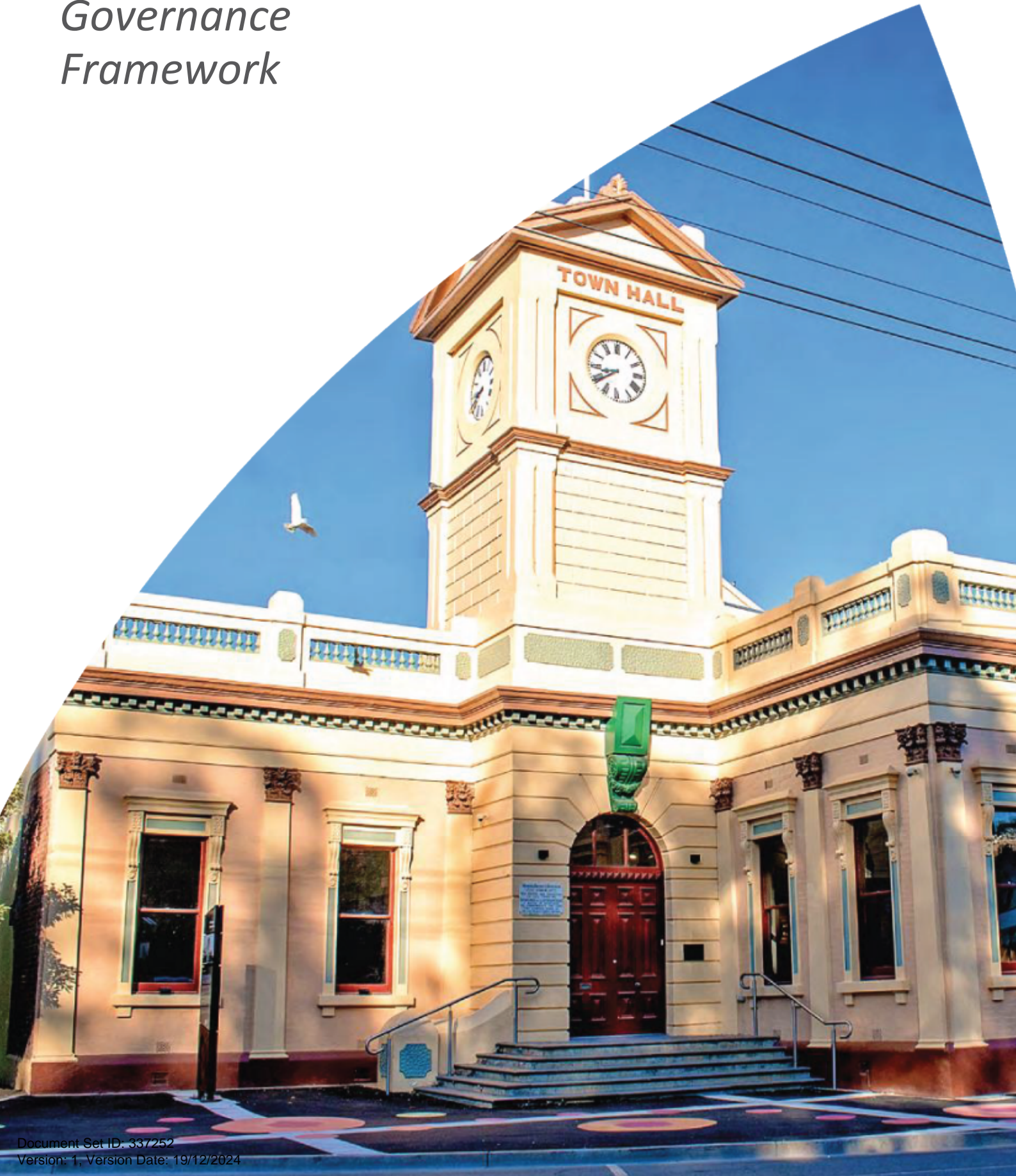




Edward  
River  
COUNCIL

# *Governance Framework*



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# Governance Framework

## What is Governance?

Governance is how Council is directed and controlled. It ensures accountability, transparency, and ethical practices while complying with legislation. Good governance involves clear decision making, sound financial management, community engagement, risk management, and effective Policies and Procedures to achieve Council's goals and provide valued services to the community.

