



Vincent Street
CESSNOCK 2325

16 January 2008

To All Councillors

You are hereby notified that the next Meeting of the Strategic & Community Services Committee will be held in the Council Chambers, on Wednesday, 23 January 2008 immediately following the conclusion of the Works & Services Committee Meeting, for the purpose of transacting the undermentioned business.

**B R MORTOMORE
GENERAL MANAGER**

AGENDA:

PAGE NO.

(1) APOLOGIES.

(2) CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES.

Minutes of the Strategic & Community Services Committee
Meeting held on 12 Decemeber 2007

(3) OFFICERS' REPORTS

ACTING DIRECTOR STRATEGIC & COMMUNITY SERVICES

| | | |
|--------|--|----|
| 1/2008 | Grant Funds For Storm Affected South Cessnock | 2 |
| 2/2008 | Cessnock Youth Centre And Outreach Service (CYCOS) | 3 |
| 3/2008 | Draft Plan Of Management For Varty Park (Weston) | 7 |
| 4/2008 | Cunneens Bridge On Paynes Crossing Road, Wollombi – Traffic Control Measures To Enforce Application Of 9 Tonne Gross Vehicle Weight Load Limit | 8 |
| 5/2008 | Progress Report On Redevelopment Of Weston Bears Park | 10 |
| 6/2008 | Palm Tree – Apex Park (Cessnock) | 13 |

(4) QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE.

OFFICER'S REPORTS

ACTING DIRECTOR STRATEGIC & COMMUNITY SERVICES REPORT NO. 1/2008

SUBJECT: GRANT FUNDS FOR STORM AFFECTED SOUTH CESSNOCK

Social Planner, Ms N Drage, reports:

Council has recently been notified that its application for the Hunter Community Recovery Fund, an initiative administered by Hunter Councils, was successful. The objective of the Hunter Community Recovery Fund is to support community development initiatives for the June Long Weekend 2007 storm affected communities.

The \$4299.52 grant monies from the Hunter Community Recovery Fund will be used for the publishing of a book which will contain a collection of short stories, poems and photography of the June Long Weekend 2007 disaster and its aftermath as captured by the community of the storm affected suburb, South Cessnock.

The process of bringing together community members through the collection and sharing of personal memorabilia serves to create a historical time piece of the community's disaster, its recovery, its resilience and its reconnection. The project will also offer the opportunity to participate in community life and promotes a sense of belonging.

Each household in South Cessnock will receive a copy of the book and copies will be donated to all of the local schools within the Cessnock Local Government Area and to the public libraries at Cessnock and Kurri Kurri via a public launch. Thorough consultation with the residents of South Cessnock will play a key role in the publishing of the book and it is expected that the project will be finalised by Recreation and Community Services in November 2008.

RECOMMENDATION Council accept the \$4299.52 grant from the Hunter Community Recovery Fund, administered by Hunter Councils.

To: **The General Manager**
Strategic & Community Services
Committee - 23 January 2008

S EADE
**ACTING DIRECTOR STRATEGIC &
COMMUNITY SERVICES**
15 January 2008

ACTING DIRECTOR STRATEGIC & COMMUNITY SERVICES REPORT NO. 2/2008

SUBJECT: CESSNOCK YOUTH CENTRE AND OUTREACH SERVICE (CYCOS)

Social Planner, Ms N Drage, reports:

BACKGROUND:

This report follows on from a previous report that was considered by Council on 7 November 2007 advising of the upcoming expiration of the tenancy agreement for the Cessnock Youth Centre and Outreach Service (CYCOS) with the Cessnock Police and Community Youth Club (PCYC) at its premises on Wollombi Road Cessnock on 31 March 2008. The report aims to provide Council with an update on the availability of alternative premises for CYCOS.

