

## 1. RATIONALE

The Treasury Management Policy exists to ensure sound management of Council's financial transactions with regards to borrowings and investments, ensuring compliance with relevant legislation.

## 2. POLICY STATEMENT

This policy provides clear direction to the management, staff and Council in relation to the treasury function. It outlines how borrowings will be raised and how cash and investments will be managed. It underpins Council's decision-making regarding the financing of its operations as documented in its annual budget, long-term financial plan, projected and actual cash flow receipts and outlays.

Council is committed to adopting and maintaining a long-term financial plan and operating in a financially sustainable manner.

## 3. OBJECTIVES

The objective of this Treasury Management Policy is to establish a decision framework to ensure that:

- funds are available as required to support approved outlays;
- interest rate and other risks (e.g. liquidity and investment credit risks) are acknowledged and responsibly managed;
- Council maximises the return on surplus funds;
- the net interest costs associated with borrowing and investing are reasonably likely to be minimised on average over the longer term

## 4. POLICY SCOPE AND IMPLEMENTATION

Treasury Management Strategy

Council's operating and capital expenditure decisions are made on the basis of:

- identified community need and benefit relative to other expenditure options;
- cost effectiveness of the proposed means of service delivery; and,
- affordability of proposals having regard to Council's long-term financial sustainability (including consideration of the cost of capital and the impact of the proposal on Council's Net Financial Liabilities and Debt Servicing ratios)

Council manages its finances holistically in accordance with its overall financial sustainability strategies and targets. This means Council will:

- maintain target ranges for both its Net Financial Liabilities and Debt Servicing ratios;
  - Net Financial Liabilities ratio: Between 0 - 50%
  - Debt Servicing ratio: Between 0 - 5%

- borrow funds in accordance with the requirements set out in its Long-Term Financial Plan;
- not utilise borrowings to finance operating activities or recurrent expenditure;
- endeavour to fund all capital renewal projects from operating cash flow and borrow only for new/upgrade capital projects, having regard to sound financial management principles and giving consideration to inter-generational equity for the funding of long term infrastructure projects;
- only retain and quarantine money for particular future purposes where required by legislation, contractual agreement with other parties, or for specific purposes as outlined in its Reserve Funds Policy;
- apply any funds that are not immediately required to meet approved expenditure (including funds that are required to be expended for specific purposes but are not required to be kept in separate bank accounts) to reduce its level of borrowings or to defer and/or reduce the level of new borrowings that would otherwise be required.

## **Borrowings**

All borrowings will be subject to Council approval on the recommendation of the General Manager Corporate Services. In doing so due consideration will be given to inter-generational equity for the funding of long term infrastructure projects and therefore the equitable sharing of the debt burden between the past, current and future generations.

To ensure an adequate mix of interest rate exposures, Council will structure its portfolio of borrowings to ensure an optimal Treasury Management position, taking into account all borrowing options including fixed and variable terms. In order to spread its exposure to interest rate movements, Council will aim to have a variety of maturity dates on its fixed interest rate borrowings over the available maturity spectrum.

Council will establish, and make extensive use of, a long-term variable interest rate borrowing facility / LGFA's Cash Advance Debenture facility that requires interest payments only and that enables any amount of principal to be repaid or redrawn at call. The re draw facility will provide Council with access to liquidity when needed.

## **Investments**

Council funds that are not immediately required for operational needs and cannot be applied to either reduce existing borrowings or avoid the raising of new borrowings will be invested. The balance of funds held in any operating bank account that does not provide investment returns at least consistent with 'at call' market rates shall be kept at a level that is no greater than is required to meet immediate working capital requirements.

Council funds available for investment will be lodged 'at call' or, having regard to differences in interest rates for fixed term investments of varying maturity dates, may be invested for a fixed term. In the case of fixed term investments, the term should not exceed a point in time where the funds could otherwise be applied to cost-effectively defer the need to raise a new borrowing or reduce the level of Council's variable interest rate borrowing facility.

When investing funds Council will select the investment type which delivers the best value, having regard to investment returns, transaction costs and other relevant and objectively quantifiable factors.

Investments fixed for a period greater than 12 months are to be approved by Council.

To reduce the level of risk embodied in treasury operations, it is appropriate to limit investments made by Council to secure financial institutions. Therefore, without approval from Council, investments are limited to:

- deposits with the Local Government Finance Authority of South Australia (LGFA);
- State/Commonwealth Government Bonds.
- bank interest bearing deposits;
- bank accepted/endorsed bank bills;
- bank negotiable Certificate of Deposits;
- Australian Financial institutions

When considering which financial institutions surplus funds will be invested with, Council will only invest funds with those with a long term credit rating of at least AA and short term credit rating of A1.

