

**MINUTES OF THE RESOURCES & SERVICES COMMITTEE
HELD 10 FEBRUARY, 2003, CIVIC CENTRE, OXLEY STREET
CAMDEN**

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Present: Cr Anderson (Deputy Mayor/Chairman), Cr Corrigan (Mayor), Cr Patterson, Cr Winn, Cr Batros, Cr Fekete, Cr McFadden, Cr Senise, Cr Campbell.

Staff: Acting General Manager (Director Works & Services), Director Governance & Outcomes, Director Development & Environment, Acting Director Works & Services (Manager Assets), Manager Community Services, Manager Corporate Services, Manager Outcomes, Senior Project Officer – Environmental Systems, Administration Officer.

1. Investment Monies: Period Ended, 31st December, 2002

(Director Governance & Outcomes)

In accordance with clause 19 (3a & 3b) of the Local Government (Financial Management) Regulation 1993, a list of investments held by Council as at 31st December, 2002, is provided at **Tabled Document “RS 1”**.

It is further certified that all investments have been made in accordance with section 625 of the Local Government Act 1993, the relevant regulations and Council’s investment policy.

Current investments of the General Fund both term and call are returning an average daily yield of 4.97% and during the month of December 2002, the average return on all investments both call and term was 4.96%.

Recommended: That,

- (i) Council note that the Principal Accounting Officer has certified that all investments held by Council have been made in accordance with the Local Government Act, Regulations and Council’s Investment Policy.
- (ii) The list of investments as at 31st December, 2002 be noted.
- (iii) The interest rate return of 4.96% for the month of December 2002, be noted.

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Resolved on the Motion of Cr Corrigan, seconded Cr McFadden that,

- (i) Council note that the Principal Accounting Officer has certified that all investments held by Council have been made in accordance with the Local Government Act, Regulations and Council's Investment Policy.*
- (ii) The list of investments as at 31st December, 2002 be noted.*
- (iii) The interest rate return of 4.96% for the month of December 2002, be noted.*

RS001/03 THE MOTION WAS **CARRIED.**

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2. Budget Review as at 31st December 2002

(Director – Governance & Outcomes)

Purpose of Report

To inform Council of the necessary adjustments to the 2002/03 Budget since the adoption of the September Budget Review. These adjustments include those that

- Council has already authorised in a previous Council meeting, and
- Senior management have proposed and require Council's determination for budget inclusion

Summary of Budget Review

The December Review of the 2002/03 Budget has identified a further gain to Council's working funds of \$356,409.

The revised forecast of accumulated working funds at the end of the financial year (30/06/03) now stands at \$1,356,409.

This represents a \$356,409 surplus above Council's minimum working funds level of \$1,000,000.

Chief Financial Officer's Comments

A thorough review of Council's budget was undertaken in the December Review with a focus on identifying expenditure savings, revenue gains and potential Revotes.

The result is a working fund gain of \$356,409 and can be largely attributed to the following variations:

Description	Gain	Reduction	Note
Interest on Investments	\$100,000		2
Organisational Salaries	\$ 94,405		2
Spring Farm Consultancy	\$ 62,818		2
Insurance Premiums	\$ 60,000		2
2001/02 Accrual Adjustment	\$ 58,997		2
Development Approvals Income	\$ 39,700		2
Authorised Variations approved by Council		(\$95,000)	1

Several projects nominated for Revote have been submitted for Council's consideration. The total value of these projects is \$397,926, a conservative sum considering the value of projects actually revoted in recent years. This is an issue that will be closely scrutinised over the coming weeks as part of senior management's aim to present Council with an accurate and realistic 2003/04 First Draft Budget.

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The following table is a summary of budget adjustments up to 31st December 2002.

NOTE: All figures reflected in this report are expressed in terms of their impact on Council's budget. In other words,

1. **INCOME: Increases** are expressed as positive figures.
Reductions are expressed as (negative figures).
2. **EXPENDITURE: Increases** are expressed as (negative figures).
Reductions are expressed as positive figures.

Description	Income	Expenditure	Impact on Council's Working Funds
2002/03 Adopted Budget	47,816,205	(48,227,132)	(410,927)
Variations up to the September Review (as adopted by Council)	3,246,311	(4,054,185)	(807,874)
December Review Adjustments:			
NOTE 1: Authorised Variations	205,481	(300,481)	(95,000)
NOTE 2: Proposed Variations	320,288	131,121	451,409
NOTE 3: Contra Adjustments	530,118	(530,118)	0
NOTE 4: Expenditure Revotes	(147,926)	147,926	0
Total of December Review Adjustments	907,961	(551,552)	356,409
Revised 2002/03 Budget as per December Review	51,970,477	(52,832,869)	(862,392)
ADD: Balance brought forward from 30/06/02			\$2,218,801
EQUALS: Estimated Working Funds as at 30/06/03			\$1,356,409
LESS: Minimum Desired Level of Working Funds			\$1,000,000
EQUALS: Surplus funds available for allocation			\$356,409

NOTE 1 – AUTHORISED VARIATIONS

This section deals with the budget variations that Council has authorised since the September Budget Review was adopted.

