



Corporate Services

Director Frank Crawley

Council's Corporate Services Directorate has introduced many new initiatives during the year, in particular:

- improved financial reporting
- transfer of Payroll Section from Human Resources to Finance to improve service delivery
- new Investment Management Policy
- new Human Resource Policies on recruitment, induction, training and development
- new Contract Management policies and procedures
- introduction of an Internal Control Policies and Procedures manual
- extensive upgrade of IT Security
- new budgeting procedures

The Directorate continues to focus on providing quality service to its external and internal customers.

This year is the second year of the three-year Internal Audit Program focussed on providing Council with opportunities for improvement of its controls and processes.

Finance

Twenty three staff supports the finance team, which provides the following services:

- the preparation of monthly, quarterly and annual financial statements
- the preparation of internal management reports and forward financial plans
- compilation of the annual business plan and quarterly budget reviews
- collection of all Council rates and revenue
- payment of Council's suppliers
- procurement and stores management
- managing and investing Council funds
- managing Council's taxation compliance
- payment of Council employees
- the provision of customer services

During the past year, the Finance Department has successfully implemented a number of new initiatives including:

- introduction of a new internal management reporting regime
- a new investment management strategy which has resulted in an increase in investment earnings
- introduction of a new budgeting process for annual and quarterly budget reviews including the preparation of an accrual budget
- finalisation of Council's Accounting Policy and Procedures Manual including an internal audit on all Council's financial policies and controls
- introduction of new processes for the calculation of employee on-costs, plant hire and administration allocations
- successful implementation of a new chart of accounts and work order management system

Throughout the year Finance has continued to review its internal practices and has been particularly involved in introducing systems and procedures for the recognition and valuation of Council's assets. All outstanding audit issues were resolved throughout the year and Council's financial performance for the 2003/04 year is contained within the Financial Statements, Management and Discussion Analysis section of this Annual Report.

Human Resources Section

The Human Resources section has seven staff who facilitate effective human resource management across Council. It coordinates training and professional development activities, recruitment and selection, provides direction and coordination of Council's occupational health and safety policies and practices for around 287 full time and part time employees.

Employee Statistics

Council has the equivalent of 283 full time positions, with approximately 110 outdoor employees and 177 indoor employees. In all, 78% of Council employees are full time permanent employees, 7% are part time permanent employees, with 7% contract or limited tenure employees.

One per cent of Council's workforce are trainees and 7% of its current employees are casual. The casual percentage alters according to seasonal fluctuations, with a higher need for casuals over the Dry season, this tapers off during the Wet.

A total of 60% of Council employees are male, 40% female. These figures have been steady over the past two years.

Council's staff is 59% unionised, with 28% in the Liquor, Hospitality & Miscellaneous Workers Union, 1% in the Australian Metal Workers Union, while 30% of staff are members of the Australian Services Union.

Personal Leave

On average, outdoor employees take thirteen days personal leave per annum, while indoor employees take eleven days.

Recruitment and Staff Turnover

Over the past year, 51 employees terminated their employment and 47 people began work with Council. This represents an overall staff turnover of 17.02% or an increase of 2.3% from last year.

Of the 51 departures, one (1%) was a long-term workers' compensation case which resulted in the employee resigning; two (3%) employees retired; one (1%) employee passed away; one (1%) resigned to pursue full time family duties; one (1%) resigned due to medical reasons; seven (13%) left to assume career opportunities within the NT, four (7%) left to return to families or positions interstate and 24% of employees did not complete the exit interview and therefore their reasons for leaving remain unknown.

Consultative Committee

In November 2003, Council formed a Consultative Committee consisting of an equal number of management staff and Union representatives to develop and review human resources policies and procedures. The formulation of the Consultative Committee reflects a transparent and consultative approach in the formulation of these policies.

The Consultative Committee has formulated three policies that have been adopted. They are: Induction Policy, Training and Education Policy and Recruitment Policy.

There are eight policies currently in progress with three policies ready for adoption, being: Dress Standards - PPE & Corporate Uniform, Higher Duties/ Acting Positions, Reclassification, with the remaining polices still to be progressed by the Consultative

Committee; being: Alcohol & Drugs in the Workplace, Equal Employment Opportunity, Managing Performance Improvement, Licence/Certification Policy and Staff Appraisals.