CYCOS is a service that works with young people aged 12-20 years. CYCOS provides programs and activities in an environment which values and supports individuals, fosters professional, caring and effective relationships with young people and promotes the positive self image and value status of young people. The service is multi-faceted in that it operates as a drop-in area, provides outreach services across the Local Government Area and is also a support and referral service.

The service has operated at the out of the PCYC building for the past nine (9) years and during that time it has been recognised that although PCYC is centrally located, the building has substantial deficiencies which impact on the operation of the service. These limitations include the general layout of the building preventing clear lines of site and the hall area which can not be used for some programming events due to public entertainment licencing constraints.

Taking onto consideration the above mentioned points and in order for CYCOS to continue delivering a broad range of programs, its relocation has been considered from the perspective of meeting the needs of its client group. In consultation with CYCOS staff and young people, an appropriate venue must have the following attributes:

- The location of the premises needs to be accessible to young people. It is necessary for CYCOS to be located in an area within central Cessnock in close proximity to local transport routes;
- The premises need to offer adequate indoor space, allowing for a broad range of youth based programs within a safe environment;
- Links to outdoor space. Access to outdoor space would allow CYCOS to offer a range of recreation and sporting programs; and
- The cost of the premises needs to be affordable. Currently CYCOS has a budget of \$13,000.00 allocated for rental fees.

REPORT:

In attempting to discover what property opportunities were in existence a number of approaches were used and are as follows:

- A review of all Council owned property including community halls;
- Discussions with Council's Property Officer;
- Web searches of the commercial lease listings within the central Cessnock area; and
- Walking the central Cessnock area (including Vincent Street) searching for suitable, available space.

The outcome of the search for space using the above methodologies suggested that a number of premises needed to be explored and critiqued as to their appropriateness for CYCOS service provision. The table below identifies how each of these premises rates against the necessary criteria for CYCOS in its search for an appropriate space, ultimately enabling the delivery of quality programs:

| Property | Central Cessnock Location | Adequate Indoor Space | Links to Outdoor Space | Annual tenancy fee < \$13,000 |
|--|---------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Cessnock CBD Shopfront Commercial spaces | √ | | | √ |
| 16 Vincent Street, Cessnock (former Water Board building) | √ | √ | | |
| 136 Vincent Street, Cessnock (former Moad's Betta Electrical) | √ | √ | | |
| 148 Vincent Street, Cessnock | √ | √ | | |
| 3/191 Wollombi Road (adjacent Domino's Pizza) | √ | √ | | |
| West End Shopping Village (Wollombi Road West Cessnock) | √ | √ | | √ |
| Cessnock Civic Indoor Sports Centre (former Basketball Stadium) | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| 49 Aberdare Road, Aberdare (Council owned and former Tourist Information Centre) | √ | √ | √ | √ |

Many of the commercial rental spaces that were considered were in excess of the current budget allocation of \$13,000 for rental. For instance a minimum \$40,000 would have been required to secure some of the above properties. Even if Council could meet the rental component, CYCOS would need to adapt their service delivery to compensate for there being no direct links to outdoor space, a necessary component of the service's operation. Out of the eight (8) possible venue options, two (2) were able to offer all of the requirements identified as being necessary. However, of these two (2) options, only one (1) was deemed to be appropriate.

The relocation of the service to the Cessnock Civic Indoor Sports Centre (former Cessnock Basketball Stadium) was investigated in 2006 by Council. At that time, it was decided that CYCOS should not relocate to the Cessnock Civic Indoor Sports Centre (CCISC) due to changes that had occurred at the CCISC as well as the PCYC building, specifically, the increased usage of the CCISC for indoor sports as well as scheduling of larger one-off events at the site. At that time the PCYC advised of its plans to improve maintenance to their building, complete works to regain a public entertainment licence and undertake a review of PCYC management structure and associated changes to their operating plan.