Council has authorised several budget variations since the September Budget Review, a summary of which follows: (Refer

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to **Tabled Document "RS 2"** – Note 1 for more information on authorised variations).

Description	Income	Expend	Impact on Council's Working Funds
Cawdor Road - Road Safety Audit	15,000	(30,000)	(15,000)
Sound System – Council Meetings	0	(20,000)	(20,000)
Libraries – Marketing Project	23,481	(23,481)	0
Miss Davies Farm – Sustainable Regions Project	167,000	(167,000)	0
Civic Centre Air Conditioning Upgrade	0	(60,000)	(60,000)
TOTAL AUTHORISED VARIATIONS	205,481	(300,481)	(95,000)

NOTE 2 – PROPOSED VARIATIONS

This section deals with proposed budget variations submitted by senior management for Council to consider.

These proposed adjustments are primarily based on **actual** income and expenditure trends to date or **forecast** variations to the budget based on information at hand. With regard to major proposed variations to the 2002/03 Budget (greater than \$25,000), the following commentary is provided: (**Refer to Tabled Document "RS 2"** – Note 2 for a complete list of proposed variations greater than \$10,000)

- **Interest on Investments** **+\$100,000**
 The combination of a larger than anticipated pool of funds to invest and a higher than expected interest yield has led to a forecast interest on investments gain of \$100,000. It should be noted this gain pertains only to General Revenue funds invested. Interest earned on Section 94 funds invested is recorded as a Contra Adjustment (see Note 3).
- **Organisational Salaries** **+\$ 94,405**
 A comprehensive assessment of salaries and related oncosts has been undertaken, the result indicating a saving of \$94,405. The saving is largely due to the timing of new appointments and extended vacancy periods.
- **Insurance Premiums** **+\$ 60,000**
 Council will recall a \$181,898 reduction in insurance premiums was reported in the 2002 September Budget Review. This was calculated on the basis of estimated final figures (ie pre-audited financial statements). Council has since received confirmation from our insurer that the reduction in our

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premium for 2002/03 is actually \$256,779. This represents an additional saving of \$74,881 to that reported in the September Budget Review. Of this amount, \$14,881 has been reallocated to OH&S compliance activity to ensure continued savings.

- **Spring Farm Consultancy** **+\$ 62,818**
Council recovers consultancy expenses associated with the Spring Farm project from developer contributions. In addition to direct consultancy costs incurred, Council recovers approximately \$40,000 per annum to cover administrative overheads. This, together with monies recovered for services rendered in 2001/02 have not been factored into the 2002/03 Budget.

- **2001/02 Accrual Adjustments** **+\$ 58,997**
A saving of \$58,997 has been identified in purchase orders raised during the latter part of the 2001/02 financial year but subsequently cancelled or paid non-order in the 2002/03 financial year.

- **Development Approvals Income** **+\$ 39,700**
A review of current trends and activity in development approvals indicates a 2% increase in revenue will be achieved.

NOTE 3 – CONTRA ADJUSTMENTS

This section deals with all offsetting adjustments between income and expenditure or a transfer of funds between allocations. These adjustments have NO impact on Council's Working Funds as both movements of income and expenditure are of equal value.

The total value of contra adjustments amounts to \$530,118 (overall increase to both income and expenditure). A breakdown of major items is shown below: (Refer to **Tabled Document "RS 2"** – Note 3 for a complete list of contra adjustments)

Increase to both income and expenditure

1. Interest on Investments (Section 94)	\$311,033
2. Cross Creek Trunk Drainage (Section 94)	\$307,500
3. Welling Drive Wombat Crossing (Contribution)	\$ 57,798
4. Central Hills Review (Contribution)	\$ 56,695
5. Landcom Roads (Contribution)	\$ 50,785
6. Mt Annan Aquatic Centre (Section 94)	\$ 46,614
7. Springs Road Cottages (Section 94)	\$ 30,043

Decrease to both income and expenditure

1. Somerset Avenue Rehabilitation (Section 94)	\$350,000
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NOTE 4 – EXPENDITURE REVOTES

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To assist Council in framing a realistic and accurate 2003/04 Budget, Managers and Directors were encouraged to identify any programmed works/projects that will NOT commence or be completed by 30 June 2003.

The following table summarises the suggested revotes as submitted by Managers and Directors.

