

**Minutes of Special Meeting 13 October 2025 online**

**Meeting commenced at 6:30pm**

Prior to the meeting the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee (ARIC or Committee) met in-camera online with the Audit Office of NSW.

**PRESENT**

<b>Audit Risk &amp; Improvement Committee Members</b>	
Independent Member - Chair	Ilona Meyer
Independent Member	Chris Davies
Independent Member	Helen Hu
Councillor	Clr Philippa Scott
<b>Other attendees</b>	
General Manager	Peter Gainsford
Director Property and Capital Projects	Ryann Midei
Director Planning	Simone Plummer
Director Corporate	Sharon Bowman
Director Engineering	Peter Shields
Chief Financial Officer	Chris Sleiman
Financial Reporting and Control Manager	Sajjad Ali
Risk WHS and Audit Manager	Justin Lucas
Risk and Audit Officer – Minute taker	Ngaire Meekan
Audit Leader for IWC, Audit Office of NSW	Chariee Bultitude
Director, Financial Audit, Audit Office of NSW	Manuel Moncada

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY**

The chairperson acknowledged the traditional custodians of the land on which the meeting took place and paid his respects to elders past and present and emerging.

The Chair, Ilona Meyer, welcomed the Committee, including new independent member Helen Hu ARIC Independent member (appointed by Council on 23 September 2025 for a period of 4 years) and other attendees to the meeting.

The Chair noted that the focus of the meeting was on the review and endorsement of the Draft Annual Financial Statements and Special Schedules for the year ended 30 June 2025, with an additional item on Financially Sustainable Service Delivery Program Update.

**APOLOGIES**

Apologies from Belinda Lawn, Independent Member and Ruth Callaghan, Director Community.

## DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS

The Committee Members confirmed there were no changes to their disclosures of interests.

All members confirmed they had no conflicts of interest in relation to any matter before the ARIC.

### Out of session documents provided to ARIC Members

- Draft Financial Statements and Financial Overview, prepared by Chris Sleiman, provided out of session to ARIC members on 27 August 2025.
- Feedback on ARIC questions, prepared by Chris Sleiman, provided out of session to ARIC members on 30 September 2025.

### RIS1025 Item 1 General Manager Verbal Update

#### DISCUSSION

The General Manager provided an update on Council activities, including the Fairer Future Plan adopted by Council at the 30 September 2025 Extraordinary Council meeting. He noted that it is the largest strategic planning exercise in the history of the Inner West. The Plan, which addresses housing within the LGA, underwent some modifications before adoption and is now being implemented by Planning Directorate staff. The ARIC congratulated staff and Council on their work in producing the Fairer Future Plan.

The General Manager highlighted current work nearing completion, notably the Greenway, which is a major capital works initiative to create a cycle and pedestrian way from the Cooks River to Iron Cove and will be open in December 2025.

The General Manager updated the Committee on community engagement in relation to Council's infrastructure priorities and in relation to affordable housing initiatives. Council is progressing with an expression of interest process to partner with Community Housing providers for affordable housing on Council-owned car parks.

The General Manager noted that Council submitted a 12-month update to the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) on the implementation of actions arising from Operation Hector. ICAC has noted and accepted the update. A final (24-month) update is scheduled for next year.

The General Manager outlined the recent commencement of the Financially Sustainable Service Delivery Program, including an extensive staff engagement initiative called 'All in for Excellence.' Nearly 1,000 permanent staff are participating in sessions aimed at gathering ideas for financial sustainability and improving organisational communication. This initiative is a key area of focus for coming months.

The General Manager updated the Committee about the Inner West Council Annual Report for the year ended 30 June 2025, which will be reported to Council at the November 2025 Council meeting.

#### RECOMMENDATION

**That Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee receive and note the verbal update.**

Moved: Helen Hu  
Seconded: Chris Davies  
Carried

## RIS1025 Item 2 Draft 2024/25 Annual Financial Statements

The Chief Financial Officer referred to the paper and it was taken as read.

The Chief Financial Officer discussed the process undertaken this year to produce the draft financial statements, and the audit process. The Chief Financial Officer and the Financial Reporting and Control Manager addressed the following:

- the operating results
- revaluations and the expert advice received from financial advisors and engineers
- specific changes made to the statements during the Audit process
- specific questions, corrections and comments from members of the ARIC.

The Committee noted there had been few changes reported by the Chief Financial Officer since the previous pro forma copy of the Financial Statements was provided and that these changes did not impact the reported results.

The Director, Financial Audit, NSW Audit Office provided a report on the conduct of the audit and noted matters which appear in the Closing Report and their intention to issue an unqualified opinion for the general purpose financial statements and the special schedule for permissible income for general rates for the year ended 30 June 2025.

The NSW Audit Office representatives stated they received suitable access as needed to Council's financial records and personnel.

The Committee discussed its:

- function under section 428A(2)(d) of the *Local Government Act 1993* to keep under review certain aspects of Council's operations, including Council's financial management; and
- role, as specified under the Financial Management Framework section of page 80 of the Guidelines on Risk Management and Internal Audit for Local Government in NSW issued by the Office of Local Government (Guidelines) to advise the General Manager and governing body of the Council about Council's external accountability and financial reporting framework, financial management framework, financial position and performance, and grant and tied funding policies and procedures.

The Chief Financial Officer:

- provided the Committee with information about Council's external accountability and financial reporting framework, financial management framework, financial position and performance, and grant and tied funding policies and procedures; and
- provided assurance to the Committee that it has been provided with information and that Council has appropriate processes in place to ensure the Committee discharges its role in relation to each of the matters specified under the Financial Management Framework section of page 80 of the Guidelines, encompassing the external accountability and financial reporting framework, the financial management framework, financial position and performance and grants and tied funding policies and procedures.

The ARIC Members acknowledged the effort of Council's staff and the NSW Audit Office to deliver the audited draft Financial Statements and to receive an unqualified opinion.

## RECOMMENDATION

**That Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee endorse:**

- 1. General Purpose Financial Statements (GPFS) for the year ended 30 June 2025**
- 2. Permissible income for general rates for the Financial Year 2025/26**
- 3. Report on Infrastructure assets as at 30 June 2025 (unaudited).**

**The ARIC thanked and congratulated the finance team and Council on their great work and the financial outcomes delivered over the year ended 30 June 2025.**

Moved: Helen Hu

Seconded: Chris Davies

Carried

### **RIS1025 Item 3 Financially Sustainable Service Delivery Program Update**

#### **DISCUSSION**

The Director Corporate, Sharon Bownman tabled the report, and it was taken as read. Council, in endorsing the program, sought to ensure that it and the ARIC receive ongoing briefings on this important initiative.

The Director Corporate outlined that the program has made significant progress, with a working group established, leadership briefed, templates, project plan and communication plans distributed to service unit managers to enable involvement (including briefing and key messages to staff).

The Director Corporate discussed the 'All in for Excellence' internal consultation process, which is engaging with all permanent staff for ideas to improve services. The project is on track and updates and reports will be delivered as planned to ARIC and Council.

ARIC and management discussed the opportunity for this exercise to consider the services provided by Council in the future and key drivers of those services. ARIC discussed how management are ensuring the rigour and independence of the analysis.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

**That Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee receive and note the report.**

Moved: **Chris Davies**

Seconded: **Helen Hu**

Carried

Meeting closed at 7.12 pm.

#### **CHAIRPERSON**