



northern
beaches
council

ATTACHMENT BOOKLET

NORTHERN BEACHES COUNCIL MEETING

TUESDAY 17 FEBRUARY 2026

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Council Policy

Communications

Policy Statement

This policy provides an understanding of the different communication channels Northern Beaches Council use, their intended purpose and the roles and responsibilities of staff in accessing and using them to ensure all communications are well coordinated, effectively managed and responsive to the diverse information needs of the community.

Principles

Council is committed to delivering its Community Strategic Plan – Shape 2028 (CSP) and the vision of ‘a safe, inclusive and connected community that lives in balance with our extraordinary coastal and bushland environment.’ Communication with the community is a key function that underpins understanding and awareness of the how the community can contribute to, and how Council is delivering, on the CSP outcomes and goals.

Communication will be in a manner that is:

- accessible and available in multiple formats to accommodate diverse information needs;
- informative and proactive, promoting awareness about the decisions of Council, policies, programs, services and decisions;
- open and transparent, encouraging two-way communication through a variety of channels that demonstrates how feedback has been used to support decisions;
- positive and builds an engaged and highly satisfied community;
- consistent, timely, accurate and responsive to our community needs; and
- respectful of the democratic process acknowledging Council resolutions represent the majority view.

Scope and purpose

This policy applies to Council staff and defines the parameters for staff and business units who:

- are authorised to administer or contribute to the development of Council’s official communication tools;
- propose to use social media or other digital channels to promote the Council’s policies, programs, events and services;
- use social media in a personal capacity.

Communications channels

Council’s communication channels includes digital media (websites, social media, Electronic Direct Mail and other online sites), print and broadcast media. These communication channels are for the use of the organisation’s programs, events and services only. Only authorised staff administrators are permitted to approve content through workflow processes prior to being published.

Council supports the free promotion of not-for-profit community groups that run events and programs that benefit the local community via the ‘Event Calendar’ on Council’s website. Council reserves the right to reject any listing if it is deemed commercial, outside the Council area and/ or not in keeping with Council’s values.



Where community-run events and programs receive Council grant funding, they may be eligible for promotion through selected Council communication channels, at the discretion of the Communications Team.

Branding

All public communication materials and channels must adhere to and reflect Council's adopted identity, employing the Brand Identity Guidelines.

Media relations

Media enquiries are managed by authorised staff in the Communications Team and only they are responsible for the coordination of all responses to enquiries. The Communications Manager is responsible for ensuring the appropriate workflow processes are followed, prior to approval and distribution.

All other Council staff are not authorised to communicate with the media unless directly permitted by a relevant Director or the Chief Executive Officer.

Unauthorised release of Council information by staff will be referred to Council's Code of Conduct.

Spokespeople

The Mayor is the official spokesperson of Council. If the Mayor is unavailable, he/she can delegate to the Deputy Mayor and/ or other Councillor.

The Mayor is responsible for the allocating of public speaking roles at Council organised events requiring Councillor participation.

The Chief Executive Officer is the official spokesperson on high-level operational matters. Directors, Executive Managers and/or Managers can act as spokesperson on medium-low level operational matters, following approval from the Chief Executive Officer.

Digital channels

Website

Council's websites host a range of content specific to services, events and programs, as well as offering self-service products that offer 24/7 flexibility that will conform to a minimum Level AA of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2 (WCAG 2.1).

All website content must be approved through a workflow process by authorised staff administrators and/ or the Communications Manager prior to it being published online.

The Chief Executive Officer or other delegate must approve all requests for the development of sub-sites, including websites and social media pages.

Electronic Direct Mail

Electronic Direct Mail (EDM) and email marketing campaigns are a form of digital marketing sent to a list of email subscribers. This digital platform is acknowledged as an effective tool for the direct dissemination of information and for its ability to provide personalised content.

Staff working on EDMs will manage all personal information collected for email marketing in accordance with the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 2009 NSW.



Social media

Social media includes online communication tools that allow user participation and interaction. Social media is used by Council as part of a communications or community engagement plan and / or as part of a communications strategy. Social media is acknowledged for its great potential as:

- a two-way mechanism to encourage feedback and comment from the community;
- a strategic tool for the promotion of council initiatives and events;
- an immediate and flexible channel to receive or distribute time sensitive information;
- listening mechanism to improve our understanding of community attitudes towards topics or issues; and
- as a way of fostering debate on a topic or issue.