NOTE: The 'Council Funds' total of \$250,000 will, if approved, be transferred to the 'Expenditure Revote' Reserve in the 2002/03 Budget and then released from this Reserve in the 2003/04 Budget for the purposes of completing the works next financial year. This process does NOT alter Council's Working Funds balance.

Description	Total Revote	Council Funds	Other Funds
New Computer System - Council funds not required in 2002/03	250,000	250,000	0
Queen Street Footpath Construction - Footpath Fees held in Trust	50,000	0	50,000
Camden Volunteering Project - Grant funds	35,026	0	35,026
LGAG Incentives Program - Grant funds	32,900	0	32,900
Urban Growth Projects - Grant funds	30,000	0	30,000
TOTAL EXPENDITURE REVOTES	397,926	250,000	147,926

Recommended: That

- (i) Council approves the necessary budget adjustments as identified in the categories of 'Proposed Variations', 'Contra Adjustments' and 'Expenditure Revotes' of this report.
- (ii) Council approve the proposal to transfer surplus funds of \$356,409 to the Capital Works Reserve.

Resolved on the Motion of Cr Corrigan, seconded Cr Winn that

- (i) Council approves the necessary budget adjustments as identified in the categories of 'Proposed Variations', 'Contra Adjustments' and 'Expenditure Revotes' of this report.

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- (ii) *Council approve the proposal to transfer surplus funds of \$356,409 to the Capital Works Reserve.*

RS002/03 THE MOTION WAS **CARRIED.**

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3. Management Plan Review – 31st December, 2002

(3568/2) (Director Governance & Outcomes)

Council prepares the Management Plan annually together with the Annual Budget, which sets strategies and actions for the next 3 years.

The Local Government Act requires quarterly reports be submitted to Council showing progress to date on strategies and actions within the Management Plan, falling due within each quarter.

The current Management Plan details Strategies, Actions and Performance Targets as either “Ongoing” or due to be completed by 30th June, 2003. These projects are currently on target to be completed within the timeframes indicated with the exception of the Significant Tree Register. Councillors would be aware that such a register must be a dynamic document which can be supplemented as additional information is discovered. For this reason its review will be ongoing. It is intended to bring a report to Council in the near future in relation to the progress of the review and procedures for implementation.

Attached is a list of the various Strategies and Actions as contained in the 2002-2003 Management Plan for the information of Councillors.

SUSTAINABLE URBAN GROWTH

- Consult with stakeholders to identify needs and conduct developer forums to promote best practice • Ongoing
- Continue to provide comprehensive planning for urban release areas • Ongoing
- Complete the development of a single, user friendly, place based planning instrument • By June, 2003
- Improve the quality of approved developments ‘on the ground’ through the revision of development control processes and policies and the provision of heritage and urban design advisory services • Ongoing
- Commence the revitalisation of the Narellan central business district and resolve issues of community identity through the Urban Improvement Program • By June, 2003
- Increase monitoring and enforcement of development application conditions of • By June, 2003

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consent

- Actively participate in the investigation of new urban development areas proposed in the Bringelly sector • By June, 2003
- Maximise the amount and quality of infrastructure provided by developers • By June, 2003
- Protect ridgelines • Ongoing

ACCESSIBILITY

- Ensure that Camden's accessibility needs are recognised at the regional and metropolitan levels through lobbying and representation • Ongoing
- Continue to implement the pavement management system to ensure the appropriate standards of road and drainage maintenance and construction • Ongoing
- Determine, by agreement with the State Government, the exact proposals and timing for the resolution of the Narellan Road / Camden Bypass / Camden Valley Way / Northern Road connections and alignments • By June, 2003
- Secure a clear and detailed commitment to appropriate, convenient and accessible public transport in Camden by the State Government • By June, 2003
- Realise improved opportunities for public transport services and utilisation • Ongoing
- Improve pedestrian mobility and accessibility • By June, 2003
- Minimise Council's liability against claims related to public infrastructure • Ongoing
- Improve the presentation of public spaces and facilities • By June, 2003
- Effectively manage the transition of parking enforcement from State Government to Council • By June, 2003

ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS

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- Adopt a comprehensive approach to environmental management • Ongoing
- Promote sustainable communities through implementation of Local Agenda 21 • Ongoing
- Implement environmental education program • Ongoing
- Undertake supplementary tree planting and vegetation management strategies • Ongoing
- Implement an environmental monitoring program to improve environmental standards • By June, 2003
- Implement a policy for the conservation of known threatened ecological communities • By June, 2003
- Develop a strategy to afford increased protection to threatened species • By June, 2003
- Improve the carrying out of Council's own operations in an environmentally responsible and sustainable manner • By June, 2003
- Ensure that there is no nett loss of remnant vegetation • Ongoing
- Enhance management strategies for all natural, public areas in Council control • By June, 2003
- Update the Significant Tree Register • By June, 2003