Council has tried to contact the PCYC via telephone and written correspondence to determine its future plans for its premises and subsequently with CYCOS. A letter has been sent to the Chief Executive Officer for PCYC NSW, Mr Chris Gardiner, requesting clarification as to the future of CYCOS at the Cessnock PCYC. To date, Council has not received any correspondence regarding this matter.

The former Tourist Information Centre on Aberdare Road is considered to be the most suitable location to which CYCOS could relocate. For the past five (5) years Council had a formal licence agreement with a dance studio for use of the building until the tenant gave notice early January this year. The current annual rental amount that is payable for this building is approximately \$12,200 which is less than what is currently being paid by Council for CYCOS to deliver its programs at the PCYC. It is expected that building would be vacant from 31 January 2008. If relocation to this site is approved a Development Application for the proposal will be submitted at the earliest opportunity.

Given its location, ability to function as a dance studio and its previous role as the Tourist Information Centre, the building offers adequate indoor space and provides excellent opportunities for outdoor activities with direct linkages to open space at Turner Park, directly behind the facility. The property is within easy walking distance from the Cessnock CBD area and is also accessible by public transport. It is important to note that the location currently has considerable youth activity given its proximity to Turner Park and the year round, regular use of the facility by local sporting clubs as well as the nearby Cessnock High School and Cessnock Public School. In consultations with the staff of CYCOS, they are in agreement that this option would be the more suitable option for their client group.

Alternative options available to Council for the provision of youth services were also investigated and include construction of a purpose built youth centre or closure of the service. Closure of the service is not recommended given the need and role of CYCOS within the youth community and the Social and Community Plan. CYCOS is continually striving towards addressing Council's 2004-09 Social and Community Plan strategies for youth, given its role as a support service, its attainments in flexible service delivery, its promotion of youth involvement in decision making and through its educational programs such as 'Life skills'. Subsequently, CYCOS is well patronised by the youth of the Cessnock Local Government Area who, on average, access the centre and/or its services on 434 occasions per month.

The cost to construct a purpose built youth centre has been estimated to be in the vicinity of \$700,000 - \$1Million. This has been based on recently constructed facilities by Council as well as the new Youth Centre at Singleton. Additional to the construction costs, Council would need to identify or acquire vacant land in central Cessnock with good linkages to outdoor space. In consulting with Council's Property Officer, Council is not in ownership of land that offers these requirements. Hence, Council would need to purchase land for the building of a Youth Centre.

In terms of the cost to relocate as well as future maintenance and operational costs of the centre, the relocation costs can be covered within the current CYCOS budget via costs savings associated with the rental that will not be paid to PCYC for the April to July period (approximately \$3,000). Maintenance of the building, where required, will remain within the Community Buildings Planned Maintenance and Capital Works Program and operational costs such as water, electricity, rates, sanitary bin, garbage collection etc can be covered by the current budget, which already allows for these particulars.

In terms of the long-term operation of CYCOS it is proposed that a full review of the service be undertaken following on from the relocation, given that the service will be operating in a new environment.

CONCLUSION:

The future location of CYCOS needs to be decided prior to the current tenancy agreement expiring in March 2008 to minimise disruption for both the staff of CYCOS and the young people who access the service. This will allow CYCOS make a smooth transition from its current premises into any new premises. A thorough search has been completed and all options have been considered with objectivity.

Taking into consideration the benefits and opportunities provided through the availability of the Tourist Information Centre on Aberdare Road as well as the uncertainty in relation to any tenure at the PCYC building on Wollombi Road, it is proposed that CYCOS give written notice to the PCYC and relocate to the Council owned premises located at 49 Aberdare Road, Aberdare.

RECOMMENDATION that:

1. Council terminates its lease with the PCYC for the use of the space it has been allocated in the building located at 196 Wollombi Road Cessnock,
2. Council relocate Cessnock Youth Centre and Outreach Service (CYCOS) to 49 Aberdare Road, Aberdare,
3. A review of the service be undertaken following on from the relocation with a subsequent report to Council.

