

Tablelands Regional Council

Corporate Governance Framework

Tablelands Regional Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the Tablelands Region and recognise their continuing connection to country. We pay respect to Elders past, present and future.



Contents

1.	Purpose	6
1.1	Our vision	6
1.2	Our purpose	6
1.3	Our values	7
2.	Stakeholders	7
3.	What is governance?	8
3.1	Essential principles of good governance in local government	8
3.1.1	Accountability.....	9
3.1.2	Transparency.....	9
3.1.3	Follows the rule of law	9
3.1.4	Responsiveness	9
3.1.5	Equitable and inclusive.....	9
3.1.6	Effective and efficient.....	9
3.1.7	Stakeholder (including the community at large) participation	9
4.	Aims and objectives	10
5.	Roles and responsibilities	11
5.1	Purpose of local government	12
5.2	Composition of Council	12
5.3	Councillors (elected members)	12
5.4	Employees and Chief Executive Officer	13
6.	Organisational structure	15
6.1	People and culture	16
6.1.1	Conduct	16
6.1.2	Equal employment opportunity	16
6.1.3	Leadership capability development	16
6.1.4	Cultural development plan.....	17
7.	Working relationships	17
7.1	Effective relationships	17
7.2	Councillors.....	17
7.3	Mayor and CEO.....	18
7.3.1	Communication	18
7.3.2	Role clarity.....	18
7.4	Elected members and CEO	19
7.5	Elected members and employees	19
7.6	Access to information	20
7.7	Leadership	20
8.	Decision-making	20
8.1	Council meetings	21
8.1.1	Confidential matters.....	21
8.2	Executive Leadership Team.....	21
8.3	Advisory committees.....	22
8.4	Council-owned entities and commercial business units	22
8.4.1	Water, waste and wastewater	22
9.	Management tools	23
9.1	Integrated planning and reporting framework	23

9.2	Policy and procedures	24
9.3	Delegations.....	24
9.4	Financial management	25
9.4.1	Long-term financial planning.....	25
9.4.2	Capital expenditure program	25
9.5	Infrastructure management	25
9.5.1	Assets.....	25
9.5.2	Infrastructure delivery.....	26
9.6	Project management framework	26
9.7	Risk management.....	26
9.7.1	Enterprise risk management	26
9.7.2	Business continuity planning.....	27
9.7.3	Disaster management	27
9.7.4	Fraud and corruption prevention.....	27
9.7.5	Liability and non-liability insurances	27
9.7.6	Workers' compensation	28
9.8	Data management.....	28
9.8.1	Transparency and accountability	28
9.8.2	Information management	28
9.8.3	Records management	29
9.8.4	Right to information	29
9.8.5	Information privacy	29
9.8.6	Registers	29
9.9	Internal controls.....	30
9.10	Complaints management	31
9.11	Communication and engagement.....	31
9.11.1	Community engagement.....	31
9.11.2	Deputations	32
9.12	Internal review of Council decisions	32
9.13	Procurement	32
10.	Accountability.....	33
10.1	Legislative compliance	33
10.2	Declaration of interests.....	33
10.2.1	Dealing with material personal interests and conflicts of interests at meetings	34
10.2.2	Register of interests	34
10.2.3	Related parties	34
10.2.4	Contact with lobbyists.....	34
10.3	Audit, risk and improvement committee	34
10.4	Internal audit.....	35
10.5	External audit	35
10.6	Corporate planning	35
10.7	Corporate performance management.....	36
10.7.1	Performance reporting.....	36
10.7.2	Reporting agencies	36
10.7.3	Quality management systems	37
10.7.4	Performance review	37

11. Implementation and review 37

Version Control

Version	Outline of Revisions	Date	Updated By
1.0	Adopted by Council and Audit Committee	Sept 2019	
2.0	Updated to reflect change in organisation structure	Sept 2020	Senior Executive Officer
3.0	Updated to reflect changes in vision, organisation structure, content and references	Dec 2023	Coordinator Communication & Engagement

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Native Title parties across the Tablelands Regional Council area and other family groups who are the traditional custodians of this land. We recognise your continuing connection to Country and pay respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders past, present and emerging including:

- Bar Barrum of the area around the Walsh River and to the west of the Wild River
- Dulabed and Malanbarra Yidinji of the Gillies Range area
- Girramay of the Kirrama area
- Gugu Badhun of the Wairuna/Lamonds Lagoon area
- Jirrbal of the Koombooloomba, Ravenshoe and Herberton areas
- Mamu of the Millaa Millaa area
- Ngadjon-Jii of the Malanda and Topaz areas
- Tableland Yidinji of the Kairi, Tolga, Tinaroo and Lake Barrine areas
- Warrungu of the Gunnawarra/Goshen area.

1. Purpose

The Corporate Governance Framework ensures compliance with legislation and best practice democratic and corporate governance. The purpose of the document is to outline our governance policies, procedures, practices and guidelines. It provides an overview for elected members, management, employees, contractors and volunteers of Tablelands Regional Council (TRC). We are committed to delivering best practice governance and strive to continuously improve our accountability and efficiency.

This framework identifies the governance functions and structures that TRC employs to facilitate, monitor and review the making of quality decisions based on adequate, timely and relevant information. The benefits of an effective governance framework include the ability to provide responsible government, oversight of Council's progress towards strategic goals, a healthy organisational culture and community confidence.

1.1 Our vision



We will **celebrate** and embrace our uniqueness, community connections, First Nations Peoples, diversity and enviable healthy lifestyle.

We will continue to focus on **sustainable** provision of assets, business development and regional planning while protecting our natural environment and good quality agricultural land.

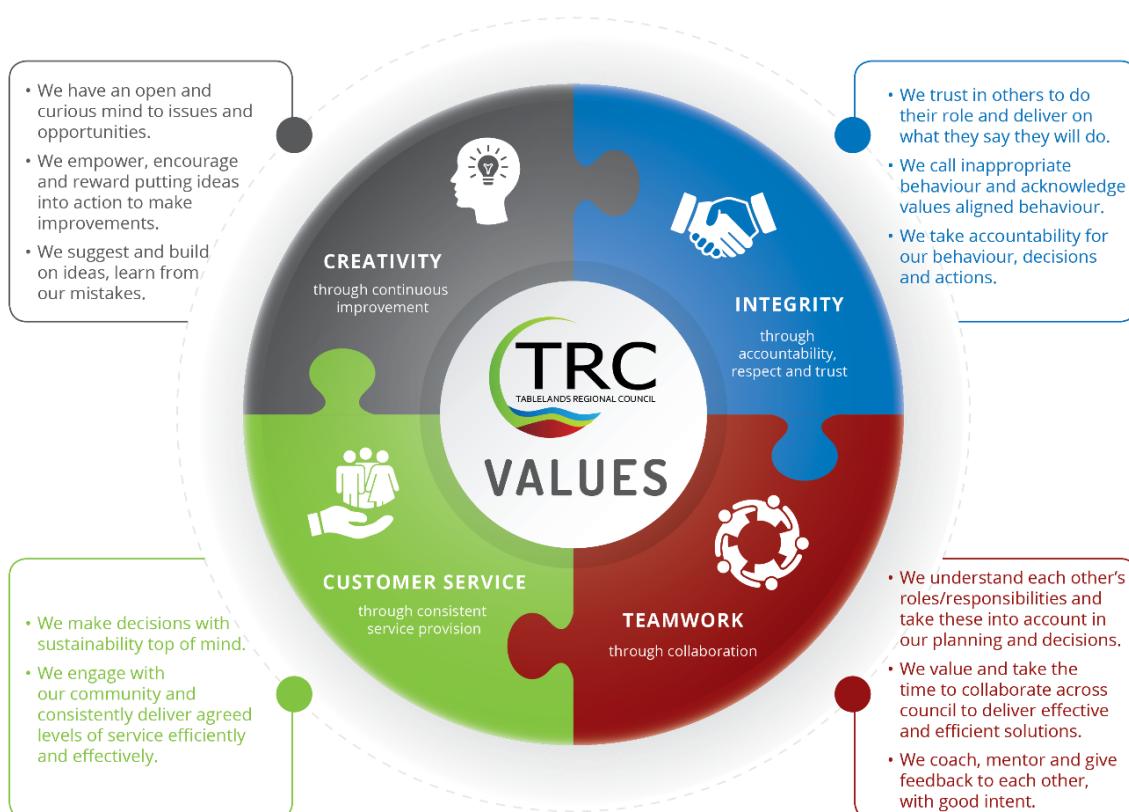
We will be **inclusive**, respecting diversity and providing equitable access to all.

We will be **resilient** and adaptable, responding to change and opportunities.

1.2 Our purpose

To be an efficient, effective and sustainable local government for our Tablelands community.

1.3 Our values



2. Stakeholders

There are a number of stakeholders who can have an effect on, or be affected by, activities and decisions undertaken by Council. The Corporate Governance Framework delivers the following outcomes to principal stakeholders:

- Community — a broad-based appreciation that resources are being used appropriately to ensure that community value is being consistently delivered by TRC.
- State government — that TRC adheres to legislation that provides for the good governance of local government including being accountable, effective, efficient and sustainable:
 - *Queensland Public Sector Ethics Act 1994*
 - *Queensland Local Government Act 2009*
 - *Queensland Local Government Regulation 2012*
 - *Queensland Local Government Electoral Act 2011.*
- Council — a high level of assurance that desired strategic priority outcomes are being achieved efficiently and effectively within an acceptable level of risk.
- Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee — a high level of assurance that the appropriate control mechanisms are in place to ensure effective delivery of services within an acceptable level of risk.
- Chief Executive Officer (CEO) — a high level of assurance that the organisation is consistently delivering community value and Council's strategic priority outcomes.
- Organisation — understanding of corporate governance and its link to ensuring community value.