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- Provide and review annual financial assistance, community support, donations and cultural grants to groups and individuals for the purpose of exercising community valued functions • Ongoing
- Provide rate relief to appropriate job generating new industries • Ongoing
- Participate in regional economic development and marketing projects • Ongoing
- Upgrade the Civic Centre asset by undertaking a program of refurbishment • By June, 2003

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- Continue the development and implementation of the Town Farm project • By June, 2003
- Update and reprint the Camden Visitors Guide and distribute for the promotion of Camden as a destination • By June, 2003
- Develop and implement new strategies for ensuring the integrating of new communities into existing ones and rural Camden • By June, 2003
- Promote a better understanding of the rights and responsibilities of living in rural areas to improve 'good neighbour' behaviour • Ongoing
- Improve social capital, community safety, community access to information and cultural opportunities • By June, 2003
- Increase recreation and tourism opportunities by capitalising on Camden's 'working country town' focus • By June, 2003
- Reduce graffiti and vandalism through the implementation of the Graffiti Action Plan • By June, 2003
- Plan for the future of Camden Swimming Pool • By June, 2003
- Improve access to visitor information services by the employment of a permanent centre co-ordinator • By June, 2003

GOVERNANCE

- Review all assets and processes to maximise opportunities and efficiencies, including the investigation of alternate forms of revenue • Ongoing
- Continue to implement and reinforce the Equal Employment Opportunity policy • Ongoing
- Identify all future costs prior to project commitment, in particular, recurrent costs • Ongoing
- Monitor community satisfaction with service and strategy through the development and implementation of community feedback mechanisms • By June, 2003

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- Implement new corporate information systems to meet Council's internal needs and the needs of the community for access to information • By June, 2003
- Develop a strategy for the improvement of community input to decision making • By June, 2003
- Continue the development of performance indicators for monitoring Council's performance and reporting it to the community • By June, 2003
- Plan for the accommodation of Council's services and staff as a result of growth • By June, 2003

Recommended: That the information be noted.

Resolved on the Motion of Cr Winn, seconded Cr Batros that the information be noted.

RS003/03 THE MOTION WAS **CARRIED.**

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4. Alteration to Ward Boundaries

(2811/8) (Director Governance & Outcomes)

The Australian Electoral Commission has advised Council that the redistribution of the Census Collector Districts and changes to the Ward Boundaries have been completed. Council's proposal submitted in September, 2002 complied with the provisions of the Local Government Act and the Electoral Commission concurred with Council's new alignment. No changes were made to the Council submission. A copy of revised Ward Boundaries is attached as **Tabled Document "RS 3"**.

The new Ward Boundaries will not come into effect until the September, 2003 elections and, in the unlikely event of a by election being held, it would be conducted according to the existing wards.

However, as part of the 2003 electoral process, Council is required under the Local Government (Elections) Regulation to give public notice of any ward boundary changes.

It is proposed to place advertisement in the local newspapers, display notices and maps in Council's Offices at Camden and Narellan, Libraries and community notice boards at 17 locations throughout the Local Government area.

Recommended: That the changes to Council Ward Boundaries for the 2003 Local Government Elections, be noted and the public advertising campaign as outlined in the report be implemented.

Resolved on the Motion of Cr Senise, seconded Cr Campbell that the changes to Council Ward Boundaries for the 2003 Local Government Elections, be noted and the public advertising campaign as outlined in the report be implemented.

RS004/03 THE MOTION WAS **CARRIED.**

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5. Camden Bowling Club

(File 1500.220) (Director – Governance & Outcomes)

Following Council's resolution to support the endeavours of various Camden sporting clubs to save the Bowling Club, a number of actions have taken place. This report serves to provide an update on the progress of various matters.

Western Suburbs and Temujin Hotels

Council requested that Wests provide a letter explaining the process of negotiation with Temujin and the circumstances of the failure of those negotiations. The letter was to be forwarded to Temujin. Discussions with Wests proved it to be amenable to this request, however discussions with Temujin reaffirmed that it was not prepared, under any circumstances, to re-enter negotiations and therefore, in view of the separate negotiations with Wests then taking place (discussed below), the matter was not pursued further.

Camden Community Sports Club

The report to Council on 28 January, 2003 outlined a proposal by several Camden based sporting clubs to redevelop the Bowling Club site into a broader sporting club. The initial proponents have now confirmed the commitment of a number of clubs, including Camden Rugby League, Camden Cricket, Camden Tennis and, of course, the Men's and Women's Bowling Clubs in the venture.

Wests have agreed to continue operating the Bowling Club site, with input from the new organisation, for a further three months. This will enable the new organisation to develop a detailed business and financing plan with a view to the seeking of a new license and the staged withdrawal of the Wests organisation. The Board and management of Wests have been extremely co-operative and accommodating of this proposal and have been generous of their time and finances and are to be commended for their efforts under difficult circumstances.