## The role of Local Government.

The role of local government in New South Wales (NSW) involves:

### Representing our community

Councillors represent the interests of residents, businesses and ratepayers – facilitating communication between the broader community and Council.

**Figure 1.** The Role of Local Government  
(Source: Councillor Handbook, Office of Local Government, 2024)

## Delivering essential services

Ensure efficient delivery of good quality services and infrastructure with supportive maintenance programs.

## Developing policies

Activities of Council are guided by policies which result in compliance, transparency and consistent outcomes.

## Advocacy

Council has a role in advocating on behalf of the community to other levels of government, statutory authorities and other agencies

## Decision Making

Aligning decisions to our overarching legislative frameworks and policies will ensure consistent outcomes for the benefit of our residents and ratepayers.

The governance structure is designed to ensure that Edward River Council operates efficiently, transparently, and in the best interests of the community by providing clear roles and responsibilities, effective decision-making processes, and accountability mechanisms.



# Governance Framework for Edward River Council

Good governance is the cornerstone of effective local government, guiding the delivery of transparent, accountable, and strategic outcomes for the community. Informed by principles of leadership, structure, accountability, and performance, our governance framework ensures that decision-making processes align with community expectations, uphold integrity, and foster sustainable growth. This approach empowers us to build trust with stakeholders, establish clear organisational structures, and maintain high standards of compliance, risk management, and performance.

The Governance Framework encompasses various components that ensure effective, accountable and transparent management. The four key components include:

## Leadership and Strategy

Our governance framework is rooted in strong leadership and strategic planning. Through the Community Strategic Plan and supporting Strategic Plans, we identify long-term community priorities, shaping policies and resource allocation to create lasting positive impacts. Leadership at all levels

reinforces a vision for the future, ensuring that initiatives align with both community needs and organizational values.

## Structure and Relationships

An effective governance structure is vital for fostering cohesive relationships within Council and with the community. Clear organisational structures, robust policies and procedures, and well-defined delegations facilitate efficient operations and empower employees to act within their roles responsibly. Our Code of Conduct reinforces ethical behaviour, creating a respectful and transparent work environment.

## Accountability and Compliance

Our commitment to accountability is demonstrated through comprehensive compliance and audit processes. External and internal audits, along with our Annual Report, promote transparency and provide stakeholders with insights into our performance. Rigorous risk management practices further strengthen our resilience, while ongoing compliance activities and reporting ensure adherence to regulatory requirements and community expectations.

## Performance Monitoring and Reporting

Regular performance monitoring and reporting are key to maintaining accountability and driving continual improvement. Through Key Performance Indicator (KPI) reporting and Operational Plan updates, we track our progress, adapt strategies, and report achievements, demonstrating our dedication to achieving high standards in service delivery and operational excellence.

### Leadership and Strategy

- Community Strategic Plan
- Strategic Plans

### Structure and Relationships

- Organisation Structure
- Policies and Procedures
- Delegations
- Code of Conduct

### Accountability and Compliance

- External Audit
- Internal Audit
- Annual Report
- Risk Management
- Compliance Activities and Reporting

### Performance Monitoring and Reporting

- External Audit
- Key Performance Indicator Reporting
- Operational Plan Reporting



# Structure and Relationships

**Council:** The elected representatives are responsible for the overall governance of Edward River Council. Edward River has nine (9) elected representatives who are elected for a four (4) year term. The Mayor and Deputy are elected by the collective group of councillors for two-year terms.

The *Local Government Act 1993* defines the role and responsibilities of Councillors and the Chief Executive Officer.

Roles and relationships are a key aspect of internal governance, with good governance relying on successful working relationships and understanding of role differences.

**General Manager** (or also referred to as Chief Executive Officer (CEO)): The role of the CEO is to manage the operations of Council, providing advice to Council, implementing strategies, policies and decisions of Council whilst maintaining the integrity of systems and processes to ensure accountability and compliance obligations are met. This clear separation of Councillor and CEO roles and responsibilities, as identified in the Act, reinforces good governance principles.

**Executive Management Team:** Supports the CEO in strategic and operational leadership of Council ensuring the implementation of strategic direction, monitoring performance and operations of the Council. The Executive Management team members are generally inclusive of CEO, Directors and any other key personnel that the CEO deems appropriate.