The Communications Team and or/ authorised administrators selectively use approved social media tools to:

- promote selected services, events, projects, policies and activities;
- enhance the Northern Beaches as a visitor destination;
- develop stronger relationships with community members;
- provide an accessible way for customers and the community to communicate with Council;
- support and complement the use of traditional media;
- expand Council's community engagement opportunities; and
- provide essential updates to the community during a crisis or emergency.

Council also uses specific online media sites selectively to:

- protect Council's reputation by monitoring social media activity that relates to Council;
- place Council's statements of facts directly onto the public record; and
- respond or clarify an issue in detail.

Managing, moderating and maintaining approved social media sites

Only approved site administrators/ authors may post content on behalf of Council on Council's official social media sites. This includes posting text, videos and photos, interacting with other social media users and responding to questions and requests. Moderation, monitoring and responding is the responsibility of the approved site administrators/ authors only.

Dealing with offensive behaviour in social media

Council will not tolerate content that is offensive, obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, bullying, discriminatory, hateful, racist, sexist, infringes copyright, constitutes a contempt of court, breaches a Court suppression order, or is otherwise unlawful.

Such content will be removed and may be referred to the authorities. Users who breach Council's Communications Policy may be banned from accessing Council's social media sites. Council also reserves the right to moderate content from individuals who seek to monopolise and dominate Council's social media sites for their own purposes.



Council staff use of social media

Council recognises that staff may wish to use social media in a personal capacity. Staff should be aware they are personally responsible and liable for content they publish or comments they may host on their own accounts on any form of social media.

Staff should take measures to ensure their personal comments cannot be mistaken for the official view of Council, impact on the staff member performing their role within Council or make comments on Council business or policy.

This does not apply to the functions of sharing, tagging, liking official Council posts on social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook and others. The exception to making comment is where it relates to professional platforms such as LinkedIn where staff can acknowledge the delivery of Council projects and activities when they have already been promoted through official channels.

Council's Code of Conduct applies to staff use of social media and requires staff act in a way that enhances public confidence in local government, and they must not conduct themselves in a manner that is likely to bring Council or other Council officials into disrepute, at all times and to not place themselves in a position where they have a conflict of interest or that is not in line with Council values or policies.

References and related documents

Northern Beaches Council documents:

- Code of Conduct
- Access to Information Policy
- Disability Inclusion Action Plan
- Community Engagement Policy and Matrix
- Customer Experience Strategy
- Digital Transformation Strategy
- Community Strategic Plan – Shape 2028

Related legislation:

- Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (GIPA Act)
- Local Government Act 1993
- Independent Commission Against Corruption Act
- Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 NSW
- Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 2009 NSW
- State Records Act 1998
- Copyright Act 1968 Cth; and
- Copyright Amendment (Digital Agenda) Act 2000 Cth.



Definitions

Communication channels	Includes digital media, websites, social media, other online sites, print media and broadcast media.
Council staff	Persons employed or engaged by Council including casuals, contractors and volunteers.
Social media	Applications that enable users to create and share information or ideas with others or to participate in social networking, whether known now or developed in the future.

Responsible Officer

Executive Manager Community Engagement and Communications.

Review Date

July 2022

Revision History

Revision	Date	Status	TRIM Ref
1	9 July 2019	Draft Policy referred to Council Meeting 23 July 2019	2019/382423
2	26 November 2019	Communications referred to Council for adoption.	2019/382423



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MINUTES

AUDIT, RISK AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

held in the Flannel Flower Room, Civic Centre, Dee Why on

TUESDAY 9 SEPTEMBER 2025

MINUTES OF AUDIT, RISK AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING - 9 SEPTEMBER 2025

**Minutes of the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee meeting
held on Tuesday 9 September 2025
in the Flannel Flower Room, Civic Centre, Dee Why
Commencing at 2:02pm**

ATTENDANCE:

Members of the Committee

Chair Stephen Horne (Chair)
Member Mark McCoy
Member Robert Lagaida
Member Tiffany Roxburgh
Member Cr Sarah Grattan

Council Officers (attendees)

Scott Phillips	Chief Executive Officer
Kelly Loveridge	Chief Operating Officer
Sally Hall	Internal Ombudsman
Sarah Dunstan	Executive Manager Governance & Risk
Aline Fernandes	Internal Auditor
Lauren Reti	Senior Advisor - Governance

Guest Attendees

Cr Sue Heins	Mayor
Cr Nicholas Beaugeard	Councillor - <i>remote</i>

Visiting Staff

Amy Noakes	Executive Manager Human Resources
Lisa Donohue	Workers Compensation Team Leader
Glenn Quince	Team Leader - WHS
Michael Turner	Chief Information Officer
Mark Jones	Executive Manager Strategy, Performance & Records
Michael McDermid	Manager, Corporate Strategy
Catherine Macfarlane	Team Leader – Organisational Performance

MINUTES OF AUDIT, RISK AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING - 9 SEPTEMBER 2025

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MINUTES OF AUDIT, RISK AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING - 9 SEPTEMBER 2025

1.0 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Sue Prichard.

2.0 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Tiffany Roxburgh declared that she resides in the Northern Beaches local government area, is the Treasurer of the Pittwater High School Parents & Citizens Association, a Non-Executive Director of the Animal Welfare League NSW and is employed full time as Chief Operating Officer at Garvan Institute of Medical Research.

Stephen Horne declared that he has stepped into the role of Chairperson for both the City of Sydney and City of Parramatta Audit, Risk and Improvement Committees.

3.0 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

3.1 MINUTES OF THE AUDIT, RISK AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 10 JUNE 2025

OUTCOME

That the minutes of the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee Meeting held on 10 June 2025, copies of which were previously circulated to all members, are hereby confirmed as a true and correct record of the proceedings of that meeting.

4.0 ITEMS RESOLVED BY EXCEPTION

Nil

5.0 ACTION ITEMS FROM MINUTES

5.1 ACTION ITEMS UPDATE

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee (ARIC) with a progress update on the actions arising from the minutes of previous meetings of the ARIC and those actions completed since the previous meeting.

DISCUSSION

The ARIC noted that all action items listed were either not due yet, or being resolved in reports presented at this meeting.

OUTCOME

That the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee note the progress on actions arising from the minutes of previous meetings.

MINUTES OF AUDIT, RISK AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING - 9 SEPTEMBER 2025

6.0 STANDING ITEMS

6.1 VERBAL UPDATE BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee with a brief update on current issues, particularly those relating to areas of potential risk for Council.

DISCUSSION

The Chief Executive Officer's (CEO) report included the following:

- An update on the tragedy that occurred at Dee Why Beach on Saturday 6th September 2025, the impact on community and Council's involvement as first responders. Council is awaiting the outcome of an investigation from NSW Department of Primary Industries, which will be reported on at the next meeting.
- An update on the outcome of the IPART process and Council's role to demonstrate performance and what this will mean going forward.
- The Voice of the Customer survey results for last month were at an all time high. The survey has been running for over 7 years, and any person who receives a service from the Council is invited to respond. The trend of record satisfaction has occurred over the last 3 months.
- James Farrington has been recruited as the Director Planning & Place. He commences 22 September 2025.
- Change to staff numbers with the contracted lifeguards that serviced the 9 northern beaches coming on as permanent Council staff.
- An update on the Office of Local Government's new Model Code of Meeting Practice. Council will be reviewing its current Code of Meeting Practice to bring it in line with the model code.
- Also discussed child safeguarding at Council.

OUTCOME

That the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee note the Chief Executive Officer's verbal update.

MINUTES OF AUDIT, RISK AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING - 9 SEPTEMBER 2025

6.2 SAFETY, WELLBEING AND INJURY MANAGEMENT REPORT

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide the Audit, Risk, and Improvement Committee (ARIC) with an update on Work Health & Safety (WHS), Workers Compensation (WC) and Wellbeing during the period 1 January 2025 to 30 June 2025.