Staff Counselling

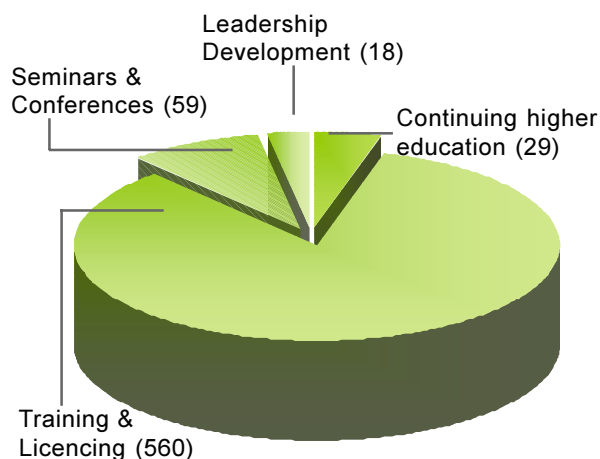
Council has an agreement with an external organisation, Employee Assistance Services Inc (EAS) for the provision of employee counselling or debriefing as required. Employees are able to access EAS counselling services for any situation that is impacting on their work performance. Counselling can be obtained after hours and on Saturday mornings.

Training and Development

During the period 2003/04 Council employees attended a range of training programs targeted at improving work performance, increasing job satisfaction, maintaining safety standards, and career development.

A total of 7,250 training hours (comprising of 666 attendances) were recorded for the year comprising the categories of Training and Licencing, Leadership Development, Continuing Higher Education, and Seminars and Conferences.

Employee Participation by Category



The total net training expenditure for the year was \$193,600, which equates to an average training expenditure of \$625 per employee. This compares favourably with the Australian Bureau of Statistics national all-industry average of \$458 per employee.

A comprehensive employee induction program incorporating corporate and local induction components was developed and implemented during the latter part of the year. This program is scheduled on a bi-monthly basis.

Council's commitment to ensuring employee health and safety was reinforced by the development and implementation of two in-house training programs namely, Coping with Heat Stress and Saving Our Skin programs. These programs were initially targeted at the outside workforce.

Professional Development

Council supports employees' ongoing professional development and encourages attendance at external professional development programs. Council supported 25 employees during the year to gain formal qualifications.

Seminars and Conferences

Throughout 2003/04, 77 Council staff attended five interstate seminars and conferences.

Workers' Compensation

In the past few years, Council has tried to reduce workers' compensation claims through sound management of its occupational health and safety practices. Last year's claims totalled 22 compared with 18 the previous year.

The following figures show a steady decline in workers' compensation claims over the past four years with 2003/04 recording a slight increase.

2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
20	20	18	22

During 2003/04, the four most common causes of injury were:

- 27% lower back strain
- 18% shoulder strain
- 13% ankle strain
- 9% head lacerations

Occupational Health & Safety

The total number of occupational health and safety (OH&S) incident reports of minor injuries incurred during 2003/04 was 63, up by eight from last year. The common injuries continue to be related to minor cuts to limbs, back problems, muscle strains due to lifting and twisting, swelling and welts due to a jellyfish outbreak at Lake Alexander. Council adopts a proactive approach to the management of injuries to ensure that employees return to work on suitable duties as soon as possible.

During 2003/04 the OH&S Committees have completed training as per requirements and all Emergency Evacuation/Fire Wardens have also been trained in the use of fire extinguishers and evacuation of Council buildings.

In the course of 2003/04 Council employees undertook a range of OH&S training programs including Risk Management (5), ChemCert Accreditation (8), Working in the Proximity of Power Lines (8), Sharps Handling (148), Saving our Skin (28) and Senior First Aid (34).

Procedures for Sun Protection, First Aid and OH&S Certification for Operators and Users of Industrial Equipment were developed during the latter part of this period and are currently undergoing review by the OH&S Committees. These procedures, once approved, will be implemented during the next period. To ensure compliance with OH&S requirements and legislation, Council Induction Procedures were also reviewed during this period.