**Leadership Team:** Managers as defined within the Organisational structure who lead by example implementing strategic decisions as they relate to each Leaders' service whilst ensuring Council is accountable and transparent to the Edward River community and any associated stakeholders.

**Council staff and contractors:** Responsible for complying with lawful direction, overarching policy and procedure and reporting any concerns regarding noncompliance.

**Committees:** A committee is a group of people who come together for a specific purpose. Edward River Council will further define the various types of committees within their Committees Framework.

# Principles and Ethical Conduct

At Edward River Council, our governance framework is built on Principles that guide our decisions and actions, ensuring we maintain the highest standards across all operations. By embedding these principles into our framework, we foster a culture of accountability and trust, driving us toward our strategic goals.

We are committed to upholding the highest standards of ethical conduct and integrity. This commitment includes:

- **Community Engagement:** We encourage active participation by the local community in decision making, ensuring their views and concerns are considered in council policies and actions.
- **Accountability and Transparency:** We provide clear, accessible information about council operations and decisions, holding council members accountable to the public and legal standards.
- **Equity and Inclusion:** We ensure all members of the community have equal access to council services and opportunities to participate in decision making.
- **Sustainability:** We promote environmental, social, and economic sustainability in all council activities, ensuring long-term benefits for community and future generations.
- **Integrity and Ethical Conduct:** We uphold the highest standards of integrity, honesty and ethical behaviour, avoiding conflicts of interest and fostering trust in Council operations.
- **Financial Responsibilities:** We ensure Council's resources are managed efficiently, transparently and prudently, balancing the community's needs with long term financial sustainability.
- **Collaboration and Partnerships:** We foster partnerships with local business, community groups and other government agencies to enhance service deliver and achieve common goals.
- **Continuous Improvement:** We commit to ongoing learning and improvement in Council processes, services, and governance practices to better serve the community.

Together, these elements form the foundation of our governance, ensuring that we operate with transparency, responsibility, and respect for all stakeholders.

# Governance Principles

T**Teamwork**

We define our purpose, roles, and responsibilities clearly, and our performance and conduct reflect our shared values.

R**Responsibility**

We continuously improve and add value in everything we do, ensuring ethical and responsible decision-making.

U**Uniformity**

We shape our culture by taking ownership, providing oversight, and applying internal controls that address risks thoughtfully.

S**Standards**

We report regularly on our goals and objectives, pursuing continuous improvement and adhering to our obligations.

T**Transparency**

We enhance effectiveness by engaging stakeholders and demonstrating integrity in our financial management and reporting.

The TRUST principles align closely with Section 8A of the *Local Government Act 1993* (NSW) by promoting a foundation of integrity and accountability in Council operations. These principles guide Edward River Council to serve their community effectively and responsibly in line with Section 8A's emphasis on ethical, responsive and suitable governance.

# Decision-Making Framework

## Strategic Policy Development

Policies are developed in consultation with stakeholders and are subject to Council approval and seek to ensure compliance to any overarching legislative requirements and drive consistent outcomes.

## Strategic Planning

The Community Strategic Plan (CSP) outlines the long-term aspirations of Council from our communities perspective. While Council has a custodial role in initiating, preparing and maintaining the CSP on behalf of the Edward River community, it is not wholly responsible for its implementation.

## Resourcing Strategy

The Resourcing Strategy is a key component supporting the CSP providing the resources and planning framework necessary to achieve the CSP's goals. The Resourcing Strategy comprises the Long-Term Financial Plan, the Workforce Management Plan and the Asset Management Plan

## Delivery Program

An output of the CSP is converting the communities strategic goals and aspirations into actions, identifying activities to be undertaken to achieve the defined goals. Each Delivery Program is aligned to the elected representative cycle of four years.

## Operational Plan

A detailed, one-year plan that outlines the specific projects and activities the council will undertake within a financial year to achieve the goals set out in their four-year Delivery Program.

The Operational Plan is integral to Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting framework, ensuring that all activities are strategically aligned, and resources are effectively managed.

## Financial Management

Long term financial planning aligns with the Community Strategic Plan, Resourcing Strategies, Delivery Programs and Annual Operational Plans which all support progress to delivering upon the long-term aspirations of Council.