To: **The General Manager**
Strategic & Community Services
Committee - 23 January 2008

S EADE
ACTING DIRECTOR STRATEGIC &
COMMUNITY SERVICES
15 January 2008

**ACTING DIRECTOR STRATEGIC & COMMUNITY SERVICES
REPORT NO. 3/2008**

SUBJECT: DRAFT PLAN OF MANAGEMENT FOR VARTY PARK (WESTON)

Community Facilities Planner, Ms K Jordan, reports:

In line with Council's Management Plan a review of all major recreational settings has been undertaken over the past three (3) years. This review has culminated in the preparation, exhibition and subsequent adoption of a number of site specific Plans of Management (PoM) including; Miller Park (Branxton), Margaret Johns Park (Kurri Kurri) and Carmichael Park (Bellbird).

To continue the updating of Council's Plans of Management, a Plan of Management for Varty Park, Weston was presented to Council at its meeting on 7 November 2007. At this meeting Council considered Acting Director Strategic and Community Services Report No. 124/2007 regarding the draft Plan of Management for Varty Park (Weston). Approval was given to advertise the document for a period of forty two (42) days from 13 November 2007 to 24 December 2007. There were no submissions received during this time.

Council approval is now required to adopt the Plan of Management.

RECOMMENDATION that Council adopt the draft Plan of Management for Varty Park (Weston).

To: **The General Manager**
Strategic & Community Services
Committee – 23 January 2008

S EADE
**ACTING DIRECTOR STRATEGIC &
COMMUNITY SERVICES**
15 January 2008

ACTING DIRECTOR STRATEGIC & COMMUNITY SERVICES
REPORT NO. 4/2008

**SUBJECT: CUNNEENS BRIDGE ON PAYNES CROSSING ROAD, WOLLOMBI –
TRAFFIC CONTROL MEASURES TO ENFORCE APPLICATION OF 9
TONNE GROSS VEHICLE WEIGHT LOAD LIMIT**

The Roads, Bridges, & Drainage Manager, Mr. John Booth, reports:

PURPOSE:

To advise of the installation of traffic control measures to enforce the application of a load limit of 9 tonnes gross vehicle weight on the timber Cunneens Bridge on Paynes Crossing Road Wollombi.

BACKGROUND:

Cunneens Bridge over Wollombi Brook is located on Paynes Crossing Road approximately 570 m west of the village of Wollombi. Cunneens Bridge is a four span timber beam structure of total length 40 metres, with timber piled piers and abutments.

The bridge is in poor condition with the carriageway having been reduced to one lane since 1998. Council and the Federal Department of Transport and Regional Services are providing funding for the construction of a new concrete bridge over Congewai Creek (North Arm of Wollombi Brook). Survey is complete and negotiations are underway between Council's Works and Services Department and the Heritage Office of the NSW Department of Planning regarding design options.

To manage the existing Cunneens Bridge until the new structure is constructed, Council has progressively reviewed the load limit based on the recommendations of structural capacity assessments undertaken for Council by consultants "access:UTS". As a result of these assessments the applicable load limit imposed on Cunneens Bridge has been progressively reduced as a result of deteriorating bridge condition. This deteriorating condition can be attributed in part to damage caused by overloading. These progressive reassessments of the load limit are documented in the following resolutions by Council to impose load limits under Section 112 of the Roads Act 1993:

- 25 tonne gross vehicle weight (GVW) load limit imposed by resolution dated 11 June 2004 (Director S&CS Report No. 96/2004 refers);
- 18 tonne gross vehicle weight (GVW) load limit imposed by resolution dated 4 October 2006 (Director S&CS Report No. 142/2006 refers); and
- 9 tonne gross vehicle weight (GVW) load limit imposed by resolution dated 2 April 2007 (Director S&CS Report No. 47/2007 refers)

DISCUSSION:

Since the 9 tonne GVW load limit was applied on 2 April 2007 Council has received information from the local community that vehicles in excess of the 9 tonne GVW load limit have been crossing Cunneens Bridge. As a result the RTA was requested to provide additional warning signs on the F3 Freeway to advise heavy vehicles of the load level affectively restricting heavy vehicle access between Wollombi and Broke on Paynes Crossing Road. As a result variable message signs have been placed at the Mt White Weigh Station. In addition written requests have been made to the Lower Hunter Area Commander of the Police to carry out enforcement.

