



Council News

Autumn 2008 Community Report from Cessnock City Council

Senior Citizens of the Year

Not one but two Cessnock Senior Citizens of the Year were announced on 10 April at a gala celebration at Hunter Valley Gardens. Mrs Beth Masterman and Mr Merv Walters are our Senior Citizens of the Year.

Mrs Masterman has been a member and is now patron of the Kurri Kurri Girl Guides Association and is a very active, committed and valued volunteer at Pelaw Main Public School. She has a genuine empathy for children and has created a feeling of ownership within the school community. Mrs Masterman also works tirelessly with Kurri Kurri Tidy Towns and has planted many a tree in her quest to beautify our community. She was also awarded Citizen of the Year in 1992.

Mr Walters is one of the most respected rugby league players to have ever represented the City of Cessnock, retiring in 1960 after his team won the Grand Final. He also coached the Cessnock Water Polo team to many Newcastle Premierships as well as Country Championship honours. His commitment to sport has continued to this day. For nearly 50 years, Mr Walters has been the starter at Cessnock Swimming Club, quietly calming those who step up to the blocks.

Presentation of the Senior Citizens Awards was witnessed by 250 senior citizens who enjoyed entertainment by soloist Margaret Albury and duo Tucan (Pam and Les Gully).

Cessnock City Council wishes to thank Hunter Valley Gardens for supporting the Senior Citizen of the Year presentation.



Above: Senior Citizen of the Year Mr Merv Walters was presented with flowers by seven year old swimming club member, Layne Egan who has mastered the 25 metre race this year.

Below left: Mayor Councillor John Clarence OAM with Senior Citizen of the Year Mrs Beth Masterman.



Local Government Elections

The 2008 NSW local government elections will be held on **Saturday 13 September 2008**. They are organised and conducted by the NSW Electoral Commission.

Every Australian citizen living in NSW who is 18 years of age or older is required to enrol and vote at federal, state and local government elections and referendums. Please make sure you are enrolled to vote. If you have moved recently you will need to update the roll with your new address. The electoral rolls will be closed on **Monday 4 August 2008**.

Forms and prepaid envelopes are also available from the NSW Electoral Commission, any Post Office or the Australian Electoral Commission. Make sure you're enrolled to have your say.

If you're interested in standing for election as a Councillor, there is a Department of Local Government publication which gives an overview of local government and outlines what a Councillor's role is and how to nominate. Please contact Ms Louise Bell at Council on 4993 4208 or louise.bell@cessnock.nsw.gov.au for your copy. Nominations close on **Wednesday 13 August 2008**.

New recycling service across the Hunter



The 'Life Cycle' collection vehicles are easily identifiable.

The first new free recycling services under the 'Life Cycle' banner have seen a range of household goods being collected in the Cessnock Local Government Area.

Cessnock, Maitland and Lake Macquarie City Councils have joined with Hunter Resource Recovery and Solo Resource Recovery to introduce the service.

Cessnock Mayor Councillor John Clarence OAM described the initiative: "This new service complements our existing kerbside service, which is arguably the best in the country, and again puts our recycling service on the front foot. I wish all involved every success in protecting and enhancing our environment."

The kerbside service will be carried out three times per year to collect used clothing, toys, household items, print cartridges, mobile phones, batteries etc and will make use of residents' existing recycling bins. Some of the items will be donated to charities and the remainder will be onsold to targeted recycling companies.

Residents are urged to continue to support their favoured charity by donating quality saleable stock directly to them.

This service is not intended to divert stock from charities: only to divert product currently going to landfill.

It is expected that 'Life Cycle' will reduce a further 4,000 tonnes of waste to landfill annually.

According to the Executive Director of the Department of Environment and Climate Change, Mr Tim Rogers, "This service further demonstrates the culture of the Hunter to work together and develop innovative programs that embrace the State Waste Strategy by increasing resource recovery, reducing toxicity and combating illegal dumping. It also has the capacity to complement the work already being undertaken to establish an alternate waste treatment plant in the Hunter."

Collection dates for the 'Life Cycle' recycling service are different in each area. If you haven't received an information pack in your mail box yet, you soon will.

The information pack will give the dates for your particular area, explain which type of goods can be collected and how you should present those goods for pickup.

Residents who wish to know more about the service can call 1800 838 884 or log onto www.lifecyclehunter.com.au.

Did you know that on Clean Up Australia Day approximately 250 volunteers collected over 43 tonnes of rubbish from sites across our LGA?

Council Works on the Web

Would you like to know when your road will be graded or when the grass at a sporting field will be mown? With a few clicks of your computer's mouse, it is now possible to find out Cessnock City Council's schedule for maintenance and construction throughout the Local Government Area.

"We receive a very large number of phone calls daily requesting information about our works schedule," explained Council's Director Infrastructure and Services Mr Lew Oldfield. "To make it easier for residents, and indeed visitors, to know where Council will be working, we have introduced an interactive component to our website which enables people to choose a particular area and find out exactly when Council will be there and what we will be doing."

Construction and maintenance works for roads, parks, gardens, sporting fields and buildings across the LGA are scheduled ahead of time and updated as the year progresses.