The new group will now spend the next three months developing, in conjunction with Wests, a detailed business and financing plan with a view to committing to a new community-based licensed club being established. In addition, Wests have agreed to provide the new group with input to the management of the facility (without jeopardising any of Wests' statutory responsibilities) in an attempt to improve the viability of the club.

The general level of enthusiasm and commitment of the people involved in this venture is outstanding and they are to be

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commended for their courage in accepting the undoubted challenges of resurrecting the club activity on the site.

(Cr Corrigan declared a Conflict of Interest in the matters to be discussed in Item 5 as parties involved supported a political fund raiser during 2002, and took no part in discussion or voting and left the Chamber – the time being 6.25pm).

(Cr Patterson declared an interest in the matters to be discussed in Item 5 as the Manager of the Merino Tavern in the Camden CBD, and took no part in discussion or voting and left the Chamber – the time being 6.25pm)

Recommended: That:

- (i) Council to support the development of a new community-based club on the site,
- (ii) Participants in the proposed new club be congratulated and encouraged; and
- (iii) Western Suburbs (Campbelltown) Leagues Club be congratulated and thanked for its co-operation and support of the proposal.

MOTION

Moved Cr Campbell, seconded Cr Winn that:

- (i) Council to support the development of a new community-based club on the site,
- (ii) Participants in the proposed new club be congratulated and encouraged; and
- (iii) The cooperation and support of Western Suburbs (Campbelltown) Leagues Club, be noted and that it be thanked.

RS005/03

THE MOTION WAS **CARRIED.**

(Cr Batros and Cr Anderson voted against the Motion).

(Cr Corrigan and Cr Patterson returned to the Chamber – the time being 6.45pm)

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6. Draft Natural Assets Policy
(4451) (Director Governance & Outcomes)

Purpose of Report

This report seeks to advise Council of the exhibition of the draft Natural Assets Policy and subsequent detailed consultation with the community and development industry generally and locally. The final draft is submitted for adoption

Background

Council on the 22nd of July resolved to place the draft Camden Natural Assets Policy on exhibition.

The policy establishes a landscape management position consistent with the Camden 2025 Strategic Plan. The policy fosters a strategic and integrated approach to natural resource management, simplifying the complex regulatory natural resource management context.

The policy seeks to mitigate the effects of development on the sustainability of the Camden LGA. Unpublished NPWS data suggests that over 2500 hectares of habitat will be lost on the Cumberland Plain over the next 15 years.

The policy reinforces the importance of no net loss, cumulative impact and precautionary principles in the assessment of development proposals.

The policy introduces an offsetting mechanism designed to accommodate urban and agricultural development without compromising landscape function.

Public Exhibition

Some 12 submissions were received in respect of the exhibition. Given the implications of the policy and at the request of landowners and the development industry the exhibition period was extended. The exhibition period extension ensured that every opportunity was given to address community concerns.

At the request of the development industry, a presentation on the policy was delivered to interested parties. At this presentation the clarification of key issues within the policy was sought and provided.

The submissions received have been **distributed under separate cover** and are summarised in **Tabled Document "RS 4"**.

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Policy support

Generally the policy was well supported with state agencies, the community and development industry applauding Camden Council for assuming a leadership role in natural resource management within the Camden LGA. All parties were in agreement with the policy's objectives and supportive of Council's initiative in simplifying a complex field. The capacity of the policy to facilitate development in a manner which does not compromise the sustainability of the Camden LGA was recognised and supported.

Flexibility

The development industry was concerned whether the draft policy, as written, contained the necessary flexibility to accommodate the variety of circumstances to which it applied. Conversely the general community was concerned that the provision of such flexibility may generate 'loop holes' that may potentially undermine the objectives of the policy.

The final draft addresses these concerns, including a clause specifying the criteria by which variations may be sought from the policy provisions. As the policy in many instances reflects the requirements of state policies and plans Council will seek the concurrence of the relevant state agency on variations sought.

It must be noted that a flexible policy is imperative in order to achieve optimal outcomes such as those achieved in Elderslie and Spring Farm.

**Consistency with the draft Recovery Plan for the
Endangered Ecological Communities (EEC) of Western
Sydney**

The NPWS is concerned that the policy sets a target of 'no net loss' rather than 'net gain'. Camden retains some 23% of its landscape under native vegetation the draft recovery plan sets a target of 30% for the Cumberland Plain. The policy takes the position that No net loss does not necessarily preclude net gain. The No Net Loss position merely states 'no worse than present' In establishing a vision for the landscape of the Camden LGA the policy articulates a vision within the offsetting guidelines of 25% or 5150 hectares of secure conservation land. The state government is yet to adopt the recovery plan, the recovery planning process has been delayed and there has been no indication as to when the plan will be completed.