Between 12 December 2007 and 19 December 2007 Council installed traffic classifiers on both approaches to Cunneens Bridge to measure the number of vehicles of the various weight classifications (Austroads '94 Vehicle Classification System) crossing Cunneens Bridge. The results show that of the total of 2494 vehicles counted crossing the bridge, 23 vehicles were of Class 4 (3 axle truck or bus) and above which would put them above the 9 tonne GVW limit, potentially able to cause catastrophic failure of the bridge.

Accordingly Council's Works and Services have designed a system of chicanes constructed from both concrete and water filled barriers to restrict access for larger vehicles to cross Cunneens Bridge. A copy of the design is included in the enclosures. These barriers and associated warning signs, lights and U turn bays will be installed as soon as practicable.

These measures are similar to those installed at Kings Bridge on Mount View Road to control heavy vehicles traversing the old structure prior to its replacement.

This matter has been listed by Council's Transportation and Road Safety Manager Mr Dale Dickey as an item for discussion on the agenda at the next Cessnock LGA Traffic Committee Meeting on 18 February 2008.

These physical traffic control and management measures are considered essential to manage risk. This is of particular importance given that the existing bridge needs to remain in service during construction of the replacement structure to avoid the considerable expense and environmental issues of constructing a low-level bypass. Therefore, the measures taken involving traffic control works and signage are cost-effective; with costs to be charged to the allocations for the Cunneens Bridge project.

RECOMMENDATION that the above report be noted.

To: **The General Manager**
Strategic & Community Services
Committee - 23 January 2008

S EADE
ACTING DIRECTOR STRATEGIC &
COMMUNITY SERVICES
15 January 2008

ACTING DIRECTOR STRATEGIC & COMMUNITY SERVICES
REPORT NO. 5/2008

**SUBJECT: PROGRESS REPORT ON REDEVELOPMENT OF WESTON BEARS
 PARK**

Community Facilities Planner, Ms K Jordan, reports:

BACKGROUND:

As Council would be aware a draft Masterplan for the redevelopment of Weston Bears Park to cater for the relocation of the Weston Junior Soccer Club from Varty Park (Weston) to the site is being prepared. Key components of the draft Masterplan are as follows:-

- The establishment of four (4) additional sporting fields including two (2) full size fields (90m x 60m) and two (2) mod size fields (50m x 35m);
- Installation of automatic irrigation systems on each of the four (4) fields;
- Installation of eight (8) floodlighting poles and floodlights;
- Upgrade to the existing grandstand/amenity block;
- Construction of an additional amenities block incorporating changerooms, kiosk, storage, first aid/referee's room and male, female and accessible toilets;
- Improvements to existing carparking areas and establishment of a additional formalised carparkings;
- Internal and boundary fencing; and
- General improvements to the layout of the site and aesthetic appearance.

In July 2007, a progress report was prepared for Council's consideration regarding the relocation of Weston Junior Soccer club to Weston Bears Park on Government Road, Weston. The report provided findings from the Flora and Fauna Assessment completed for the site, which illustrated the presence of Kurri Sand Swamp Woodland (KSSW), an Endangered Ecological Community (EEC) within the proposed development area. As the clearing of areas containing KSSW are crucial to the redevelopment of the site, the report stated that a meeting would be held with the Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC) to discuss any requirements they may have in terms of vegetation offsets, should Council proceed with the redevelopment. Finally, Council's recommendation within the July report was that the draft Masterplan for Weston Bears Park be finalised and a report prepared for Council's consideration.