3. What is governance?

The [Queensland Audit Office](#) (QAO) defines governance as the means by which an organisation holds itself accountable. It also advises that good governance depends on transparency, accountability and equality in ways that are responsive to the present and future needs of the local government community. It also assures that opportunities for fraud, corruption and perceived conflicts of interest, particularly in decision-making processes, are minimised.

The Australian Standard for Good Governance Principles (AS8000-2003) defines corporate governance as the systems by which entities are directed and controlled. It encompasses authority, accountability, stewardship, leadership, direction and control exercised in the organisation.

A good governance framework provides the structure within which an organisation's management practices operate. Some elements of the structure are mandatory and set by legislation, and other elements are discretionary to address organisational needs.

With a good governance framework, Councillors and the community can be confident that TRC is operating efficiently and meeting legislative obligations.

3.1 Essential principles of good governance in local government

Good governance refers to the rules, processes and behaviours that shape how powers are exercised. Everyone has a role to play in the governance of a local government — from the person offering advice at the customer service counter, to the Councillor representing constituents. Effective governance relies on an understanding of the different roles played by elected representatives and employees and the successful working relationships that are established as a result.

The [Local Government Act 2009](#) (the Act) creates clear obligations for Councillors in carrying out their responsibilities. Section 4(2) of the Act provides five core principles:

- transparent and effective processes, and decision-making in the public interest
- sustainable development and management of assets and infrastructure, and delivery of effective services
- democratic representation, social inclusion and meaningful community engagement
- good governance of, and by, local government
- ethical and legal behaviour of Councillors and local government employees.

The benefits of good governance can extend through all aspects of TRC through developing and implementing tools such as:

- corporate and operational plans
- annual budgets and future forecasts
- appropriate and clear delegations
- code of conduct for employees
- systems for monitoring and reporting (being able to measure and report performance against the stated objectives and budget)
- a reliable information management system capable of retaining information in a structured and secure manner
- a risk management system (operational, misconduct and financial)
- register of interests
- management of declarations of interest including material personal interests and conflicts of interests
- lobbyist register
- gifts register.

The use of these tools can contribute to a stable, transparent and ethical decision-making process. Good governance is also underpinned by a strong, ethical and values-based culture within the organisation.

The following are our key governance commitments:

3.1.1 Accountability

Accountability is fundamental to good governance. Council has an obligation to report, explain and be answerable for the consequences of decisions it has made on behalf of the community it represents.

3.1.2 Transparency

People should be able to follow and understand the decision-making process. This means that they will be able to clearly see how and why a decision was made — what information, advice and consultation Council considered, and which legislative requirements (when relevant) were followed.

3.1.3 Follows the rule of law

Decisions will be made in a manner that is consistent with relevant legislation or common law and are within the powers of Council.

3.1.4 Responsiveness

Local government should always try to serve the needs of the entire community while balancing competing interests in a timely, appropriate and responsive manner.

3.1.5 Equitable and inclusive

A community's wellbeing results from all members feeling their interests have been considered in the decision-making process. This means all groups, particularly the most vulnerable, should have opportunities to participate in the process.

3.1.6 Effective and efficient

Council will implement decisions and follow processes that make the best use of the available people, resources and time to ensure the best possible results for their community.

3.1.7 Stakeholder (including the community at large) participation

Stakeholders will have the opportunity to participate in the process for making decisions. TRC may engage with stakeholders including:

- informing — provide accurate and objective information in a timely manner
- consulting — seek feedback on analysis, issues, alternatives and decisions where possible
- involving — ensure concerns and aspirations are considered
- collaborating — partner with community during decision making
- empowering — place final decision-making with the community.

4. Aims and objectives

The Corporate Governance Framework aims to reinforce the accountability standards within TRC and ensure that the organisation's objectives are being achieved efficiently and effectively to ultimately deliver value to the community. The aims and objectives of the framework are:

- Strong ethical, performance and values-based culture. This means:
 - behaviour reflects endorsed values
 - robust performance monitoring and evaluation.
- Quality decision-making founded on adequate, timely and relevant information disclosure. This means:
 - minimal unintended consequences of decisions
 - quadruple bottom line (environment, social/community, economic, governance) impacts are clearly understood and integrated into decision-making processes.
- Assurance of desired outcomes or results. This means:
 - decisions are unambiguous
 - the accountability for carrying out decisions to required standards is enforced
 - controls and monitoring are effective.
- Effective management of risks and opportunities. This means:
 - existing, new or previously unforeseen risks and opportunities are routinely identified, assessed and managed.
- Effective and widespread stakeholder commitment and support for good corporate governance. This means:
 - Corporate Governance Framework elements are clearly defined and understood
 - stakeholder roles and responsibilities are understood
 - support for good corporate governance is reflected in behaviours
 - stakeholders have access to relevant information and training to support and fulfil their roles and responsibilities
 - stakeholders take part in, and are informed of, corporate changes.
- The system of corporate governance is streamlined and flexible to meet emerging demands or needs. This means:
 - integrated information management and support systems
 - the overall system is regularly reviewed.
- Transparency and disclosure. This means:
 - accurate, complete and timely information provided to Council, management and decision makers
 - high level of community understanding of Council policies, decisions and performance.
- Strategic leadership and direction are clearly stated. This means:
 - operational and corporate plans, and associated processes are guided and aligned
 - priorities, strategies, operations and performance are integrated.
- Stewardship. This means:
 - legal and fiduciary responsibilities are understood and carried out effectively.

5. Roles and responsibilities

Local governments are responsible for the good rule and local government of its local government area.¹ This responsibility includes the performance of various functions and the delivery of a range of services to the community. These functions include the provision of municipal services such as water, waste and sewerage; planning, law making and enforcement; advocacy and representation.

Elected members and TRC employees are tasked with delivering the functions of the local government, and in doing so must adhere to the principles of good government — equity, transparency, integrity and accountability — to secure the confidence of the communities they serve.²

The Mayor and Councillors have responsibilities for democratic and corporate governance through their representative and decision-making roles. The corporate governance of the organisation, however, is separate to the democratic governance of the elected Council and the local government area.

The democratic governance of TRC and local government area focuses on the elected Council and includes:

- the conduct of elections conducted by [Electoral Commission Queensland](#) (ECQ)
- the representative role of Councillors
- the post-election meeting and all related aspects
- the conduct of Council meetings including standing and advisory committees.

The corporate governance of TRC focuses on the organisation and includes:

- organisational planning
- organisational performance management
- internal controls.

Within TRC, leadership is the responsibility of the Council, individual Councillors, CEO, general managers, managers, team leaders and supervisors. TRC recognises that strong, ethical and values-based leadership at all levels of the organisation is crucial to ensuring services and outcomes are delivered in ways that meet the current and future needs of the community and other stakeholders.

TRC exercises its leadership role through:

- working with the community, industry and other levels of government to establish a clear strategic direction for the local government area
- ensuring that allocation of resources is aligned with the strategic direction of the organisation and is focused on delivering maximum benefit to the community
- promoting a performance culture through the active adoption of the principles of corporate governance.

The Mayor, Councillors and CEO have specific responsibilities that will ensure effective control over the management and operation of the local government area. The *Local Government Act 2009* provides formal distinctions between the role of the Mayor, Councillors and CEO. It is good governance that the Mayor, Councillors, CEO and employees recognise and respect each other's roles and responsibilities and maintain good relationships to benefit the community. It is important the Mayor and Councillors do not become involved in management and operational functions, and for management not to establish or pursue strategies and policies that have not been endorsed by Council.

¹ s9 *Local Government Act 2009*

² Belcarra Report Summary, 2017

5.1 Purpose of local government

The *Local Government Act 2009* provides for:

- the way in which a local government is constituted and the nature and extent of its responsibilities and powers
- a system of local government in Queensland that is accountable, effective, efficient and sustainable.³

The roles and responsibilities of elected members (the executive arm of government) and employees (administrative arm of government) are clearly defined in the Act.

5.2 Composition of Council

TRC is comprised of seven elected members including six divisional Councillors and the Mayor.

