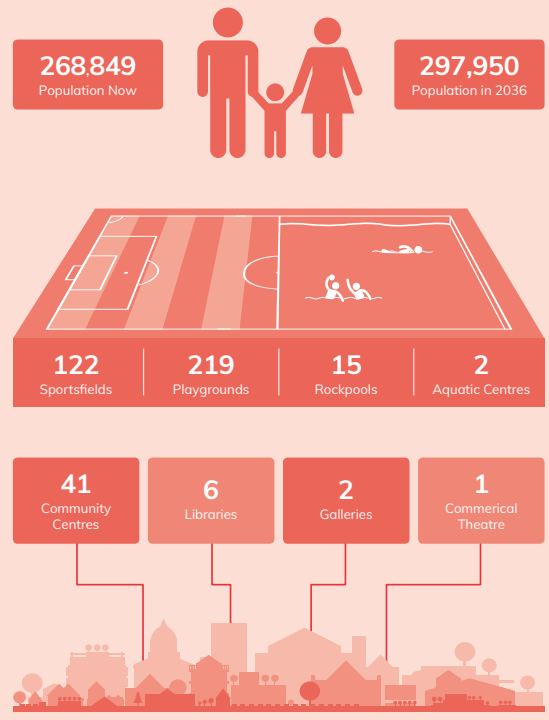
We implement decisions and follow processes that make the best use of the available people, resources and time.



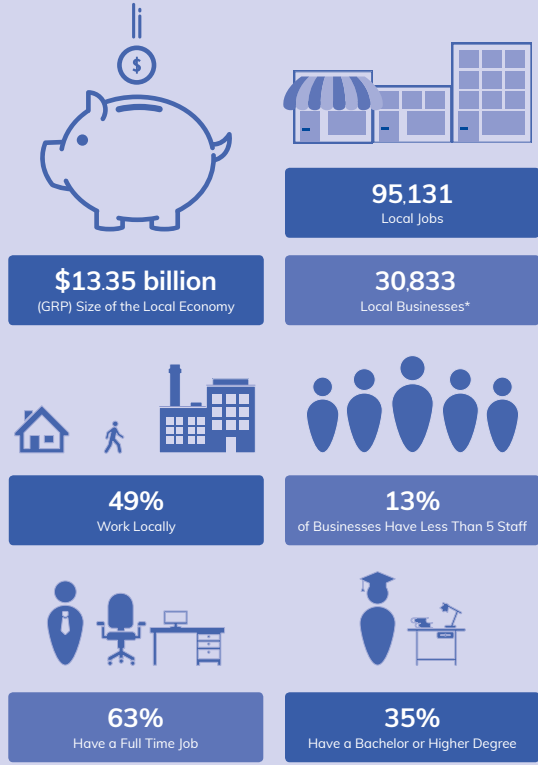
## Environment



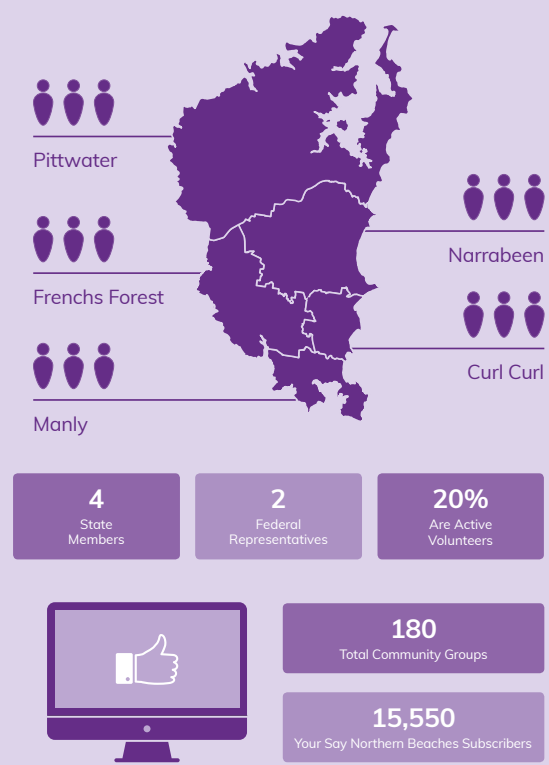
## Community



## Economy



## Governance



## Northern Beaches Council Vision

Delivering the highest quality service, valued and trusted by our community.

## Northern Beaches Council Values



### Teamwork

**because**  
working together delivers



### Integrity

**because**  
we are proud of doing  
what we say



### Respect

**because**  
valuing everyone is how  
we make a difference



### Service

**because**  
we care as custodians  
for the community



### Trust

**because**  
being open brings  
out our best



### Leadership

**because**  
everyone has a leading role



## Northern Beaches Council Structure



**Mark Ferguson**  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
 Mark has Bachelor of Business and Executive Master of Business Degree:

- Transformation and Performance
- Finance
- Integrity and Complaints Resolution



**Helen Lever**  
**General Manager Customer and Corporate**  
 Holds a Master of Education.  
 Customer and Corporate is responsible for:

- Governance and Risk
- Customer Services
- Systems and Information Management
- Human Resources
- Community Engagement and Communications
- Library Services
- General Counsel



**Ben Taylor**  
**General Manager Environment and Infrastructure**  
 Holds a Bachelor of Applied Science and Diploma of Government Management.  
 Environment and Infrastructure is responsible for:

- Transport and Civil Infrastructure
- Capital Projects
- Parks and Recreation
- Waste Management and Cleansing
- Natural Environment and Climate Change
- Property



**David Kerr**  
**General Manager Planning, Place and Community**  
 Holds a Bachelor of Arts and a Master of Urban and Regional Planning Degree.  
 Planning, Place and Community are responsible for:

- Development Assessment
- Children's Services
- Environmental Compliance
- Strategic and Place Planning
- Community, Arts and Culture

## Our performance Snapshot