The draft Natural Assets Policy provides the framework that will facilitate implementation of the recovery plan when

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completed. Any inconsistencies that may exist between the Natural Assets Policy and the completed recovery plan can be easily addressed when it is released along with the required revision of other Council documents such as any affected plans of management.

Considering offsets in the significance threshold test

The offsetting procedure operates through the consideration of offsetting works as an ameliorative measure in determining whether a development is likely to have a significant impact on threatened species populations, ecological communities and their habitats. The test to determine whether or not the impact is likely to be significant is called the 'significance threshold test, Council is the discretionary authority. The NPWS position is that offsets cannot be considered in the significance threshold test and that NPWS concurrence is required if there is likely to be a significant impact irrespective of whether ameliorative measures are proposed. The NPWS however will investigate the granting of 'assumed concurrence' subject to its satisfaction with the effectiveness of the Natural Assets Policy.

On adoption Council should apply the policy guidelines, implement offsetting and refer all relevant proposals to the NPWS for concurrence. After a suitable time frame has passed and a number of offsetting arrangements have been scrutinised the effectiveness of the policy will be assessed and Council may seek 'assumed concurrence' accreditation from the NPWS.

Core Habitat Regional - Exceptional Circumstances

A point of contention in the draft policy was the policy position in relation to offsetting in lands categorised as Core Habitat-Regional. The draft plan indicated that offsetting only be allowed in 'exceptional circumstances'. Submissions sought clarification of what exceptional circumstances entailed. The policy defines exceptional circumstances as development of outstanding public socio-economic benefits in which direct and indirect adverse impacts are unavoidable. This definition includes major government infrastructure and urban release lands for which master planning has been completed to the satisfaction of PlanningNSW, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service and Council. This definition accommodates the application of offsets in areas such as the ecological corridor.

Multiplier Tables

A concern was raised by one party regarding the scientific justification of the figures within the multiplier tables used in calculating offsets. The multipliers were developed on best available information in consultation with the NPWS. In formulating the multiplier tables the precautionary principle

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has been applied, that is “.....if there are threats of serious and irreversible environmental damage, lack of **full** scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation”

The ‘precautionary principle’ is an element of Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) the application of which is consistent with both Council’s Charter and the Local Government Act.

The multiplier tables were otherwise accepted as a suitable starting position by all interested parties. The effectiveness and suitability of the multiplier tables is subject to review within two years.

Policy Review

The context in which the Natural Assets Policy operates is dynamic with changes in the status of natural assets and the policy and legal framework. In order to keep the policy relevant the final draft includes detail of the timeframe and criteria by which the policy will be reviewed. The policy review process will coincide with the seeking of assumed concurrence from the NPWS and is scheduled to occur within two years of adoption.

Council’s capacity to implement Policy

Comments were made regarding the commitment of Council and specifically Council’s capacity to implement the policy. The recent appointment of key staff in the development and engineering branches and revision of the procedure for assessing development applications in respect of impact on natural assets facilitates the implementation of this policy.

The installation of the geographic information systems (GIS) will empower Council to readily provide the information required to implement this policy effectively including information such as the ownership of bushland remnants.

Managing Secure Conservation Land

Comments were made regarding the commitment of Council to the ongoing management of conservation land under private ownership. The policy requires land secured as conservation land through the offsetting procedure to be managed by the proponent for a period of 5 years. After 5 years the Council will subsidise the cost of management by the landowner through the provision of a ‘stewardship grant’. This ‘stewardship grant’ will cover the costs of materials utilised in the management of secure conservation land such as fence maintenance materials and herbicide.

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The material costs of managing secure conservation land after the 5 year period will be minimal with research from Western Sydney indicating between \$50 and \$70 per hectare per annum. The 'stewardship grant' provides just compensation for the provision of a public good and recognises the contribution that the agricultural sector make to the broader sustainability of the region. Council will be eligible for state and federal grant funds to cover the cost of the stewardship grant program. It should be noted that in meeting the 2025 objectives the strategy of supporting conservation on private land is easily the most cost effective.

Primary Corridors

Suggestions were made that the policy was ambiguous in regard to primary corridors. In particular concerns were raised about the amount of area affected. The final draft clarifies this issue, the broad boundaries of primary corridors indicate the area in which a suitable configured corridor should be either created or maintained and not the final width of the corridor.

Conclusion

Camden's bushland is central to the achievement of sustainability. The rural aesthetic heritage values agricultural productivity, water quality etc all rely upon the maintenance of a functioning landscape.

This landscape function, compromised by centuries of agriculture is now threatened by the cumulative impact of urban development.