5.3 Councillors (elected members)

In accordance with the *Local Government Act 2009 (Section 12)*:

- (1) *A Councillor must represent the current and future interests of the residents of the local government area*
- (2) *All Councillors (including the Mayor) of a local government have the same responsibilities, but the Mayor has some extra responsibilities*
- (3) *All Councillors have the following responsibilities:*
 - (a) *ensuring the local government:*
 - (i) *discharges its responsibilities under this Act*
 - (ii) *achieves its corporate plan*
 - (iii) *complies with all laws that apply to local governments*
 - (b) *providing high quality leadership to the local government and the community*
 - (c) *participating in Council meetings, policy development, and decision-making, for the benefit of the local government area*
 - (d) *being accountable to the community for the local government's performance*
- (4) *The Mayor has the following additional responsibilities:*
 - (a) *leading and managing meetings of the local government at which the Mayor is the chairperson, including managing the conduct of the participants at the meetings*
 - (b) *preparing a budget to present to the local government*
 - (c) *leading, managing, and providing strategic direction to the chief executive officer in order to achieve the high quality administration of the local government*
 - (d) *directing the chief executive officer and senior executive employees, in accordance with the local government's policies*
 - (e) *conducting a performance appraisal of the chief executive officer at least annually, in the way that is decided by the local government (including as a member of a committee, for example)*
 - (f) *ensuring that the local government promptly provides the Minister with the information about the local government area, or the local government, that is requested by the Minister*
 - (g) *being a member of each standing committee of the local government*
 - (h) *representing the local government at ceremonial or civic functions*

³ s2 *Local Government Act 2009*

- (5) *A Councillor who is not the Mayor may perform the Mayor's extra responsibilities only if the Mayor delegates the responsibility to the Councillor*
- (6) *When performing a responsibility, a Councillor must serve the overall public interest of the whole local government area.*

The primary role of elected members is to drive the strategic direction of the TRC local government area. Councillors must demonstrate and provide strategic vision and leadership by adopting strategies, plans, policies and local laws that enable the delivery of outcomes to service the community's need. Strategic decisions by Council (elected members) are made to guide the operational (day-to-day) work of employees, which ultimately achieves the strategic goals that are set out in the [Corporate Plan](#).

Councillors must avoid actively participating in operational matters as this can lead to inequitable decisions which are inconsistent with policy objectives and strategies.

Councillors are not employed by the community to do a job and are not paid to be on-call 24/7. Councillors have a representation role and a decision-making role. Council (the elected members) sets policy and strategy in the interest of the community and region at large, and Councillors receive an allowance to undertake these roles. TRC staff are responsible for delivering services and implementing the policy and strategy decisions made by Council.

5.4 Employees and Chief Executive Officer

In accordance with the *Local Government Act 2009 (Section 13)*:

- (1) *All employees of a local government have the same responsibilities, but the chief executive officer has some extra responsibilities*
- (2) *All employees have the following responsibilities:*
 - (a) *implementing the policies and priorities of the local government in a way that promotes:*
 - (i) *the effective, efficient and economical management of public resources*
 - (ii) *excellence in service delivery*
 - (iii) *continual improvement*
 - (b) *carrying out their duties in a way that ensures the local government:*
 - (i) *discharges its responsibilities under this Act*
 - (ii) *complies with all laws that apply to local governments*
 - (iii) *achieves its corporate plan*
 - (c) *providing sound and impartial advice to the local government*
 - (d) *carrying out their duties impartially and with integrity*
 - (e) *ensuring the employee's personal conduct does not reflect adversely on the reputation of the local government*
 - (f) *improving all aspects of the employee's work performance*
 - (g) *observing all laws relating to their employment*
 - (h) *observing the ethics principles under the Public Sector Ethics Act 1994, section 4*
 - (i) *complying with a code of conduct under the Public Sector Ethics Act 1994*
- (3) *The chief executive officer has the following extra responsibilities:*
 - (a) *managing the local government in a way that promotes:*
 - (i) *the effective, efficient and economical management of public resources*
 - (ii) *excellence in service delivery*
 - (iii) *continual improvement*
 - (b) *managing the other local government employees through management practices that:*
 - (i) *promote equal employment opportunities*
 - (ii) *are responsive to the local government's policies and priorities*

- (c) *establishing and implementing goals and practices in accordance with the policies and priorities of the local government*
- (d) *establishing and implementing practices about access and equity to ensure that members of the community have access to:*
 - (i) *local government programs*
 - (ii) *appropriate avenues for reviewing local government decisions*
- (e) *the safe custody of:*
 - (i) *all records about the proceedings, accounts or transactions of the local government or its committees*
 - (ii) *all documents owned or held by the local government*
- (f) *complying with requests from Councillors under section 170A:*
 - (i) *for advice to assist the Councillor carry out his or her role as a Councillor*
 - (ii) *for information, that the local government has access to, relating to the local government*

The day-to-day work of the local government is carried out by TRC employees under the direction and guidance of the CEO. This operational work is directed by the decisions of Council through its annual [Operational Plan](#) and [budget](#). Work carried out by employees is aimed at achieving strategic objectives. The CEO is responsible for reporting against key performance criteria to monitor progress towards these objectives.

6. Organisational structure

Our organisational structure is aligned to the achievement of Council’s goals and objectives and is reviewed after each Corporate Plan review. The organisational structure can also be reviewed when Council reviews its annual Operational Plan and budget to ensure optimal deployment of resources for the delivery of services and appropriate cohesion between departments.

The organisational (or administrative) structure of TRC, determined by the CEO in consultation with general managers, is endorsed by Council and is responsible to the CEO. The CEO will consult with Council regarding any changes to the general manager (senior executive) positions. Restructures within departments can be approved by the CEO upon referral from the relevant general manager. The CEO endorses all organisational structure changes below general manager level in consultation with the Executive Leadership Team.

The CEO is responsible directly to the Council.

Our organisational functions are managed across three departments with executive support provided for the CEO, Mayor and Councillors:

- Office of the CEO
- Infrastructure & Environment
- Community & Corporate Services.



6.1 People and culture

6.1.1 Conduct

The [Employee Code of Conduct](#), in accordance with the *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994*, assists employees to understand the standards of conduct expected and to help them decide what they must do when faced with ethical or conduct issues.

The code is binding for all employees including management, and promotes the employee ethical principles (as outlined in the *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994*) of:

- integrity and impartiality
- promoting public good
- commitment to the system of government
- accountability and transparency.

The code outlines the action that can be taken if there is a breach and provides a guide to support ethical decision making. Employees who breach the code may be subject to disciplinary action including, but not limited to, dismissal.

6.1.2 Equal employment opportunity

In appointing people to positions, it is essential TRC ensures fairness and consistency and avoids unlawful discrimination of any kind. TRC is committed to the principle of equal employment opportunity and will not unlawfully discriminate in matters of recruitment, selection or career progression on the basis of any distinction, exclusion, or preference having regard to a person's sex, marital status, pregnancy, parental status, lawful sexual activity, race, impairment, age, religion, trade union activity or political opinion or any other attribute contained within the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* and/or the suite of relevant Federal anti-discrimination legislation.

TRC is committed to creating a work environment that is free from discrimination and sexual harassment and where all employees are treated with dignity, courtesy and respect.

6.1.3 Leadership capability development

To deliver consistently high standards of service and value to the community, the quality of leadership needs to be of the highest calibre possible. To achieve this standard, TRC consistently strives to develop leadership capability within the organisation by:

- providing elected members with an induction program and ongoing education and development programs
- applying the leadership capability framework, profiling the managerial and leadership capabilities required for success
- conducting annual achievement and development process to enable constructive feedback to be provided and continuing development of leadership capabilities
- providing ongoing education and development programs to organisational leaders
- implementing Executive Performance Management Framework that defines services, values, behaviours and deliverables each executive is responsible for.

The thorough application of this program ensures TRC can consistently and strategically develop the leadership capabilities of employees to help effectively deliver the objectives of the Corporate and Operational Plans.

6.1.4 Cultural development plan

In order to lead the organisation and the region into the future in a sustainable way, TRC is focusing on a clear strategic direction and requires a culture (work environment) that enables the achievement of that strategy. Our Culture Development Plan provides a systemic approach to achieving the strategically aligned target culture.

7. Working relationships

7.1 Effective relationships

Relationships are the key to good governance in local government. Good relationships, which are based on understanding and agreement around roles, help the different elements of a local government to work together effectively.

Councillors and employees must have a clear and thorough understanding of their different roles and responsibilities, and the fact that these operate within a hierarchy. Employees are accountable to the CEO, who is accountable to the Council.

The elected members role is to develop the vision and then build the strategies and policies to achieve it. The role of employees is to advise Council, implement Council decisions and to oversee service delivery.

It helps if employees recognise the complex political environments in which elected members operate and acknowledge that the whole system is based on democratic governance. Councillors similarly need to understand that to prepare information and provide quality advice on a wide range of issues is a highly complex task and resource intensive.

7.2 Councillors

Councillors are members of a team, elected by their constituents to work collectively in the best interests of the whole community. Good governance is dependent on a mature and constructive working relationship between Councillors.

Councillors should behave in a manner that generates community trust and confidence in them and enhances the role and image of both the Council and the local government area. Councillors are expected to:

- conduct their ongoing relationship with other Councillors, employees and the community with respect and courtesy
- act within the law
- act in good faith and not for improper or ulterior motives
- act ethically
- act in a reasonable, just and non-discriminatory manner
- undertake their role with reasonable care and diligence.

The State Government's [Code of Conduct for Queensland Councillors](#) is a public declaration of the principles of good conduct and standards of behaviour that Councillors must conform to when carrying out their roles. It provides guidance to Councillors about carrying out their duties and responsibilities in accordance with the following standards of behaviour:

- Carry out responsibilities conscientiously and in the best interests of the Council and the community.
- Treat people in a reasonable, just, respectful and non-discriminatory way.
- Ensure conduct does not reflect adversely on the reputation of Council.

All Councillors will have individual views regarding community priorities and issues, not all of which can be addressed at the same time. Councillors are required to represent both the current and future interests of residents across the local government area. What is important to one Councillor may not be as important by other Councillors. Councillors need to be able to persuade, through respectful debate and discussions, sufficient numbers of their fellow Councillors to support and prioritise the specific matters they wish to advance, and this depends significantly on having good relationships with each other.