All investments must be made exercising care and diligence and considering the following:

- the credit rating of the prospective institution.
- the likely yield and term of the investment;
- the period in which the investment is likely to be required;
- the cost of making and maintaining the investment;
- an assessment of future interest rate movements;
- an assessment of future cash flow requirements;
- the Government guarantee on the investment;

To ensure competitive rates for investments are achieved, quotations must be obtained from authorised institutions on investments of more than \$1,000,000 where the period of investment exceeds 30 days and market conditions are known to be fluctuating (for example, when the Reserve Bank of Australia changes the Cash Rate).

Investment of surplus funds outside of the above investment choices must be reported to Council for approval.

Examples of specific investment activities Council would not participate in include shares in private/public companies, listed or unlisted property trusts and derivatives.

## Reporting

In accordance with Section 140 of the Local Government Act, a report will be presented to Council annually which will summarise the performance of the investment portfolio. This report will review the investment performance against prior years and appropriate benchmarks including the RBA cash rate and the 90-Day Bank Bill Swap rate (90 Day BBSW).

## 5. DEFINITIONS

**Financial Assets** include cash, investments, receivables and prepayments. Equity held in a Council business is normally regarded as a financial asset but is excluded for the purpose of calculating Local Government published financial indicators. Also, inventories and land held for resale are not regarded as financial assets.

**Financial Sustainability** is achieved where planned long-term service and infrastructure levels and standards are met without unplanned increases in rates or disruptive cuts to services.

**Net Financial Liabilities** equals total liabilities less financial assets, where financial assets for this purpose include cash, investments, receivables and prepayments, but excludes equity held in a Council business, inventories and land held for resale.

**Debt Servicing Ratio** indicates the extent to which a Council's operating revenues are committed to its Debt Servicing costs (Principal and interest repayments).

**Net Financial Liabilities Ratio** indicates the extent to which net financial liabilities of a Council could be met by its operating revenue.

**Non-financial or Physical Assets** means infrastructure, land, buildings, plant, equipment, furniture, and fittings, library books and inventories.

**Operating Revenues** are "operating revenues" as shown in the Income Statement but exclude profit on disposal of non-financial assets, grants and contributions received specifically for new/upgraded infrastructure and other assets, e.g. from a developer.

**Rates Revenue** is general and other rates net of the impact of rate rebates and revenue from the Regional Landscape levy.

**Inter-generational Equity** in economic, psychological, and sociological contexts, is the concept or idea of fairness or justice between generations. In relation to local government it is often considered in the context of whether payment for the cost of services is recovered over time broadly in accordance with the benefits enjoyed by the service recipients.

## 6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Council is to approve all borrowings, as well as investments for a period of greater than 12 months.
- General Manager, Corporate Services is responsible for making recommendations with regards to borrowings.
- Manager Finance is responsible for ensuring all other tasks are conducted in accordance with the policy.

## 7. REFERENCES

### OTHER RELATED POLICIES

- Reserve Funds Policy

### LEGISLATION

#### **For Borrowings**

- Local Government Act, 1999 - Section 44/Section 122/Section 134
- Regulations 5 and 5B of the Financial Management Regulations under the Act

*The main legislative provisions in the Local Government Act covering borrowings are:*

- *Section 44 – a Council must approve all borrowings and the legislation clearly states that the power to borrow cannot be delegated (for simplicity many Councils appropriately just have all proposed borrowings for the year approved at the time the annual budget is adopted)*
- *Section 22 – a Council's strategic management plans must include an assessment a Council's proposals with respect to debt levels*
- *Section 134 – empowers a Council to borrow and requires a Council to consider expert advice before entering into financial arrangements for the purpose of managing, hedging or protecting against interest rate movements and other risks associated with borrowing money*
- *Regulations 5 and 7 of the Financial Management Regulations under the Act – require the preparation of Cash Flow Statements (including financing transactions) covering Councils' Long-term Financial Plans and Budgets*

## **For Investments**

- Local Government Act, 1999 - Section 47/Section 139/Section 140

*The main Local Government Act provisions covering investments are:-*

- *Section 47 – prohibits a Council from directly acquiring shares in a company*
- *Section 139 – empowers a Council to invest and requires that the power of investment be exercised with the care, diligence and skill that a prudent person of business would exercise in managing the affairs of other persons. Section 139 also requires Council to avoid investments that are speculative or hazardous in nature*
- *Section 140 – requires that a Council review the performance of its investments at least annually*

## **8. REVIEW AND EVALUATION**

This policy will be reviewed annually as part of the Annual Budget process.