The purpose of this report is to inform Council of the progress achieved to date and to propose a course of action regarding the redevelopment of Weston Bears Park.

REPORT:

With the aim of finalising the draft Masterplan for Weston Bears Park consultation has been undertaken with a number of parties, both internal and external to Council in an attempt to foresee requirements at the Development Application stage.

An interim referral was provided to Corporate and Regulatory Services to address possible issues with the proposal, prior to lodging a formal Development Application. When reviewing the comments regarding the proposed redevelopment of Weston Bears Park it is evident that traffic management at the site needs to be considered as designated State roads adjoin the development. Other matters which will need to be addressed prior to the lodgement of a Development Application include carparking, earthworks and associated drainage at the site.

In December 2007 Council held an informal meeting with the Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) to discuss traffic management at the site as a result of the proposed redevelopment. The RTA stated that as Northcote Street and First Street are designated State Roads, a traffic study would need to be undertaken by a suitably qualified and experienced Traffic Engineer prior to submitting a formal Development Application.

Council met with the Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC) in late 2007 regarding the presence of the KSSW at the site and to discuss requirements in regards to vegetation offsets, should the proposed redevelopment proceed. The parcel of land that will complicate the establishment of sporting fields at the site is Area C which is a relatively intact example of KSSW. (A map highlighting the KSSW areas A, B, C, D & E; as well as proposed fields has been included within the Enclosure Documents). The DECC stated the department does not need to be involved in the redevelopment of Weston Park as long as Council can demonstrate a credible improve or maintain case relating to the KSSW on the proposed development.

Ecological consultants have advised that this can be achieved on site by removing the western vegetation (Areas A, B and C) and retaining and rehabilitating the eastern vegetation (Areas D and E).

Specifically this involves the following actions to be taken in areas D and E:

- Removal of all dumped rubbish;
- Removal of all weed species;
- Closure of, and assisted rehabilitation of, the existing tracks through the area;
- Creation of a singular consolidated access track into the area;
- Ongoing management of key issues such as fire frequency;
- Installation of educational signage to inform the public of the values and characteristics of both KSSW, and the threatened tree species *Eucalyptus Parramattensis* subsp. *decadens* occurring therein; and
- Designation of the area as "Parramattensis Park".

It is anticipated that the items listed above will form the basis for a Plan of Management for KSSW on the site.

CONCLUSION:

The information collated to date suggests that works identified within the draft Masterplan for Weston Bears Park can be achieved, however, this would need to be confirmed via assessment of a Development Application for the proposed development.

Lodgement of a Development Application would require the preparation of a number of studies and other documentation, including:

- Statement of Environmental Effects;
- Review of Environmental Factors;
- Seven Part Test;
- Traffic study;
- Detailed concept plans;
- Engineering advice regarding stormwater drainage, geotechnical.

The costs associated with the lodgement of a Development Application are estimated at a minimum of \$35,000.

Given that there are no funds in the Recreation and Community Services budget in the current financial year to fund this expenditure, it is suggested that the Draft Masterplan be completed and submitted to Council for consideration together with an estimate of the costs associated with the proposed redevelopment of the site.

When Council considers the Draft Masterplan and costs it can then determine whether or not the proposal should be progressed to the next stage of lodgement of Development Application, finalisation of the scope of works and detailed costings of the proposal. The proposal will be included in the February Budget Briefings for the 2008/2009 budget so that Council has the opportunity to provide funding for necessary plans and studies for the Development Application should it wish to proceed.

RECOMMENDATION that:

1. The information be noted.
2. The draft Masterplan for Weston Bears Park be finalised and a report prepared for Council's consideration.
3. The report include an estimate of costs for the redevelopment of Weston Bears Park.