The structure of Council, consisting of a group of independently elected Councillors, is an environment in which good relationships, mutual respect and a constructive appreciation of differences are required for good decision-making and the capacity of Councillors to deliver on their various election platforms.

Given the way local government operates, it is inevitable that there will sometimes be conflict. From a good governance perspective, it is the way that conflict is addressed that is significant. The role of the Mayor is particularly important during these times. Good, robust debate is part of local government, but the focus should always be on issues, not personalities.

When it comes to behaviour in Council meetings, Councillors should model good and constructive relationships, and show respect for one another at all times. Understanding the key elements of good conduct and having solid processes in place to manage behaviour is important for good governance.

7.3 Mayor and CEO

The Mayor and CEO work closely together and the relationship should be characterised by frank, open and good communication, with each keeping the other informed about important and relevant issues.

They both have a role in liaising with each other on local and regional affairs and the performance of TRC's functions. Any liaison between the Mayor and CEO is only relevant to those matters that enable each party to perform their statutory role.

The Mayor is the official spokesperson on behalf of Council, primarily concerning policy issues and the decision-making role of Council, and promotion of events, programs and services. There may be occasions when the Mayor delegates this responsibility to another Councillor. The CEO (or delegate) is the official spokesperson for operational or technical matters. These responsibilities involve the development of a clear relationship and an understanding of the limits of each other's authority. The [Media Policy](#) provides guidance to ensure appropriate representation of Council, its decisions, actions and services to media outlets and on corporate communication tools.

The essential principles for an effective Mayor/CEO relationship are communication and role clarity.

7.3.1 Communication

- Both parties brief the other about information that would assist them in performing their role.
- Regular meetings, over and above those scheduled to discuss specific issues or problems, are necessary to enhance planning and communication.
- The no surprises principle should apply — the Mayor and CEO should brief one another so that neither is caught off guard.

7.3.2 Role clarity

There is a need for the Mayor and CEO to understand and respect one another's role. A clear understanding of their different roles is crucial.

The Mayor:

- provides leadership to Councillors and steers policy direction

- has civic and ceremonial duties and responsibilities
- chairs Council meetings
- see Section 12(4) of the Act.

The CEO:

- provides leadership to the organisation
- implements the agreed strategic priorities of Council
- is responsible for operations and services
- see Section 13(3) of the Act.

7.4 Elected members and CEO

The CEO is accountable to Council and is a valuable source of support and assistance to Councillors. Councillors, as a collective, are responsible for employing the CEO and managing their performance.

While the formal relationship is very important, it is equally important for Councillors and the CEO to create positive working relationships. They are generally in regular contact to share information, discuss issues and action opportunities. As with the relationship between the Mayor and CEO, there needs to be trust and respect between all. This trust should be based on good communication and an understanding of each other's role and responsibilities.

7.5 Elected members and employees

In order to maintain the integrity of the relationship between the strategic (Councillors) and the administrative (employees and operations) elements of TRC, it is important for Councillors to understand their obligations when interacting with employees.

Section 170(A) of the Act provides a framework for Councillor/employee interactions. Councillors must deal with employees in accordance with the [Acceptable Requests Guideline](#) and [Councillor Interaction with the Organisation Policy](#). Councillors should seek advice from the CEO to resolve any uncertainties or matters not clearly defined in the policy. The policy specifies the channels to use when requesting information or advice from employees, and the appropriate ways to provide employees with information or knowledge about specific matters.

A Councillor (including the Mayor) must not under any circumstances give a direction to employees. This includes requests framed in such a way that employees interpret them as instructions, or that seem to be an attempt to exert improper influence over a process or a decision. Only the Mayor may give a direction to the CEO or general managers in accordance with Section 12(4)(d) of the Act.

7.6 Access to information

A Councillor (current or past) must not use information obtained through their role as a Councillor in order to gain a financial or other advantage for themselves, a relative or an associate, or to cause detriment to the local government. This extends to providing inside information to another person.

Respecting the classification (confidential, restricted etc.) given to information is important in protecting the content of the information (including references to people or commercial-in-confidence information) and the integrity of Council.

The only exception to Section 171 of the Act is when the information used or provided to a person was lawfully available to the public in the first instance. Failure to comply may constitute official misconduct and risk a criminal conviction and dismissal.

7.7 Leadership

Councillors have an important role as leaders of the community. It is essential that Council establishes and maintains relationships with State and Federal government, business and community groups, local service providers and agencies, partner organisations and Indigenous elders to better represent the local community.

As part of the leadership role, Council adopts strategies, policies and plans to guide improved liveability and community development including social, economic, environmental and governance outcomes. These documents are [publicly available](#).

8. Decision-making

The Act provides Council with broad decision-making powers for the good rule and governance of its local government area.⁴

Meetings of Council are the primary method of decision making regarding strategic or significant matters. Many operational decision-making powers are legislatively provided directly to the CEO. For operational efficiencies, there are other circumstances where it is appropriate to delegate Council's decision-making power to the CEO. These powers may be sub-delegated to appropriately qualified employees (authorised delegates) unless precluded by legislation or a condition of the original delegation.

Certain decisions of Council are prescribed by legislation and must not be delegated.

Decisions made must be made in a way that is consistent with the local government principles set out in the Act (S4):

- transparent and effective processes, and decision-making in the public interest
- sustainable development and management of assets and infrastructure, and delivery of effective services
- democratic representation, social inclusion and meaningful community engagement
- good governance of and by local government
- ethical and legal behaviour of Councillors and local government employees.

Good decision-making requires that:

- decisions must be those that the local government can lawfully make
- decisions must be consistent with and in accordance with legislation and Council policies

⁴S9 *Local Government Act 2009*

- Councillors should have all the relevant information to make a considered and informed decision
- Councillors should be impartial, objective, free from bias and act in the public interest of the overall local government area, not just the division they represent
- declarations of interest are dealt with in an accountable and transparent way that meets community expectations as per Section 5A of the Act
- decisions should be made on a reasonable basis.

8.1 Council meetings

Council is committed to:

- conducting meetings in accordance with the principles of the Act and Standing Orders to ensure an accountable, effective, efficient and sustainable system of local government
- ensuring Councillors are performing their responsibilities as required under the Act
- providing meeting processes that support effective contributions from elected members, employees and residents in the best interest of the community

Council generally holds Ordinary meetings on the fourth Thursday of each month and Planning Committee meetings on the second Thursday of each month.

[Standing Orders and meeting procedures](#) are modelled on the State Government templates to define how meetings will be conducted and includes the order of meeting agendas. The meeting agenda listing is released on the Friday prior, and the full agenda, including reports, is released on the Monday prior to each Council meeting to inform the community of the items of business Council will be considering.

8.1.1 Confidential matters

Processes must be open and transparent so that the community understands how decisions have been made. There are some circumstances where decisions relating to confidential matters need to be made without public discussion or dissemination of reports. This may include matters as per Section 275(1) of the Local Government Regulation 2012 relating to:

- the appointment, dismissal or discipline of employees
- industrial matters affecting employees
- the local government's budget
- rating concessions
- contracts proposed to be made
- starting or defending legal proceedings involving the local government
- any action to be taken by the local government under the *Planning Act*, including deciding applications made to it under that Act
- other business for which a public discussion would likely prejudice the interests of the local government or someone else, or enable a person to gain a financial advantage.

In these cases, resolutions of Council will be a public record, however substantive information may be considered in confidential business to prevent prejudice to Council or third parties or breaches of confidentiality obligations.

8.2 Executive Leadership Team

The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) comprises the CEO and general managers. Its purpose is to provide leadership, direction and collaborative organisational decision-making to enhance community value and the achievement of Council's strategic vision. Some of the key issues considered by the ELT include:

- management of Community, Corporate and Operational Plans and the annual budget
- implementation of Council's decisions, key strategies and plans, for example Economic Development Strategy, Transport Strategy, Long-term Financial Plan and Workforce Strategy

- key organisational capacity and people management issues, for example Enterprise Bargaining Agreements, Cultural and Leadership Development Program, recruitment and retention strategies and employee satisfaction surveys
- high risk and/or sensitive corporate projects being advanced under the Corporate Governance Framework, including corporate performance management reviews, issues and opportunities relating to corporate security, risk management, work health and safety, disaster management and strategic asset management
- matters being tabled at Council meetings
- relevant whole-of-Council communication and engagement priorities.

Where input is required from particular employees on a matter, those employees are invited to attend ELT meetings to provide expertise, present reports, answer questions and take part in discussion that will assist them in the implementation of any decisions or directions given by the ELT.

8.3 Advisory committees

TRC has advisory committees to provide valuable assistance and advice in a range of specialist areas. Advisory committees do not have decision-making powers. Each committee has a terms of reference. These committees are established when TRC needs to:

- work directly with or partner with stakeholders throughout a process
- ensure concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered
- develop alternatives and identify a preferred solution
- source specialist expertise and advice.

The [Advisory Committees Policy](#) provides structure and governance around these engagement activities.

8.4 Council-owned entities and commercial business units

8.4.1 Water, waste and wastewater

The Infrastructure and Environment Department is a provider of water, waste and wastewater services within the TRC local government area, and issues commercial fees and charges to recipients of these services. These services are conducted through commercial business units of Council.

The *Local Government Act 2009* and the Local Government Regulation 2012 govern the operation of business units run by local government.