DISCUSSION

The Executive Manager Human Resources, Workers Compensation Team Leader and Team Leader – WHS provided an update on this item and discussed the following:

- The number of claims made and costs incurred has continued to decrease
- Average number of 'lost days' for claims is reducing due to implementing strategies of early intervention and recovery at work.
- An improvement in the reporting of near miss incidents.
- Proactive work health and safety initiatives.

ARIC commended the team on their report and noted that the proactive 'near miss' reporting is a sign of maturity in the work health and safety culture.

OUTCOME

That the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee note the update on Work Health Safety, Workers Compensation and Wellbeing as of September 2025.

MINUTES OF AUDIT, RISK AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING - 9 SEPTEMBER 2025

6.3 ENTERPRISE RESOURCE PLANNING (ERP) - PROGRAM COSMO UPDATE

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide the Audit Risk and Improvement Committee (ARIC) an update on Council's Enterprise Resource Planning Project – Program COSMO.

DISCUSSION

The Chief Information Officer provided the ARIC with an overview of this report and discussed the following matters:

- The successful launch of release one on 1 July. The small number of issues encountered were able to be resolved with training and other methods.
- Release 2 commenced, with the entire project team meeting to go through the structures of the project as well as lessons learned from release 1. This activity has received positive feedback from the team.
- Change governance – looking at people, process and technology change. Meeting and liaising with other councils throughout Australia that have completed this transition previously to gather and share information and learn from their experiences.
- Management of risks rated as high for release 2.
- Selection of the go live date for release 2 and managing this with the vendor to ensure an extended hyper care period to cover any periods of staff leave and ongoing training.

The ARIC commended the team on completing release 1 on time and under budget.

OUTCOME

That the Audit Risk and Improvement Committee note the report.

MINUTES OF AUDIT, RISK AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING - 9 SEPTEMBER 2025

7.0 INTERNAL AUDIT

7.1 INTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE REPORT

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee (ARIC) on all aspects of Internal Audit work since the last ARIC meeting.

DISCUSSION

The Internal Ombudsman updated the committee on this item, including the following:

- Internal Audit progress was reviewed against the 4 year Strategic Internal Audit Plan, and how the plan is updated according to any new risks identified or requests raised through the ARIC or executive team.
- A review of the recommendations from the Independent Commission Against Corruption Operation Mantis report was undertaken and discussed.
- The use of Artificial Intelligence AI in audits and the associated opportunities and risks.
- Implementation of an upgrade to the HR system that will complete an outstanding audit recommendation.

OUTCOME

That the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee note:

1. The status of the 2024-25 and 2025-26 internal audit plans.
 2. The outcomes of the internal audit reports completed since June 2025 ARIC.
 3. The status of audit recommendations and opportunities, generated in previous internal audits.
 4. The additional reviews undertaken.
 5. The yearly review of the Internal Audit Charter.
 6. The implementation of the Internal Audit Strategy.
 7. The FY 25/26 Internal Audit Budget.
 8. The annual confirmation of Internal Audit independence.
-

MINUTES OF AUDIT, RISK AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING - 9 SEPTEMBER 2025

8.0 IMPROVEMENT

8.1 BENCHMARKING PROGRAM 2023/24 - FINANCES, WORKFORCE AND OPERATIONS

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to present the 2023/24 benchmarking results and trends for finance, workforce and operations.

DISCUSSION

The Executive Manager Strategy, Performance & Records, Manager, Corporate Strategy and Team Leader – Organisational Performance updated the ARIC on this item and discussed the following:

- 82% of items are meeting or exceeding the industry benchmark. There are 5 items that are below industry benchmark, however 4 of those still meet the Office of Local Government (OLG) benchmark. Two items that did not meet the OLG benchmark, being the infrastructure renewal ratio and asset maintenance ratio, will be addressed with the incoming funds from the special rate variation.
- The length of time it takes to compile the data and metrics.
- Presenting this data in a report to Council.

OUTCOME

That the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee note the performance results for the 2023/24 core benchmarking program on finance, workforce and operations.

MINUTES OF AUDIT, RISK AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING - 9 SEPTEMBER 2025

8.2 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2024/25

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on performance as of June 2025 against measures in Council's Operational Plan 2024/25.