## Delegations

Delegations provide staff with the authority to exercise duties and make decisions as required by legislation. Under the *Local Government Act 1993* both the Council and the General Manager/CEO are entrusted with specific functions and duties. The Council has the capacity to delegate some of its functions and duties to the General Manager/CEO, who can further delegate these responsibilities to other officers. This ensures efficient and effective operations with Council, facilitating timely decision making and accountability.

## Risk Management

Risk management is integral to the governance framework. Council has a risk management system that includes:

- Identifying and assessing risks
- Developing risk mitigation strategies
- Monitoring and reviewing risks regularly
- Reporting to the Audit, Risk, and Improvement Committee and the Council.

## Community Engagement

Community engagement is central to Council's governance ensuring communities have a say in decisions that shape their future. In accordance with the Communication and Community Engagement Strategy Edward River Council will:

- **Be Accessible** - make channels and information easy to understand
- **Be Timely** - provide information and seek feedback with ample time to act
- **Be targeted** - ensure all relevant community stakeholders are consulted
- **Be acted upon** - community feedback should genuinely inform outcomes



# Reporting, Review and Continuous Improvement

## Compliance and Continuous Improvement

Edward River Council is committed to complying with all relevant legislation, regulations, and standards. Compliance with regulatory obligations is the responsibility of everyone in every area of Council and needs to be considered in the context of other forms of risk.

Continuous improvement is achieved through regular reviews of policies, procedures, governance practices and auditing, with a focus on enhancing effectiveness and efficiency.

Auditors (External and Internal): External Auditors ensure Annual Financial Statements of Council are free of material misstatement whilst Internal Audits are designed to add value and improve Council's operations through continuous improvement.

## Performance Monitoring and Reporting

Performance is monitored through key performance indicators (KPIs) aligned with strategic objectives. Regular reports are provided to the Council and the community to ensure transparency and accountability.

The Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) Framework requires Council to complete an Annual Report. The Annual Report evaluates Council's progress towards meeting the objectives set in the Community Strategic Plan, Delivery Program, and Operational Plan for the previous financial year.

## Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee (ARIC)

An independent, objective review and advisory Committee that provides assurance that Council's governance controls are appropriate to manage risk and achieve operational objectives.

Conclusion

A robust governance framework is essential for fostering sound decision-making, promoting ethical behaviour among our elected representatives and staff, effectively leading, governing, and serving the community. By adhering to principles of teamwork, responsibility, uniformity, standards and transparency, Edward River Council can ensure that decisions are made in the best interests of all stakeholders. Ethical conduct from staff and elected representatives builds trust and confidence within the community, reinforcing the council’s commitment to integrity and fairness. By engaging with the community and encouraging participation, Council can better understand and address the needs and concerns of its residents. This collaborative approach not only enhances the quality of services provided but also strengthens the community’s trust in Council. Ultimately, a well-implemented governance framework enables the council to lead with vision, govern with responsibility, and serve with dedication, ensuring a sustainable and prosperous future for the community.

Review and Evaluation

The governance framework is subject to regular review to ensure its effectiveness and will be formally reviewed within each Council term.

Document Control Table

Document #		FRA-GOV-002	Framework Title		Governance Framework	
Framework Owner			Manager Governance, Safety and Risk			
Type			Strategic	Approval Type	Council	
Version Control						
Version Number	Modified by (position)	Modifications made		Date modified, approved or adopted	Council Minute Number	Status
1.0	Acting Director Corporate Services	Development of Strategy		17 Dec 2024	2024 / 1712 / 11.9	Adopted
						Choose an item.
						Choose an item.

Key Supporting Documents

Document Reference	Document Description
Local Government Act 1993	Defines the roles, responsibilities and powers of Council
Code of Conduct	Sets the behavioural standards for council members and staff
Code of Meeting Practice	Outlines the rules and procedures governing the conduct of Council Meetings
Delegations Register	Documents the authority delegated by the council to staff enabling efficient and accountable decision making
Staff & Councillor Interaction Policy	Defines the appropriate protocols and boundaries for communication and collaboration between councillors and staff
Corporate Policy Framework	Structure and guidelines for developing, implementing and reviewing policies