The draft Natural Assets Policy provides a target for the amount and configuration of bushland within the LGA to ensure landscape function.

It provides guidance on how to minimise the impact of development on natural assets, and where this impact cannot be avoided, a mechanism to offset the impact through ameliorative measures.

The draft Natural Assets Policy completes a process that originated with the decision to develop a Vegetation Management Plan. The policy reflects Councils commitment to a sustainable Camden and provides a framework to achieve that goal.

The policy pre-empts the recovery plan for the endangered ecological communities of Western Sydney and signifies Council's commitment to leadership in the implementation ecologically sustainable development.

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Recommended:

- (i) That Council adopt the Natural Assets Policy, a copy of which forms **Tabled Document "RS 5"**.
- (ii) That Council advise all persons responsible for submissions and involved in policy development of the adoption of the policy.
- (iii) The policy be reviewed as denoted in document.
- (iv) The stewardship grant program be investigated and a report to council be prepared.

Resolved on the Motion of Cr Corrigan, seconded Cr McFadden that this Item be deferred and brought back to Council at the next possible meeting after the completion of further consultation with those who made submissions.

RS006/03 THE MOTION WAS **CARRIED.**

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7. RTA Funding – 2003 – 04 REPAIR Program

(File 3212) [Director Works and Services]

Council has been advised of a funding offer from the RTA under the 2003-04 REPAIR Program. The following rehabilitation project has been approved on the basis that:

1. Council matches the funds on a dollar for dollar basis.
2. Work must be completed by 30 June 2004.

Location	Description	Project Cost	RTA Contribution
Broughton Street Segments 3 & 4 between Murray and Menangle Road	Reconstruct kerb and gutter and provide an asphalt overlay	\$152,000	\$76,000

In accepting funding for this project Council must therefore provide matching funds of \$76,000.

Recommended: That Council accept the RTA funding offer of \$76,000 towards the reconstruction of Broughton Street, between Murray Street and Menangle Road; and undertakes to provide matching funding from 2003-04 Budget to complete this project.

Resolved on the Motion of Cr Winn, seconded Cr Corrigan that Council accept the RTA funding offer of \$76,000 towards the reconstruction of Broughton Street, between Murray Street and Menangle Road; and undertakes to provide matching funding from 2003-04 Budget to complete this project.

RS007/03 THE MOTION WAS **CARRIED.**

8. Draft Community Wellbeing Policy
(File TC/1323) (Director Works and Services)

Purpose

This report seeks Council's approval of a draft policy to guide the development of social sustainability or community wellbeing in the Camden Local Government Area.

Discussion

Camden 2025 has as one of its key strategic directions a focus on ensuring that Camden is sustainable. This is in relation to the environment, economy and social aspects of our community.

Social sustainability, or community wellbeing, is a crucial aspect of sustainability, along with environmental and economic sustainability.

"Sustainable futures result from economic and social development that protects and enhances the environment, human well-being and social equity." (Institute for Sustainable Futures, UTS)

At Council's meeting held on 22 April 2002 Council was advised of the development of the sustainability indicators for Camden. In this report sustainability was described in this way:

A sustainable community is a balanced one. A sustainable community resembles a living system in which all elements are interdependent and draw strength from one another. A sustainable community seeks a better quality of life for everyone – now and in the future – by creating supportive communities where there are adequate work, health and recreational opportunities; by protecting and enhancing the environment and by managing local resources to improve economic prosperity. Community sustainability – Camden's sustainability – is about making life better and making sure it stays that way.

Current Policies

There are currently only 3 policies that cover Council's position on issues relating to the social aspects of its work in the community, and the core values guiding Council's decision-making.

The existing policies are:

- Civic Centre hire fee relief (2.1.18);
- Donations to gifted persons (2.1.1); and

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- Access & Equity: Local Ethnic Affairs Policy Statement (2.2.3) (1995)

Development of the draft community wellbeing policy and social sustainability policy framework

The draft policy was developed initially as an update and enhancement of the current Access and Equity Policy (2.2.3) adopted in 1995. However during this review, the need for a far broader policy ensuring access and equity (or social justice) for all groups within the community, as well as developing the other key aspects of a sustainable community was identified.