Role of TRC:

- owner of business
- specifies level of service.

Role of water, waste and wastewater business units:

- service provider for planning and operation of assets
- owner of waste and water management assets.

Information regarding Council-owned entities and commercial business units is available from the Annual Report and TRC [website](#).

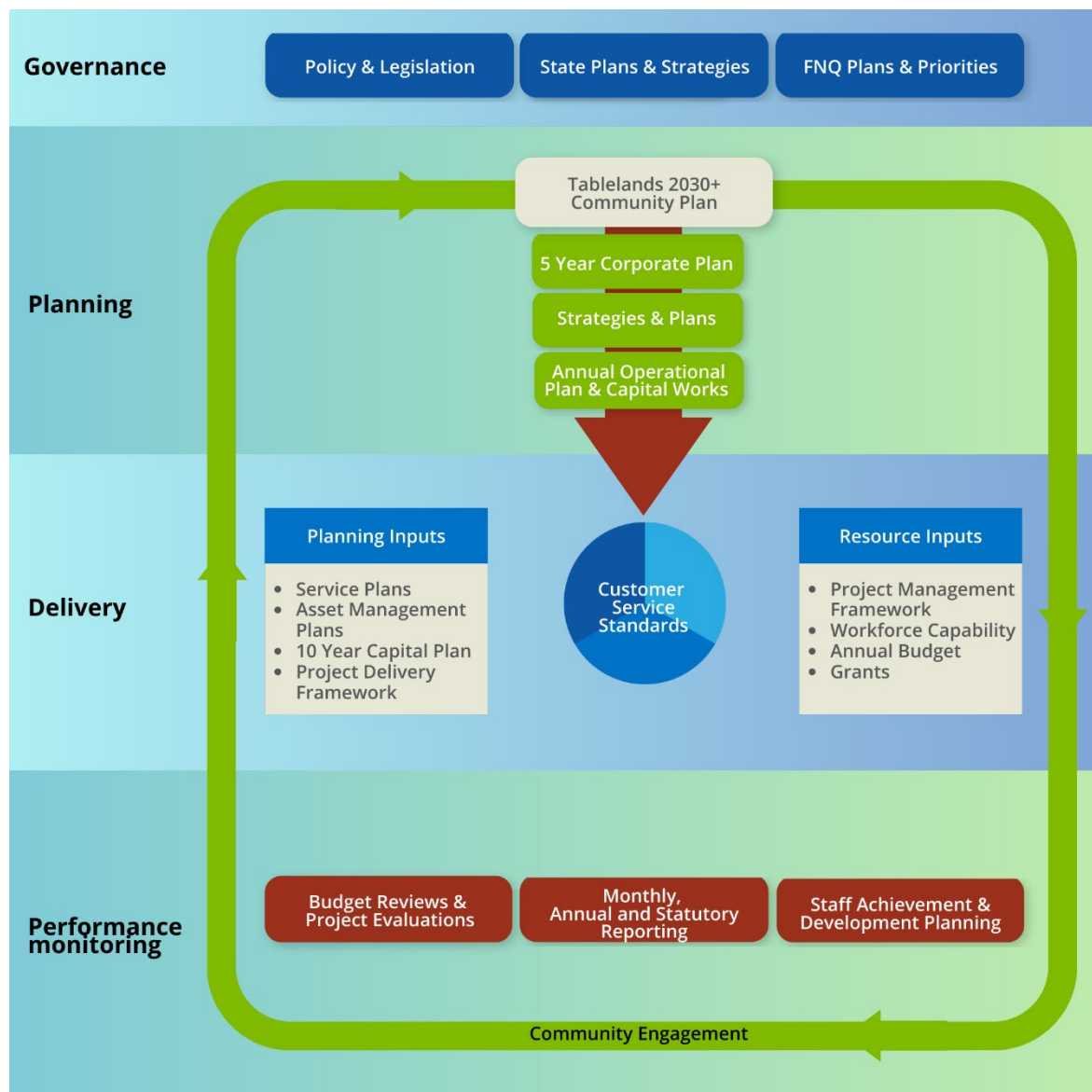
9. Management tools

9.1 Integrated planning and reporting framework

There are a number of interrelated tools that are used to undertake the planning of what services are to be delivered by TRC, and how the delivery of these services are managed. Integrated planning and reporting gives Council a framework for identifying the priorities of the community and creating a holistic planning approach to achieve those goals in a sustainable way, given the resources available.

Local government is bound to operate within relevant legislation, and TRC is guided by State Government and Far North Queensland priorities. TRC actively monitors emerging issues and changes in legislation and regularly reviews adopted policies, strategies and plans in response to any such changes.

TRC's Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework provides the mechanism for the implementation of the [Tablelands 2030+ Community Plan](#). The Community Plan is the highest level plan within this framework. The diagram below illustrates our Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework and how the various elements are related.



9.2 Policy and procedures

TRC has appropriate policy documents (policies, procedures and frameworks) to support operations. Policies are developed in light of legislation, Council's vision, strategic intent and long-term objectives. The consistent use and interpretation of policies enhance corporate governance.

A statutory or corporate policy is a statement adopted by Council that describes Council's position on a particular matter. They focus on a corporate objective including those prescribed by legislation. An administrative policy is a statement adopted by the CEO that describes management's position on a particular operational or administrative matter. Policies provide guidance for future action by clearly stating the objectives, scope and responsibilities for implementation. All employees are required to comply with policies.

Policies are reviewed and evaluated regularly to ensure that they are up-to-date, accurate and continue to achieve the objectives expressed in them. Approved policies are kept in a policy register and corporate policies are available on the TRC [website](#).

Procedures provide specific direction and administrative processes to be followed by employees.

Frameworks are a set of policies, procedures and supporting tools grouped together due to commonality in dealing with a particular issue or opportunity.

9.3 Delegations

In accordance with the Act, Council may delegate its legislative powers to:

- the Mayor
- the CEO
- a standing committee
- the Chair of a standing committee.

Council routinely delegates its powers to the CEO who is empowered under the Act, with certain exceptions, to further on-delegate these powers to TRC officers. The delegation of a power from Council to the CEO, and the on-delegation of powers to TRC officers, encompasses the power to appoint authorised persons to implement particular legislation.

The CEO or an officer who the CEO has delegated the power, exercises discretion in their own right in the appointment of statutory authorised persons and must be satisfied that the person being appointed has the necessary competencies to perform the required responsibilities.

As required under the Act, a corporate database (register) of all delegations is maintained and are reviewed annually by Council to ensure they remain current.

9.4 Financial management

9.4.1 Long-term financial planning

To ensure Council's strategies, policies and projects are financially responsible and sustainable, a long-term financial forecast is developed which has a 10-year horizon outlining allocation of resources for continuing operations, new works and services. It is reviewed and updated annually. The document contains income, expenditure and the value of assets, liabilities and equity for the next 10 years.

Long-term financial planning is an essential governance tool in supporting:

- development of financial strategies in areas such as revenue, expenditure and borrowings
- development of the annual budget
- minimising ad hoc financial decisions
- transparency with regard to TRC's financial position
- reporting against financial targets and goals
- capacity of managers to effectively plan and deliver services
- development of performance measures and target service levels
- appropriate levels of inter-generational equity.

9.4.2 Capital expenditure program

The capital expenditure program (CAPEX program) outlines the proposed infrastructure delivery for the next 10 years. The CAPEX program responds to Asset Management Plans across various infrastructure classes (roads, drainage, buildings, parks etc) and feeds into the Long-term Financial Plan (LTFP). This supports prudent financial and technical planning for this significant area of expenditure, where projects must be planned several years in advance.

Each year, Council reviews its CAPEX program as part of budget deliberations. During this review process, projects may be deferred, removed or brought forward and estimated project costs may be adjusted. All adjustments are updated in the LTFP annually.

9.5 Infrastructure management

9.5.1 Assets

The [Strategic Asset Management Plan](#) (SAMP) provides the framework for effective, consistent, appropriate and responsible asset management. It ensures that assets are managed to provide the essential services the community requires now and in the future. This involves strategies to ensure assets are appropriately planned with funded Asset Management Plans.

The SAMP collates the findings and actions from a suite of class-specific Asset Management and Maintenance Management Plans to present a holistic assessment of TRCs asset base and requirements. The SAMP has a 10-year horizon. The expectations developed through the Asset Management and Maintenance Management Plans are prioritised taking into consideration affordability and our ability to deliver, to inform the annual and 10-year forecast CAPEX programs.

Asset management must be considered from a whole-of-life perspective so the efficiency and effectiveness of decisions are considered not only for the upfront capital investment but over the entire life of the asset. Adopting sound asset management practices and requirements support the provision of agreed services and assets in a sustainable manner.

9.5.2 Infrastructure delivery

The Project Management Framework enables effective planning, integration, prioritisation and optimisation considering affordability and delivery of infrastructure projects. The framework and process help to ensure the three-year lifecycle of works is achieved and supports:

- improved decision-making to facilitate the efficient and effective setting of 10-year works programs and annual budgets
- building a robust and impartial priority-based system for allocating finite resources to capital works
- the capital works component of Corporate and Operational Plans, LTFP and SAMP
- improved public confidence in the decision-making process
- increased awareness of procedures and responsibilities
- Councillors and employees with appropriate decision-making information and direction on capital projects.

