

## **Review of resource sharing arrangements between Latrobe and Kentish Councils**

Kentish and Latrobe Council engaged the Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) to review of resource sharing arrangements between Latrobe and Kentish Councils.

The Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government's work on local government reform, service delivery and the adoption and application of new ideas in the Australian local government sector confirms that the current economic, financial and policy climate in Australia requires councils to deliver better performance at lower costs. This requirement extends beyond a dedication to incremental and continuous improvement and requires a commitment to changes in the way services are planned, organised and delivered.

The resource sharing arrangements between Kentish and Latrobe Councils are now well established with an increasing range and type of shared staff, projects and systems. The following 21 recommendations of the UTS report aim to build on the solid foundations established over the past six years and are designed to improve and enhance the current arrangements, to make the arrangements more strategic, to ensure the objectives are clear and measurable and to ensure that resource sharing continues to benefit the communities of Latrobe and Kentish.

### ***Strategic planning and leadership development***

1. Engage the senior leadership group and councillors in a strategic planning exercise to identify community expectations of service delivery in the next ten years and design an approach to resource sharing to respond to the long-term needs, including the development of a workforce plan for the two organisations
2. Following the strategic review, refresh the vision for resource sharing and engage the leadership groups to proactively drive the strategic vision and thinking
3. Convene regular meetings of the leadership and councillor groups of Kentish and Latrobe Councils to engage in strategic planning activities
4. Informed by the long-term workforce plan, expedite alignment of organisation structures, strategic plans, budgets and annual reports.

### ***Communications***

5. Develop an internal and external communications strategy to ensure staff, councillors, the community and other stakeholders understand the rationale for resource sharing and the vision and benefits of the arrangements. Measure the success of the communications strategy in increasing awareness and understanding of resource sharing in community feedback and staff surveys.

### ***Staffing and workforce***

6. Ensure that recruitment policies clearly identify the desired attributes and skills for resource shared positions to ensure candidates are suitable for these positions
7. Introduce a shared performance management and workload system for staff reporting to two managers
8. As part of workforce planning, prepare guidance material for resource shared officers on how to carry out their role. Ensure the guide includes advice for dealing with any conflict of interest that might arise from their shared role. Ensure people in resource shared

positions have a regular opportunity via the performance management system to discuss and resolve any issues or concerns with their managers

9. Review current work policies and practices to ensure the councils are achieving the maximum benefits of resource sharing and remove barriers to productivity, such as travel between the two council offices.

### ***New and expanded opportunities***

10. Informed by the long-term workforce plan, continue to expand resource sharing in areas such as human resources, strategic communications and other operational areas
11. Integrate and further develop existing plant and fleet management systems to allocate costs and evaluate lifecycle costings and to improve and maximise use of current plant and assets across the two councils
12. Continue to pursue structural changes in the works activities of both councils and implement the current proposal for Kentish and Latrobe Councils to specialise in their areas of expertise. It is noted there is a current proposal to coordinate the capital works for roads and road maintenance teams out of the Kentish Council Works Depot, comprised of staff from both councils. There is also a current proposal to coordinate the building/facility maintenance and parks and reserves management teams out of the Latrobe Council Works Depot, comprised of staff from both councils. The proposed changes will work towards a centre of excellence model that could be made available to other councils on a fee for service basis
13. Continue to improve the capacity of staff to better plan for infrastructure delivery through strategic asset management.

### ***Governance***

14. Develop a process for dealing with any conflicts of interest that may arise from resource sharing of staff across two councils
15. Review whether the three-month notice period to withdraw from the Resource Sharing Agreement is appropriate given the increasing scope of resource sharing, especially with integrated systems and technology. Consider amending the agreement to 12 to 24 months to reduce the risk of the impact on continuing operations with any withdrawal.

### ***Succession planning***

16. Develop a clear succession plan for the General Manager and other senior positions. Clearly identify the desired attributes and skills needed to perform this critical leadership role.

### ***Managing change and project management***

17. Ensure that any changes resulting from resource sharing are well managed, that staff fully understand the need for change and that the changes and new practices are well planned, documented and managed
18. Ensure that strategic projects across the two councils are supported with strong project management, a robust process for decision-making and clear procedures for managing potential conflicts of interest.

### ***Evaluation and reporting***

19. Develop an evaluation framework which monitors success on a regular basis and continues to refine the identification of financial outcomes
20. Engage in the resource sharing review being undertaken by the Cradle Coast Authority to ensure strategic opportunities for advancement are pursued

21. Share the findings of this review with the Minister for Local Government, the Division of Local Government, the Local Government Association of Tasmania, the Cradle Coast Authority and surrounding councils.