DISCUSSION

The Executive Manager Strategy, Performance & Records, Manager, Corporate Strategy and Team Leader – Organisational Performance attended for this item. The Manager, Corporate Strategy noted that there has been year on year improvement, with the diversion rate for Kimbriki being achieved for the first time.

The ARIC discussed the process to review and adjust performance targets, including looking at their relevance and the appropriate time for this process to occur. The ARIC asked the team to review this process in the context of the comments made.

ACTIONS

Review the process of assessing the performance targets, including looking at their relevance and the timing of when this process needs occur.

OUTCOME

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

MINUTES OF AUDIT, RISK AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING - 9 SEPTEMBER 2025

**8.3 NORTHERN BEACHES COUNCIL CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
UPDATE**

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee (ARIC) with an update on Council's continuous improvement program.

DISCUSSION

The Executive Manager Strategy, Performance & Records, Manager, Corporate Strategy and Team Leader – Organisational Performance attended for this item. The 2024/25 target for improvements was 200 and this was exceeded with 250 improvements being captured.

The ARIC discussed maturity of the program and the challenge for staff to continue finding improvements. The team highlighted that with the new ERP system being rolled in that it will likely create opportunity for further improvements. Regular promotion of the program is also undertaken which is helping to embed the 'continuous improvement' culture within teams.

OUTCOME

That the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee note the progress of Council's continuous improvement program.

MINUTES OF AUDIT, RISK AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING - 9 SEPTEMBER 2025

**8.4 SERVICE REVIEW PROGRAM PROGRESS AND IMPLEMENTATION STATUS AS OF
30 JUNE 2025**

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of Council's Service Review Program and progress on the implementation of the improvement recommendations identified from the completed service reviews as of 30 June 2025.

DISCUSSION

The Executive Manager Strategy, Performance & Records, Manager, Corporate Strategy and Team Leader – Organisational Performance updated the committee on this item noting that 92% of the of the improvements that were recognised over the 11 reviews completed, are either on track or have been completed by the business. Positive feedback is being received from teams noting that they see the benefits of the review in terms of improvement potential.

The ARIC raised the matter of change fatigue for staff, considering the continuous improvement program along with the service review program and the ERP project. The Executive Manager Strategy, Performance & Records confirmed the team are taking this into consideration by liaising with the Executive Managers, allowing flexibility when scheduling the reviews.

The ARIC suggested the team provide a qualitative statement of the outcomes and benefits of the service review program on a biennial basis.

Quality review or assurance of the implementation of recommendations was discussed, with the ARIC suggesting the team could include a summary of the action taken by the business for each recommendation.

ACTIONS

1. Consider developing a qualitative statement of the outcomes and benefits of the service review program on a biennial basis.
2. Consider expanding the service review process to include an assurance review of the completed actions.
3. Circulate to the ARIC the detail of 3 recommendations that did not proceed.

OUTCOME

That the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee note the progress of Council's Service Review Program and implementation plans.

MINUTES OF AUDIT, RISK AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING - 9 SEPTEMBER 2025

9.0 FRAUD AND RISK MANAGEMENT

9.1 ARIC ANNUAL REPORT 2024/2025

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to present the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee's (ARIC) Annual Report for 2024/25 and review the ARIC's Terms of Reference.

DISCUSSION

The Executive Manager Governance & Risk attended for this item. The ARIC provided its initial feedback on the draft report and noted any further feedback can be provided to the Governance team by 26 September 2025.

ACTIONS

Feedback from the ARIC to be incorporated into the ARIC Annual Report for 2024/25.

OUTCOME

That the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee approve the ARIC Annual Report for the period July 2024 – June 2025.

10.0 SPECIAL AGENDA ITEMS

10.1 LEASE AND LICENCE REGISTER

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to present to the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee (ARIC) the Lease and Licence Register for the financial year ended 30 June 2025.

DISCUSSION

The CEO discussed this item with the ARIC, covering the following points:

- The process that Council undertake to review rental rates and ensure they are in line with the current market rate.
- Terms and conditions of leases, where the lease term has expired and the tenant is paying month to month.