TRC is committed to maintaining existing infrastructure by adopting a strategy of renewing existing assets that meet community need ahead of other upgrade and/or new works in an effort to reduce future operational and maintenance costs. Asset Management and Maintenance Plans are the primary tool for capital planning and are directly linked to the long-term financial forecast. TRC will ensure it maintains a capital program that confirms the source of funding for renewal and new capital works.

9.6 Project management framework

The Project Management Framework provides a consistent approach to project management for both infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects, and outlines the key requirements and expectations for successful project delivery. The framework supports Council's vision by assisting to deliver projects more efficiently so we achieve better value for money, deliver increased benefits and continue to meet the expectations of the community.

The Project Management Office oversees the Project Management Framework and implementation.

9.7 Risk management

The management of risk is recognised as an integral part of good management practice and is an essential component of good corporate governance for the successful achievement of Council's vision, objectives and community expectations.

9.7.1 Enterprise risk management

[Enterprise Risk Management](#) (ERM) is the management of risk not only in conventional hazard categories such as work health and safety, information management and finance, but in the full spectrum of strategic and operational risk. The ERM Framework and policy provide a structured approach of aligning strategy, processes, people, technology and knowledge with the purpose of evaluating and managing risk.

The ERM Framework recognises the need for risks and opportunities to be identified, classified, reported and managed. The Framework focuses on risks associated with what is undertaken and the risk in lost opportunities of what is not done and is based on Risk Management Standard ISO 31000.

The ELT regularly review operational processes and procedures and implements corrective action when necessary to ensure the effectiveness of internal systems. This ensures assets are safeguarded, decision-making capabilities are enhanced, and the accuracy of reporting and financial results are maintained at a high level.

TRC is committed to an integrated approach to risk management to protect employees, assets, liabilities and the community against potential exposures, to minimise uncertainty in achieving goals, and to maximise opportunities.

9.7.2 Business continuity planning

The [Business Continuity Management Framework](#) includes the [Corporate Business Continuity Plan](#) (BCP) which is a suite of business unit recovery plans that outline the actions to ensure TRC services are recovered in the shortest timeframe possible in the event of a significant disruption. The Continuity Leadership Team, led by the CEO with support from the Senior Advisor Emergency Management, is responsible for activating the BCP.

TRC reviews and tests the BCP every year with a major coordinated test of the plan at least every two years.

9.7.3 Disaster management

The [Local Disaster Management Plan](#) is prepared and approved by the Local Disaster Management Group in accordance with the requirements of the *Disaster Management Act 2003*, to provide for effective disaster management in the local government area.

In accordance with Section 58 of the *Disaster Management Act 2003*, the Local Disaster Management Plan is consistent with disaster management standards and guidelines.

9.7.4 Fraud and corruption prevention

TRC operates under relevant legislation, including the *Crime and Corruption Act 2001*, *Local Government Act 2009* and *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994*.

TRC is committed to the prevention of fraud and corruption and seeks to promote a strong culture of corporate governance to detect, investigate and take appropriate action in cases of suspected or proven fraud. To facilitate this we have a [Fraud and Corruption Prevention Policy](#) and Framework to help minimise the impact and reduce the risk of fraud and corruption within the work environment.

Fraud prevention at TRC is enforced through mechanisms including Employee Code of Conduct and related policies and procedures, employee induction process and ongoing training. Reporting of corrupt conduct is in accordance with the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010* including referring matters to the [Crime and Corruption Commission](#). The [Public Interest Disclosure Policy](#) and guideline ensure that a centralised, independent and effective incident reporting and investigation process exists.

9.7.5 Liability and non-liability insurances

To adequately protect the interests of the organisation and the community, TRC has several insurance policies which are renewed annually.

Liability insurance protects TRC from public liability and professional indemnity claims from third party personal or property damage arising out of a failure of our assets or services or from an unintended act of negligence by an employee in carrying out their duties, providing advice or services. There is a deductible on liability insurance premiums which ensures that TRC's maximum exposure from any one insurable event does not exceed \$25,000. TRC is self-insured through Local Government Mutual Services for public and professional liability.

TRC is self-insured through Local Government Mutual Assets for all other insurable risks including building and motor vehicle/fleet insurance.

Being self-insured enables TRC to exercise control over and manage liability and asset-based risk exposures, avoiding direct dependence on the commercial insurance market (which continues to be characterised by volatility in availability and cost).

9.7.6 Workers' compensation

In accordance with the *Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003*, TRC is a member of the Queensland Local Government Workers' Compensation Self-Insurance Scheme (Local Government Workcare (LGW)), which effectively exercises complete control over the discharge of the liability to compensate and rehabilitate injured employees. The self-insurance arrangements are monitored by the Workers' Compensation Regulator who ensures:

- TRC complies with workers' compensation legislation
- the performance of our self-insurance program is regularly audited
- appropriate licensing protocols are observed.

The renewal of LGW's self-insurance license is subject to the Workers' Compensation Regulator receiving a report attesting to satisfactory work health and safety performance, which is completed by external certifiers in the last year of each license period.

TRC ensures the best possible people and financial outcomes through a combination of management practices and controls including:

- an excellent work health and safety program
- early intervention by the rehabilitation team after an injury
- a high standard of care for injured workers including access to excellent doctors and allied health professionals.

9.8 Data management

9.8.1 Transparency and accountability

In accordance with relevant legislation and good governance principles, TRC is committed to transparency and accountability to residents and relevant stakeholders. Policies and procedures govern the information and registers held. Detailed information on services, projects, strategies and plans, events, accessing information and the complaints process is available on the TRC [website](#) and at customer service centres.

9.8.2 Information management

The Information Management Strategy outlines the overall direction for information management and information systems. Its objectives are to:

- enhance customer experience
- increase value-add to customers
- maximise accessibility and minimise risk.

The Systems and Information section have policies, guidelines and procedures to assist with achieving the objectives of the strategy.

Technology is rapidly changing and it is important to ensure that technologies used are compatible, assist to manage compliance, and provide effective records. All employees have a responsibility for understanding and complying with information management and recording keeping requirements and are provided with continuous training.

Elected members receive all correspondence including agendas and minutes electronically. Devices are provided to each Councillor to use during their term of office for accessing and creating information.

9.8.3 Records management

TRC is committed to ensuring all records are appropriately retained, complete, accurate and can be identified, accessed and retrieved in a useable format that preserves the records' integrity. The Records Management Policy provides guidance to Councillors and employees to ensure compliance with the *Public Records Act 2002* and consistency with good record keeping principles.

9.8.4 Right to information

The *Right to Information Act 2009* makes information concerning government documents available to members of the community unless it is contrary to the public interest to release that information. The *Information Privacy Act 2009* makes one's personal information available to them and enables members of the community to ensure that information concerning them is accurate, up-to-date and not misleading. TRC has established formal processes to support the timely provision of information requested by members of the public under each of these Acts.

9.8.5 Information privacy

TRC protects the personal information which can identify an individual and takes all reasonable actions to ensure collection, use, disclosure and handling of all personal information complies with relevant legislation.

The process and legislation regarding right to information and privacy is available on the TRC [website](#) and at customer service centres.

9.8.6 Registers

TRC is required to maintain and report on a list of registers that are available for public inspection in the interests of openness and transparency. These registers include:

- interests of Councillors
- interests of CEO and persons related to the CEO
- interests of Senior Executive Employees (SEE) and persons related to a SEE
- electoral gifts
- contact with lobbyists
- gift and benefits
- delegations
- local laws and subordinate local laws
- policies
- roads
- general charges and regulatory fees
- pre-qualified suppliers
- contracts
- hazardous substances
- asbestos
- dogs
- impounded animals
- development applications
- cemeteries
- assets
- fraud incident tracking
- administrative action complaints.

These registers are available for inspection by the public on request.

9.9 Internal controls

Having internal controls in place assists management to set the operational expectations for the organisation. The CEO has a responsibility to support and oversee operations by reviewing internal controls which should be proactive and have a risk management element. Once risks are identified, management need to identify, develop and manage policies, procedures or any other relevant tool to mitigate those risks.

An effective framework of internal controls is a key element in driving the organisation to achieve its vision, deliver on its Community, Corporate and Operational Plans, minimise risk, promote efficiency and ensure compliance with legislation. Internal control consists of five interrelated components:

- Control environment — deals with the integrity, ethical values and competence of employees, management's operating style, the way authority and responsibility is assigned and attention and direction provided by Council.
- Risk assessment — details how the organisation identifies and analyses relevant risks to the achievement of the organisation's objectives and makes determinations on how those risks should be managed.
- Control activities — the policies and procedures that help to ensure management directives are carried out including approval, authorisations, verifications, reconciliations, performance reviews and allocation of duties.
- Information and communication — outlines how information is identified, captured and communicated in a form and timeframe that helps people to carry out their responsibilities including how information flows throughout the organisation ensuring employees receive clear messages from management and that there are appropriate mechanisms in place for information to flow from employees to management.
- Monitoring — assesses the quality of the system of internal control over time and can include ongoing monitoring at the operational level, evaluations from the internal audit and risk functions or working groups established to review a problem.

Internal controls include:

- structure of the organisation
- culture of the organisation
- knowledge, skills and experience of employees
- processes employed by the organisation to conduct business
- accountability and integrity in relation to any financial transactions.