Economic Development and Business Services

Darwin City Promotions

Council promotes and markets the City of Darwin funded through a special levy rate on CBD businesses, which amount to \$720,000 per annum.

In 1994 Council established a separate legal entity to conduct this activity with representation on the board from Council, a number of key business community groups and city traders. This business model allows for a number of city traders to provide input into the decision making process in acquitting funds promoting the City.

This year Council's Audit Committee recommended Darwin City Promotions (DCP) operations be included in Council's financial statements as a controlled entity and thus for the first time DCP's statement of financial position will be incorporated as part of Darwin City Council's consolidated financial statements.

A separate Annual Report is available for DCP, which details the company's activities over the past twelve months including activities for next year, which have been budgeted for.

Contracts

Council awarded 76 contract tenders during the year worth a total value of \$16 million as follows;

Value	Number of Tenders Awarded	Key Suppliers
\$50,000 - \$100,000	35	Grounds Maintenance Stronsay Mowing P/L Security Services MSC Guards and Patrol Audit Services KPMG
\$100,000 - \$200,000	17	Provision of Sweeping Services Jim Gikopoulos Pty Ltd Storage Area Network Corporate Services Legal Services Cridlands
\$200,000 - \$300,000	12	Management of Casuarina Swimming Pool Leisure Management & Marketing T/A Belgravia Leisure Management of Nightcliff Swimming Pool J & LP Dempsey Management of Thorak Cemetery Janto Services Pty Ltd Supply of Ready Mix Concrete Readymix Holdings Pty Ltd Service of Litter Bins Jim Gikopoulos Pty Ltd Maintenance of Parking Meters Cash Handling Systems Pty Ltd
\$300,000 - \$400,000	5	Smith Street Upgrade Wolpers & Flowers Construction P/L Electrical Works G&T Electrical Enterprises Pty Ltd Provision of Painting Services Z Vrontos T/A NT Repairs & Painting Minor Civil Works S&P Poullas Roads and Cyclepaths Pioneer Road Services Pty Ltd
\$400,000 - \$500,000	2	Parap Market Upgrade Paradise Landscaping Pty Ltd Gilruth Avenue Upgrade Tonrock Pty Ltd
\$500,000 - \$1.0 million	3	Provision of Cleaning Services Solidarity Cleaning Services Pty Ltd Building and Carpentry Works Z Vrontos T/A NT Repairs and Painting Misc Concreting Paving Jim Gikopoulos Pty Ltd
\$1.0 - \$2.0 million	-	
\$2.0 million and over	2	Waste Collection Wastemaster Shoal Bay Waste Disposal Site Henry Walker Elton Pty Ltd
Total	76	

As part of its improved corporate governance process Council has undergone an extensive review of its procurement process as reported through the Audit Committee which has resulted in updated policies, procedures and training during the year.

Economic Development

Darwin City Council is developing a Greater Darwin Regional Economic Development Strategy in partnership with six of its neighbouring Councils who are collectively known as The Top End Regional Organisation of Councils (TOPROC).

The group has been meeting since the mid 1990's and comprises Palmerston, Litchfield, Cox Peninsula, Coomalie, Belyuen and Darwin. The administration and secretariat is shared amongst the member Councils.

TOPROC is developing its shared vision for Darwin and its region in the form of a Regional Economic Development Strategy, which it is currently in the process of completing.

Sinclair Knight Merz were appointed as the preferred consultant in October 2003 to assist in the development of the Greater Darwin Regional Development Strategy.

It was agreed the final strategy would consist of a:

- visioning/investment document
- detailed action plan
- quantitative regional profile

A regional profile document was published in December 2003 which provides a demographic profile of the region. The document can be down loaded from TOPROC's website www.toproc.com.au

In February 2004 a draft Issues and Options paper was produced and distributed to more than 160 key business leaders.

In April 2004 TOPROC considered the first draft of the Greater Darwin Regional Development Strategy and it was agreed prior to distributing the document for public comment that a number of amendments were required and that further comments needed to be provided back to the consultants.