OUTCOME

That the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee note the publication of the Annual Public Lease and Licence Register, with all personal and sensitive information removed.

MINUTES OF AUDIT, RISK AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING - 9 SEPTEMBER 2025

12.0 FEATURE TOPIC

12.1 GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK FOR THE DELIVERY OF THE SPECIAL VARIATION PROGRAM

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide the Audit Risk and Improvement Committee (ARIC) with a governance framework for the oversight of Special Variation (SV) programs.

DISCUSSION

The COO updated the ARIC on this item and discussed the following:

- The governance framework that has been developed to oversee the successful delivery of the SV program. The framework highlights all key stakeholders, the assurance pathway for each delivery outcome stream, their respective objectives and staff leads.
- Planning and preparation has ensured Council's system will be able to report on the specific SV programs.
- The development of the dedicated page on Council's website that displays the SV funds received, along with a link to each of the specific SV programs that the funds will be used to deliver. There is also an interactive map where the community can view the status of projects and if they are SV funded.

The ARIC commended the team on this report, the governance framework and the communication to the community on the delivery of Special Variation programs.

OUTCOME

That the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee note the proposed governance framework for the delivery of the Special Variation program.

13.0 GENERAL BUSINESS

13.1 ARIC 2026 PROPOSED MEETING DATES

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek adoption of the proposed 2026 meeting schedule for the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee (ARIC).

DISCUSSION

The Committee agreed to the amended date for the March 2026 meeting and were in agreement for the proposed June, September and December 2026 meetings.

OUTCOME

That the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee adopt the 2026 meeting schedule with the amended meeting date of Monday 2 March 2026.

MINUTES OF AUDIT, RISK AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING - 9 SEPTEMBER 2025

13.2 AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to present to the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee (ARIC) the proposed agenda items for the ordinary December 2025 meeting.

OUTCOME

That the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee discuss the proposed December 2025 agenda.

The Chair, on behalf of members and staff, thanked Mark McCoy and Councillor Sarah Grattan for their many years of input and the immense value they have added to the Committee during their respective tenures.

14.0 NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 9 December 2025

The meeting closed at 5:03pm

This is the final page of the Minutes comprising 15 pages numbered 1 to 15 of the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee held on Tuesday 9 September 2025.



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MINUTES

EXTRAORDINARY AUDIT, RISK AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

held in the Flannel Flower, Civic Centre, Dee Why on

TUESDAY 9 SEPTEMBER 2025

MINUTES OF EXTRAORDINARY AUDIT, RISK AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING - 9 SEPTEMBER
2025

**Minutes of Extraordinary Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee meeting
held on Tuesday 9 September 2025
in the Flannel Flower, Civic Centre, Dee Why
Commencing at 11.02 am**

ATTENDANCE:

Members of the Committee

Chair Stephen Horne (Chair)
Member Mark McCoy
Member Robert Lagaida
Member Tiffany Roxburgh
Member Cr Sarah Grattan

Council Officers (attendees)

Scott Phillips	Chief Executive Officer
Kelly Loveridge	Chief Operating Officer
Sally Hall	Internal Ombudsman
Sarah Dunstan	Executive Manager Governance & Risk
Aline Fernandes	Internal Auditor
Lauren Reti	Senior Advisor - Governance

Council Auditors (attendee)

Ms Susan Prichard	Director of Financial Audit Services, Audit Office of NSW
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Guest Attendees

Cr Sue Heins	Mayor
Cr Nicholas Beaugeard	Councillor - <i>remote</i>

Visitors

Caroline Foley	Chief Financial Officer
Scott McGill	Manager Financial Planning & Systems
Renae Wilde	Team Leader, Financial Accounting
Richard Ji	Team Leader, Financial Planning & Assets

MINUTES OF EXTRAORDINARY AUDIT, RISK AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING - 9 SEPTEMBER
2025

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1.0 APOLOGIES

Nil

2.0 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Tiffany Roxburgh declared that she resides in the Northern Beaches local government area, is the Treasurer of the Pittwater High School Parents & Citizens Association, a Non-Executive Director of the Animal Welfare League NSW and is employed full time as Chief Operating Officer at Garvan Institute of Medical Research.