Strategies implemented to achieve effective risk management and internal controls include:

- reporting to the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee
- implementing an internal audit program where compliance with major regulatory, strategic and operational requirements (e.g. the Act, environmental, heritage, cultural, work health and safety, industrial relations and equal opportunity legislation) may be periodically reviewed
- pursuant to Section 129 of the Act, annual external audit to provide assurance that Council's Annual Financial Statements are true and fair and to provide an opinion on the adequacy of the internal controls in place
- policies and procedures
- limits of authority delegated in accordance with the Act, and appropriate approval processes
- organisational review when required
- position descriptions
- annual performance appraisals
- approval processes
- training for Councillors and employees.

9.10 Complaints management

The [Complaints Policy](#) and external complaints management procedure assist in making decisions more transparent and ensures that TRC can use complaints as constructive opportunities to address problems and make improvements where appropriate. The process ensures a consistent approach to complaint resolution and contains mechanisms to ensure fairness and objectivity, accessibility, visibility and confidentiality.

9.11 Communication and engagement

Effective communication and engagement are essential to responsible decision-making, especially in local government. We value communication and engagement as tools of understanding and commit to the sharing of information and key decisions with all stakeholders. We provide avenues for our community and stakeholders to have a meaningful say in Council decisions that affect or interest them.

There are different mechanisms for the community to have input into Council decisions including community engagement, public forums, deputations and internal review of decisions. Good governance requires accountability to the community and requires communication about performance.

The following tools are in place to guide communication and engagement with stakeholders:

- [Community Engagement Policy](#) and procedure
- [Media Policy](#) and procedure
- [Digital Communications and Social Media Policy](#) and procedure
- [Communication and Engagement Strategy](#)
- Advisory Committees
- [Tablelands Youth Strategy](#)
- [Age-Friendly Strategy](#)
- [Reconciliation Action Plan](#)
- [TRC Planning Scheme](#)
- Council meetings are open to the public including [agendas](#) and [minutes](#) c
- [Corporate website](#) including engagement portal and social media ([Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#))
- Channels of direct communication (email, telephone, letters, online forms, meetings, engagement sessions, customer service centres, visitor information centres, libraries etc)
- Targeted messages with ratepayers affected by Council decisions (letter drop, door knock, SMS message, telephone or email)
- Annual Report, Quarterly Reports and budget documentation
- Electronic newsletters
- Print and radio advertising including public notices
- Public meetings, information sessions, displays at events, training and networking opportunities
- Engagement plans and methods to reach diverse audiences including telephone, print and online surveys or polls, focus groups, pop up stalls etc
- Submissions from stakeholders.

9.11.1 Community engagement

TRC is committed to going beyond minimum requirements for public consultation and has a [Community Engagement Policy](#) and procedure in place to better engage with residents about issues and opportunities. Engagement plans are implemented for major projects and initiatives that will have an impact on our community.

Community engagement is a continuous process, which provides opportunity for residents and other key stakeholders to have a greater say in what happens in the local government area and to be more active in the decision-making process.

Public forums are held to disseminate information and to obtain community input. These forums are for collecting and sharing information, not for making decisions.

Some examples of when TRC uses community engagement include:

- annual budget formation
- major projects or proposals
- amendments to local laws
- community land acquisitions and disposal
- Land Management Plans
- major roadworks
- certain development applications
- proposed changes to rating system
- proposed changes to Planning Scheme
- recreation development proposals
- reserve naming, renaming or leasing
- road closures
- strategic planning
- boundary reviews
- tree planting and removal.

9.11.2 Deputations

Deputations are permitted in Council meetings as a mechanism for a person or a group to raise their concerns. Requests for deputations are made to the Mayor's office.

If a deputation is refused, it must be reported at the next Council meeting. If the deputation will be heard, it can be presented to an informal Councillor workshop.

9.12 Internal review of Council decisions

Request for internal review of decisions can be made directly to TRC or to the Ombudsman. There are procedures in place to manage customer suggestions and complaints. View the [Customer Experience Standards](#) and [Complaints Policy](#) or see them at a customer service centre.

9.13 Procurement

In accordance with the *Local Government Regulation 2012*, Council adopts a [Procurement Policy](#) before the commencement of each financial year. The policy aims to ensure transparency and the achievement of best possible value in contracts entered into with suppliers of goods and services. The Procurement Policy is consistent with, and supports, the achievement of the sound contracting principles outlined in Section 4 of the Act:

- value for money
- open and effective competition
- the development of competitive local business and industry
- environmental protection
- ethical behaviour and fair dealing.

The procurement procedure defines the process and communicates to employees their responsibilities when undertaking procurement functions. The procedure serves to:

- specify the policy position
- reinforce the need for compliance with relevant legislation, directives and the specific processes established

- outline the procurement methods, strategies and requirements that should be employed for all aspects of procurement functions
- identify the key procurement and contract risks that need to be managed.

10. Accountability

10.1 Legislative compliance

The Legal and Governance section monitor and communicate on significant legislative changes and emerging legislative issues. Officers are responsible for satisfying the legislative requirements of their positions through appropriate recruitment, performance management, professional training, memberships and operational risk notifications and reports. This mechanism ensures that appropriate corporate responses to legislative changes are coordinated and enacted as required.

While there are numerous acts, regulations and policies that impact TRC, the following priority areas require the most significant control:

- *Local Government Act*
- *Right to Information Act*
- *Information Privacy Act*
- contract law
- case law
- employment law
- administrative law and natural justice
- work health and safety
- environmental protection
- planning laws.

The Legal and Governance section oversees the engagement of external legal services to ensure that legal risks are appropriately identified and mitigated.

10.2 Declaration of interests

Material personal interests and conflicts of interests must be declared by Councillors at Council meetings and recorded in the minutes.

A Councillor has a material personal interest in a matter if any of the following stand to gain a benefit or suffer a loss (either directly or indirectly) depending on the outcome of consideration of the matter:

- the Councillor
- a spouse of the Councillor
- a parent, child or sibling of the Councillor
- a partner of the Councillor
- an employer (other than a government entity) of the Councillor
- an entity (other than a government entity) of which the Councillor is a member
- another entity prescribed by regulation.

A Councillor does not have a material personal interest in the matter if the Councillor has no greater personal interest in the matter than that of other persons in the local government area.

A conflict of interest is a conflict that:

- is between a Councillor's personal interests and the public interest
- might lead to a decision that is contrary to the public interest.

10.2.1 Dealing with material personal interests and conflicts of interests at meetings

Material personal interests and conflicts of interest must be dealt with by Councillors in accordance with Division 5A of the Act. TRC officers are required to disclose conflicts of interest to the People and Culture section under TRC's Code of Conduct.

The Integrity Commissioner has [guidelines](#) to assist Councillors and staff with their consideration of declaration of interests.

10.2.2 Register of interests

TRC maintains a register of interests for Councillors, CEO, ELT and their related persons, as required by the *Local Government Regulation 2012*.

10.2.3 Related parties

TRC complies with the disclosure requirements for related party transactions under the Australian Accounting Standards and has a Related Party Disclosure Guide.

Related parties are likely to include the Mayor, Councillors, CEO and ELT, their close family members and any entities that they control or jointly control. Any transactions between TRC and these parties, whether monetary or not, need to be identified and disclosed.

This information will be audited as part of the annual external audit by Queensland Audit Office.

10.2.4 Contact with lobbyists

The Integrity Commissioner requires TRC to maintain a register of contact with lobbyists for Councillors and employees. This register is available to the Integrity Commissioner upon request.

Pursuant to Section 71 of the *Integrity Act 2009*, a Councillor or employee must not knowingly permit an entity that is not a registered lobbyist to carry out lobbying activities for a third party.

10.3 Audit, risk and improvement committee

The Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee (ARI Committee) provides an advisory role, with key activities for review and advice endorsed annually. These activities include:

- appraisal of internal controls to assess their effectiveness in achieving TRC's goals and objectives
- fiduciary and legislative responsibilities
- providing recommendations to Council and the organisation in accordance with the ARI Committee's Terms of Reference
- risk management of TRC operations.

The ARI Committee meets at least four times per year and on an annual basis with the external auditor to review the external auditor's report.

The ARI Committee provides a formal review and monitoring function over corporate assurance, audit, risk management and corporate governance activities and arrangements. It has an established charter and operates independently of any influence from the political (Council) or administrative (corporate) arms of the organisation.

10.4 Internal audit

In accordance with Section 105 of the *Local Government Act 2009* and Section 207 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*, TRC is required to establish an internal audit function to provide independent and objective oversight to controls.

The internal audit function (external contract) is responsible for independently evaluating the adequacy and effectiveness of the systems of internal control established and implemented by management. Internal audit plans are developed with consideration to most significant operational risks and audits are conducted to evaluate the controls in place to manage those risks.

The internal audit function performs an important assurance and continuous improvement role through its recommendations for improving the control environment.

The internal audit focus is driven by the corporate risks contained in the ERM Framework. Audits are undertaken in a consultative manner with management and employees, with ongoing discussions during and after the audit processes. The internal auditor reports to the CEO and the ARI Committee and administratively to the General Manager Community & Corporate Services.

10.5 External audit

Each year the Queensland Audit Office (QAO), or a contractor appointed by the QAO, audits TRC's financial statements and provides an independent audit report. Audited financial statements are published in the Annual Report.

The QAO provides a management report that identifies financial and compliance deficiencies and other matters. These are reviewed and addressed by management via the coordination and stewardship of the Finance section. In addition to financial and compliance audits, the QAO performs performance management audits and information systems audits on a rotational basis. Any significant issues the QAO identifies is made public through the Auditor-General's Reports to Parliament.