As a result of Council elections TOPROC decided to postpone refining the strategy until the newly elected members were appointed in June 2004.

The final strategy is expected to be completed early next year.

Car Parking

Parking meters were first introduced to Darwin City in August 2002. The fees for the car parking meters have remained unchanged since then.

The total occupancy for on street parking for 2003/04 was 57%.

On average a parking bay in Zone A generates \$3.27 net per day or \$819 net annually, a bay in Zone B generates \$1.29 net per day or \$324 net annually and a bay in Zone C generates \$1.51 net per day or \$378 net annually.

	Number of Bays	Net Cash 2003/2004	Actual Occupancy
Zone A	696	\$570,101	63%
Zone B	804	\$260,315	43%
Zone C	327	\$123,673	67%
Total	1827	\$954,090	57%

Council has nine off street car parks providing 1500 car parking bays. Mott Court Carpark was closed on 29 August 2003 due to development and displaced 229 car parking bays. The displacement has been effectively absorbed by Council's remaining eight car parks.

The total occupancy for off street car parking in 2004 was 86%.

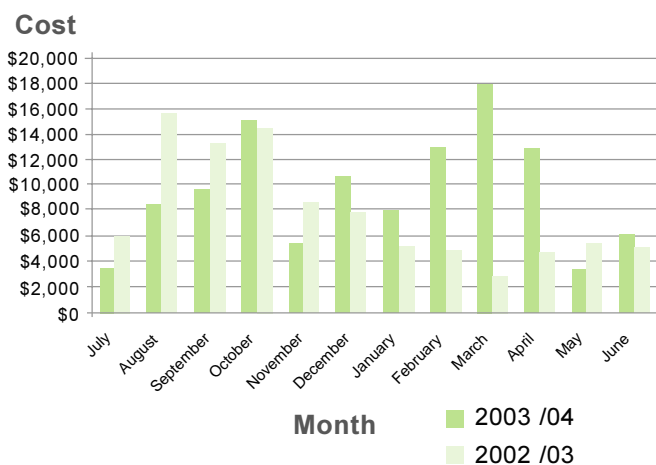
	Number of Bays	Average Occupancy	Year to Date for 2003/2004 Financial Year
West Lane	444	103%	\$488,668
Cavenagh St	393	82%	\$201,053
McLachlan St	90	81%	\$45,789
McMinn St	215	57%	\$59,071
Mitchell/Daly	106	83%	\$24,314
Nichols Plc	137	93%	\$87,909
Mott Crt	-	-	\$22,879
Stott Lne	40	95%	\$19,458
Darwin Oval	75	97%	\$44,070
Total	1500	86%	\$993,211

Risk

Vandalism cost Council approximately \$113,255 during 2003/04.

The highest cost of vandalism in the financial year was recorded at East Point Reserve at \$22,142. This compared to \$15,460 for the same area in the 2002/03 financial year.

Total Vandalism Costs 2003/04 Financial Year



Information Systems

Information Systems is divided into two sections, Records Management and IT Support.

Records Management electronically stores and coordinates the distribution of all correspondence in and out of Council. While this system has served Council well for many years, it is now starting to date and plans are under way to upgrade the system. Preliminary works have commenced.

The IT Support section manages the computer resources within Council, including file and print serving, email and Internet access. It also maintains the databases for records' management and corporate accounting software.

Council's IT environment has seen significant changes in the last 12 months with upgrades to most of the back end server infrastructure. The most significant project was the implementation of a SAN (Storage Area Network). The SAN allows the centralised storage of Council's entire server structure in one location. This allows for ease of backups, better utilisation of storage space and ease of management of the server environments.

Several new services have been introduced to enhance the reliability of the services provided to the environment. The new services allow for the automated upgrades to all corporate PCs of such things as virus updates and operating system patches. New email and web filtering technology also scans all traffic for viruses before they arrive into the environment and the removal of SPAM or junk email.

Major upgrades have also been made to Councils corporate database and document management system through upgrades to both the server and application. Similar projects are planned to file and print and email services in the coming 12 months. Changes relating to the recent IT security audit recommendations are continuing.