Proposed Policy Framework to promote Community Wellbeing or Social Sustainability

A social sustainability policy framework has been developed to strengthen Council's emphasis on the social aspects of sustainability in Camden. This framework consists of a lead policy on Community Wellbeing, that is based on four underpinning principles that are vital for promoting wellbeing within communities:

1. Social justice – social justice is the achievement of equal access to power, resources, information, opportunities, participation, choices and outcomes.
2. Social capital – social capital is "community connectedness," the extent to which people are involved with other people in social networks and relationships that are characterised by norms of trust and reciprocity, and lead to mutually beneficial outcomes.
3. Democratic governance – good local governance exists where there is a strong, democratically elected and pro-active council, dedicated to the interests and progress of the community.
4. Active citizenship and participation – *active citizenship is about making contributions to the community. It is about being informed, participating, creating ownership of community issues, safety and security, and providing local solutions to local issues.*

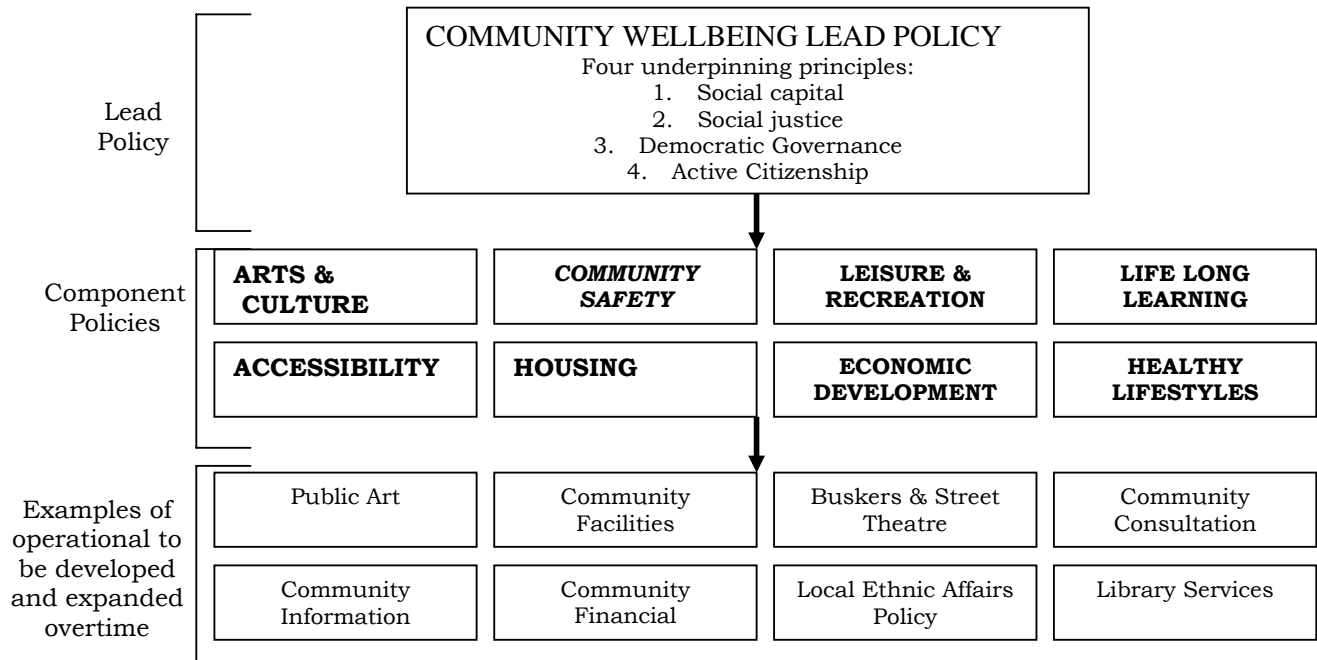
Policy Framework

The proposed policy framework for promoting social sustainability consists of an overarching policy, the Community Wellbeing Policy, with broad policy statements and principles with a series of policies cascading down to the more specialist operational policies.

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The draft Community Wellbeing policy is contained in **Tabled Document "RS 6"**.

The lead policy and component policies will remain consistent however the more operational policies will be expanded and added to on an ongoing basis. The proposed policy framework is set out below:



Consultation

The draft community wellbeing policy was the subject of a Councillors workshop on Monday 3 February 2003. At this time it was agreed that local businesses would be approached to seek their involvement in raising awareness of the draft policy. In particular that the notices and copies of the draft policy will be made available at the Leppington, Cobbitty and Catherine Field shops, subject to the agreement of the shop owners, to increase awareness within the rural areas of the LGA.

It is also proposed that the draft policy is circulated to key local and regional agencies such as Macarthur Community Forum, Camden Area Community Resource Centre, NSW Community Relations Commission and the Macarthur Migrant Resource Centre for their comments.

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Information sessions will also be scheduled to provide an overview of the policy framework and then specific details on the lead policy to community organisations as well as the general community.

Recommended: That Council endorse the draft Community Wellbeing Policy and that it be placed on public exhibition for a period of six weeks.

Resolved on the Motion of Cr Batros, seconded Cr Fekete that Council endorse the draft Community Wellbeing Policy and that it be placed on public exhibition for a period of six weeks.

RS008/03 THE MOTION WAS **CARRIED.**

The Meeting closed at 7.01pm.