10.6 Corporate planning

Our Corporate Document Framework sets out the mandatory requirement for the process of planning. The framework supports Council in setting its strategic direction, identifies the integration between different types of planning and creates clear linkages between Council's long-term high-level outcomes, strategic objectives and operational day-to-day work.

Council's direction and priorities are set at a strategic level and cascade through to operational and financial planning. Corporate planning is integrated through a system of long, medium and short-term planning instruments that recognise the importance of planning in driving resource allocation decisions and ensuring a clear direction for the organisation. Council's long-term vision is translated through medium and shorter-term planning into financially sustainable services, projects and outcomes for the community.

TRC governs the planning process through:

- ensuring the long-term vision for the local government area effectively links to strategy and a tangible set of organisational activities
- aligning strategic planning to operational budget and activities (what Council wants to achieve and how it aims to get there)
- ensuring that operational planning (financial and non-financial) is delivered within the context of the long-term strategic priorities and long-term financial planning to endorse sustainability of inputs, outputs and outcomes
- establishing the parameters by which decisions for future planning can be made.

10.7 Corporate performance management

10.7.1 Performance reporting

Performance reporting is important for ensuring responsible, transparent and accountable government.

The diversity of local government creates a complex range of performance information needs across a broad variety of stakeholder groups including Federal and State government, the community, the elected Council, the ARI Committee, and management. Our performance reporting seeks to ensure:

- all statutory reporting on performance, as outlined in the *Local Government Act 2009* and supporting regulation, is delivered as required on a timely basis
- performance reporting contains a balance of strategic measures (i.e. reporting against the overall achievement of the Corporate Plan and various strategies) and operational measures (i.e. reporting against the projects contained in the Operational Plan and other key areas of service delivery — parks, roads and footpaths, waste management etc.)
- assurance of an open and transparent organisation that is willing to share performance data with the community and other stakeholders regardless of whether the data might be perceived favourably or not.

Mechanisms are in place to ensure performance is continually monitored and reviewed, and corrective action is taken where required. TRC reports its performance in the following ways:

- Financial reports are included in monthly Council meeting agendas, with budget reviews conducted quarterly.
- Capital works reports are provided to Council quarterly to monitor progress of the annual capital works program.
- The LTFP, Asset Management Plans and projects linked to the Corporate Plan are key guiding documents that are reviewed annually.
- The ELT receives monthly budget reports.
- Audited annual financial statements are reviewed by the ARI Committee before being considered by Council.
- Quarterly reports showing performance towards achieving strategic objectives outlined in the Corporate Plan and progress towards achieving activities and initiatives identified in annual Operational Plans, capital works program and budget.
- Annual Report published including audited financial statements.
- Media releases, website and community updates.
- Community engagement to understand how the community views the performance and delivery of services by TRC.
- Reporting on the effectiveness of the system of internal control over time as part of audit of annual financial statements.

10.7.2 Reporting agencies

There are a number of external agencies that provide oversight and require reporting by TRC, including:

- Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government, and Planning
- Crime and Corruption Commission
- Queensland Ombudsman
- Queensland Audit Office
- Queensland Treasury Corporation
- Office of the Information Commissioner
- Queensland Integrity Commissioner
- regulatory authorities
- funding bodies.

10.7.3 Quality management systems

The Quality Management Framework identifies and establishes systems and processes to ensure consistent outcomes are integrated throughout the organisation to ensure compliance with regulatory authorities and Australian Standards.

10.7.4 Performance review

The CEO performance review panel is responsible for setting the CEO's annual key performance indicators to measure success against key result areas, reviewing the CEO's learning and development plan and undertaking two reviews annually of the CEO's performance including seeking feedback from Councillors.

The Executive Performance Management Framework outlines the process for the review and development of the CEO and general managers.

Individual performance planning for all employees involves achievement and development plans designed to establish a shared understanding of what is to be achieved, and how it is to be achieved, and ensure that individual performance contributes to the achievement of our Corporate and Operational Plans. Achievement and development plans are created each year for each employee, with two reviews of progress towards achieving desired outcomes.

Policies and procedures are in place to address performance improvement.

11. Implementation and review

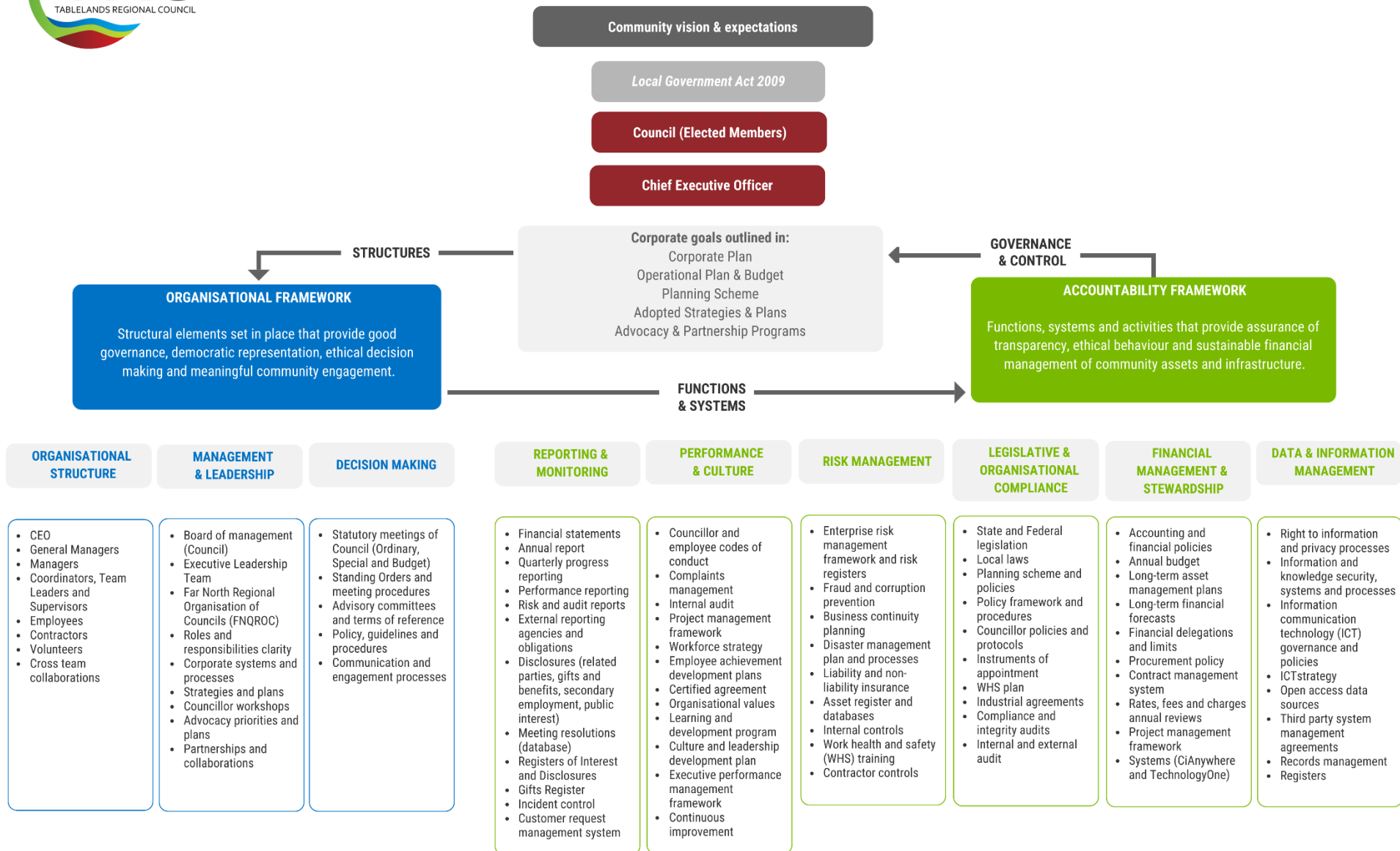
This Framework is maintained by the Legal and Governance section under the stewardship of the General Manager Community & Corporate Services.

It is the responsibility of the General Manager to monitor the adequacy of the Corporate Governance Framework and recommend appropriate changes.

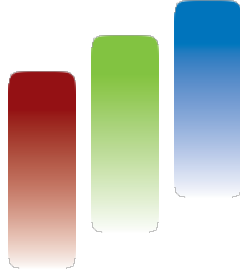
To ensure compliance and best practice governance, TRC will conduct an annual review of the Framework to ensure continuous improvement. The review will ensure the accuracy of the document in line with changing legislation and organisational responsibilities.

The Corporate Governance Framework is to remain in force until otherwise amended or repealed by resolution of Council.

The Corporate Governance Framework was endorsed by the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee, and first adopted by Council at its September 2019 Council Meeting.



Governance provides the structure through which council's vision and objectives are achieved within a context of competing and changing social, economic and environmental issues. Corporate governance refers to the system by which council is directed and controlled within the local government environment. This diagram gives an overview of the Corporate Governance Framework processes and practices to enable better decision making for councillors, management and employees of Tablelands Regional Council.



Live, discover and invest in a Tablelands community



Tablelands Regional Council

trc.qld.gov.au
info@trc.qld.gov.au
1300 362 242



45 Mabel Street, Atherton Qld 4883
PO Box 573, Atherton Qld 4883