To: **The General Manager**
Strategic & Community Services
Committee – 23 January 2008

S EADE
ACTING DIRECTOR STRATEGIC &
COMMUNITY SERVICES
15 January 2008

ACTING DIRECTOR STRATEGIC & COMMUNITY SERVICES
REPORT NO. 6/2008

SUBJECT: PALM TREE - APEX PARK (CESSNOCK)

Recreation and Community Services Manager, Ms N Benson, reports:

This report has been prepared in response to Questions Without Notice from Cr Olsen and Cr Ryan at the Council meeting held on 12 December 2007 regarding the recently installed Palm Tree in Apex Park on the corner of Maitland and Allandale Roads Cessnock.

REPORT:

Council has been undertaking the staged upgrade of parklands at the northern end of Vincent Street – Conway's Corner and Apex Park for the past few years as a means to improve the existing parklands and to compliment the upgrade to Vincent Street that was completed in 2004.

Works have been completed via the Recreation and Community Services budgets and the programs within and have included paving, installation of seating, turf improvements and landscaping as well as planting of advance stock trees at Conway's Corner. An advance stock Crepe Myrtle (*Lagerstroemia indica*) tree was transplanted to the park from the Cessnock Pool prior to the construction of a car park at the pool in 2005/06.

Proposed works for Apex Park (stage 2) were presented to Council as part of the 2007/08 Budget Briefings held in February 2007. These works were subsequently adopted by Council in the Recreation Capital Works Program (DSCS Report NO. 34/2007), and include the installation of an advance stock tree in Apex Park.

Stage 1 and 2 works completed at Apex Park to date include relocation of the stone archway from the former Shakespeare Park, removal of dangerous trees from the park, renewal of fencing at the site, planting of advance stock Crepe Myrtle street trees, and installation of an advanced stock Date Palm (*Phoenix canariensis*). This Date Palm completes the row of established vegetation in the park that includes alternately planted and established Jacarandas (*Jacaranda mimosifolia*) and Date Palms. It is expected that the 3rd and final stage will be incorporated in the 2008/09 Recreation and Community Services budget for Council's consideration and will include works such as additional pathways and turf improvements.

Over 12 months ago (approximately October 2006) an inspection of a Date Palm tree at 35 Wollombi Road, Cessnock was undertaken by Council's Tree Preservation Officer. At that time the owner of the property was advised that permission would not be granted to remove the Date Palm as they are considered a protected species in the LGA and that the removal of Date Palms was considered to be contrary to the spirit of Council's Tree Preservation Order. It was noted at the time that relocation of the tree to a suitable location within the LGA would be considered in future landscape/streetscape plans for projects being completed by Council. The property owner then offered to donate the tree to Council for installation in a suitable location within the LGA at an appropriate time.

As part of monthly planning meetings (Partners Meetings) between Works and Services staff and Strategic and Community Services staff, in 2007, Apex Park at Cessnock was identified as being a suitable location for the donated tree due to the planned works for the park and existence of the same, established species within. It was recognised at the time that if the donation were to be accepted the offer could not be fulfilled until such time that permission was granted to relocate the tree.

Permission to remove the tree from 35 Wollombi Road was given through the issue of development consent (DA 8/2006/981/1) for a development at that location granted on 16 October 2007. A condition of that consent was that the palm tree be located to a suitable location in the Cessnock LGA.

Subsequently, Council officers engaged an arboricultural contractor to remove the tree from 35 Wollombi Road and install it in Apex Park Cessnock. An allocation of \$12,500 was incorporated into the Recreation Capital Works Program, for the stage 2 work to cover costs associated with the installation of an advance stock tree, automatic irrigation at the site and pathways. The total cost to Council for the relocation of the tree which includes establishment and maintenance costs is \$9,211.

RECOMMENDATION that the information be noted.

To: **The General Manager**
Strategic & Community Services
Committee – 23 January 2008

S EADE
ACTING DIRECTOR STRATEGIC &
COMMUNITY SERVICES
15 January 2008