Stephen Horne declared that he has stepped into the role of Chairperson for both the City of Sydney and City of Parramatta Audit, Risk and Improvement Committees.

11.0 EXTERNAL AUDIT

11.1 DRAFT 2024/25 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee (ARIC) with an overview of the process undertaken and significant judgements and assumptions used in preparing the draft 2024/25 Northern Beaches Council Financial Statements prior to their inclusion on the agenda for the Council meeting to be held on 21 October 2025.

DISCUSSION

The Chair invited the Director of Financial Audit Services to provide an update from the NSW Audit Office on the current status of the audit.

The Director of Financial Audit Services confirmed that the interim audit has been finalised with nothing significant to report. Therefore an interim management letter was not required to be issued. The Finance team was commended on the assistance provided to the NSW Audit Office team and it is anticipated the current timetable will be met.

The Chief Financial Officer and Manager Financial Planning & Systems provided a summary of the results of the draft financial statements, with members then given an opportunity to provide comments and ask questions.

Key points discussed:

- Net operating result of \$61.5m surplus including capital grants and contributions (\$17.2m surplus excluding capital grants and contributions).
- There are several restrictions on funds within the \$17.2m surplus. When these are removed, the underlying result was a surplus of \$0.2m.
- Council met all 6 financial performance indicators. Approval of the Special Rate Variation (SRV) from IPART will ensure Council can meet the 4 asset performance indicators in the coming financial year.
- The net operating result increased by \$20m for 2024/25 compared with the 2023/24 financial year. This was influenced by several factors including:
 - An increase in capital grants and contributions due to a non cash dedication of stormwater assets, along with several large grant funded projects including Frenchs

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Forest precinct park upgrades and Manly Dam boardwalk.

- Large disaster recovery payments received with a lower spend than previous years.
- Insurance claims, with receipt of a large claim related to fire damage at a Council property.
- The Financial Assistance Grant (FA Grant) was \$1.8m lower than the prior year due to a change in the Commonwealth Government’s approach to prepaying this grant. In 2025, 50% of the 2026 FA Grant was paid in advance. By comparison, 85% of the 2025 FA Grant was paid in advance in 2024.
- The project to replace Council’s core operating systems progressed substantially. An additional \$4.8m was spent in the 2024/25 financial year, with a total spend of just under \$8m, compared with \$3m in the 2023/24 financial year.
- ARIC members enquired on the rationale for the discount rates used for the employee leave entitlement provisions. Staff confirmed there are requirements with accounting standards to what constitutes risk free rates, the table used by Council is used consistently across the sector for this purpose as it is considered the reflective risk free rate within the context of discounting provisions. In regards to timing of individual years, in the case of employee leave entitlements it is to reflect the fact they will be utilised progressively. The ARIC suggested staff raise with the Office of Local Government the rationale of risk free rates being used for discounting provisions as they may generate misleading results.
- The ARIC queried the commentary on employee benefits and on-costs and suggested that additional commentary would assist the community to understand why Council is not above the benchmark rate.

ARIC provided feedback, including general formatting and refining commentary along with the following (summarised) suggestions for consideration:

Section	Note Item	ARIC comment
ARIC report	Pg 12	Consider adding commentary on 2 asset performance indicators being below benchmark on pages 3 and/or 101.
Financial Statements	Financial Commentary	Materials and Services – IT and Communications costs of \$18.8m (per Note B3-2) – suggest these costs be referenced in the first sentence. ‘Significant variances’ refers to most of the \$5.5m IT increase being ‘operating system project costs’ - add an accounting policy statement referring to software (and other intangibles) being expensed rather than capitalised (if not included elsewhere).
Financial Statements	Financial Commentary	Re Cash etc - suggest removing redundant first sentence and value/necessity of remaining commentary.
Financial Statements	Financial Commentary	Provisions – suggest review of the explanation.
Financial Statements	Financial Commentary	Operating performance commentary - line 2 reword ‘recovery of natural disaster and increased fine income’.
Financial Statements	Financial Commentary	Operating performance commentary – reorder and reword for clarity.
Financial Statements	Financial Commentary	Unrestricted current ratio commentary – suggest rewording to more accurately reflect the drivers of the movement in this ratio.
Financial Statements	Financial Commentary	Buildings and infrastructure renewals ratio – here (and on page 14) – suggest minor rewording in the context of achieving benchmarks, eg ‘return’ to ‘gradually return’.
Financial Statements	Financial Commentary	Asset maintenance ratio – suggest rewording the description of the ratio for clarity.

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Financial Statements	Financial Commentary	The % change figures appear to all be calculated as '2025 amount/2024 amount' (expressed as a percentage) without regard to whether the amounts are positive or negative - suggest all movement percentages be based on what is favourable (a positive movement percentage) or unfavourable (a bracketed movement percentage).
Financial Statements	Note G2-1 Commitments	GST policy – revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of GST, unless GST is not recoverable in which case it is included in the cost of an asset – check Note G2-1 re capital expenditure commitments (to create assets).
Financial Statements	B1-1 Functions or activities - income, expenses and assets	Subscript 1 – query reference to 'or Council rates'. Subscript 4 – suggest rewording for clarity.
Financial Statements	B1-2 Components of functions or activities	After 'Eliminations', add a description of the function or activity labelled 'General purpose income' in the list on page 29.
Financial Statements	B2-6 Other income	Subscript 1- check if restriction should be included in Note C1-3. Consider cross-referencing Frenchs Forest Contribution Plan here with subscript 2 on page 91 (to make 'navigation' easier for the reader).
Financial Statements	B3-4 Depreciation, amortisation and impairment of non-financial assets	Subscript 2 refers to amortisation of landfill remediation asset, but page 70 says such costs are depreciated (not amortised). If amortised, state applicable accounting policy. If depreciated, suggest including the respective useful life with other asset classes being depreciated on page 58.
Financial Statements	B5-1	Interest and investment income – line 2 – 'higher' - suggest "higher (than budgeted) interest rates.
Financial Statements	B5-1	Cash flows from investing activities – suggest the first dot point be more specific re amount, suggest rewording 2 nd dot point for clarity and to quantify the comment.
Financial Statements	B5-1	Cash flows from investing activities – there is a heading at the bottom of page but no amounts or commentary No reference to cash flows from financing activities – amend to include appropriate amounts and commentary in each case.
Financial Statements	C2-1 Council as a lessee	First sentence – amend 'below market for' to 'below market value for'; suggest under 'Council as lessor' heading' amend wording to 'The leases are generally for terms of between 10 and 20 years'.
Financial Statements	C3-5 Provisions	Last sentence re provision for self-insurance – refers to Note E3-1 (1.iii) –appears incorrect. Sentence re bank guarantee for \$5,042,000 also references Note E3-1 but E3-1 does not mention such an amount. Cross-referencing needs checking.
Financial Statements	E2-1 Fair value measurement	A total for the amounts listed on this page needs to be included - \$5,405,371. The reconciliation is to an amount of \$5,405,370 – a rounding compared to the total of amounts on the previous page.
Financial Statements	G2-1 Commitments	Suggest subscript 2 be deleted.
Financial Statements	Note C1-3	CFO discussed with ARIC intention to restrict rollover funding as an internal allocation to fund future works as well as restricting resilience funds to cover future natural disasters

ACTIONS

The ARIC asked the team to:

1. Review the employee leave entitlement provision discount rate for the year 2036.
2. Confirm if the bond is paid with a coupon or yields – pt 7 (c) Key accounting policies, critical accounting estimates and significant judgements position paper.

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OUTCOME

That the ARIC support the draft 2024/25 Financial Statements as presented (inclusive of suggested amendments) as suitable for consideration by Council for referral to audit.

14.0 NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 9 September 2025

The meeting concluded at 12:38pm

This is the final page of the Minutes comprising 8 pages numbered 1 to 8 of the Extraordinary Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee held on Tuesday 9 September 2025



**Delivery Program 2025 - 2029
and Operational Plan 2025-2026**

Quarterly Report
December 2025



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We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of these lands and show respect to Elders, past present and emerging.

Our purpose: Partnering with the community to protect, improve and create our future