The new feature on the website includes interactive maps and project lists which detail the work to be undertaken. Directions about how to request Council to undertake work are also included on the site.

Council's website address is www.cessnock.nsw.gov.au and a link to the information is on the home page. Details will be updated weekly to ensure the information is responsive to changes such as those imposed by weather conditions.

"The initiative is in its infancy at this stage and we are encouraging users to contact Council to make suggestions about how the service can be improved," Mr Oldfield said. "We have made every effort to include relevant information in an easy to access manner but it is crucial that the information we are providing meets the needs of our community."

If anyone has suggestions about how the information provided can be enhanced, they are asked to please contact Council by emailing to kristy.matterson@cessnock.nsw.gov.au

\$25,000 for culture

Council has provided a total of just over \$25,000 to local groups this year under its Community Cultural Development \$ for \$ Grant Program.

For several years Council has administered the Program to support a range of projects which promote and develop community activity in arts and culture.

The funds can be used to help purchase equipment and materials, improve buildings/facilities, promote an event, publications or generally support artistic endeavours. The group has to be able to provide matching funds to be eligible for consideration.

Groups benefiting from the program this year have included the Abermain Heritage Preservation Society, Bloodtree Festival Sub Committee of Mountain Districts Sports Association, Central Hunter Community Broadcasters Inc, Cessnock City Country Music Festival Inc, Cessnock District Historical and Family History Society Inc,

Cessnock Gem and Mineral Club, Cessnock Quilters and Embroiderers, Cessnock Senior Citizens and Pensioners Choir, Cessnock Woodturners, Coalfield Heritage Group Inc, Greta Multi Purpose Centre Management Committee Inc, Hunter Music Academy, Kulnura Community Arts and Entertainment Program, Kurri Kurri Community Centre/Cessnock Youth Development Project, Towns with Heart, Valley Artists Inc, Sculpture in the Vineyards along the Wollombi Valley wine trail, and Wollombi Valley Arts Council.

Applications for the next round of funding will be called for in February 2009. Council looks forward to receiving many submissions from our local arts and cultural community.

If you would like more information about the program, please contact Council's Cultural Services Manager, Simon Eade, on 4993 4385 or email to simon.eade@cessnock.nsw.gov.au

Draft LEP on public exhibition soon

The draft Local Environmental Plan 2008 (LEP) was considered by Council on 21 November 2007 and 16 April 2008.

At those meetings Council resolved, subject to various amendments, to adopt the draft Plan for the purpose of submitting it to the Department of Planning with a request to issue Council a certificate to place the draft Plan on public exhibition.

Strategic Planning Manager, Bo Moshage, said that following their acceptance, Council hopes to exhibit the draft LEP, including the draft CityWide Settlement

Strategy and the draft Development Control Plan 2008 for a period of 10 weeks, which will include extensive community consultation.

"By putting these draft documents on exhibition, Council is providing an opportunity for comment and review by the community on the these very important strategic planning tools," Mr Moshage said.

As soon as the Department gives approval for exhibition, Council will advertise and call for written submissions.

Building better skills locally

Much has been said about current skills shortages in the workforce across Australia as well as locally, particularly in the past 12 to 18 months.

Cessnock City Council, TAFE NSW – Hunter Institute, the Department of Education and Training – Hunter and Central Coast Schools signed a Memorandum of Understanding on 27 February which aims to address the issue of skills in our local workforce.

"The Memorandum of Understanding is a formalisation of what has been a good and beneficial association between the organisations," Council's Economic Development Manager Ms Kavita Payall-Phelan explained. "The intent of the Memorandum is to foster initiatives which will address school retention rates and identify appropriate training and career paths."

Specifically, the organisations will work together to place a priority on strategic planning, implementing and responding to opportunities for better employment outcomes in the LGA through education and training availability and increasing the participation of local people in education and training.

"Council has a strong relationship with both the Department and TAFE NSW and together we have made great progress in the last few years in regard to identifying the needs of our local employers and providing training options to meet those needs."

"Signing the Memorandum serves to strengthen the collaboration and will mean even better outcomes can be expected in the coming years for both employers and potential employees," Ms Payall-Phelan said.



Department of Education and Training Regional Director John Mather, TAFE NSW – Hunter Institute Director Phil Cox, Mayor Councillor John Clarence OAM and Council's General Manager Bernie Mortomore at the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding.

Recreation and open space plan

Council is seeking community feedback on a draft plan for the future development and maintenance needs of recreation facilities and open spaces across the LGA.

"It is important our community is informed about the future directions planned for recreation and open space because these areas are vital to the health and well being of our residents," explained Council's Recreation and Community Services Manager, Nicole Benson.

The draft 2008 Recreation and Open Space Strategic Plan is on public exhibition until Wednesday 11 June. It is available for viewing at Cessnock and Kurri Kurri Libraries, the Branxton Post Office and the Council Administration Building.

In addition, the draft Recreation and Open Space Strategic Plan is available for viewing on Council's website during the exhibition period. The link is : <http://www.cessnock.nsw.gov.au/cessnock/index.asp?id=1638> or alternatively follow the links from Council's homepage at www.cessnock.nsw.gov.au.

Submissions about the Strategic Plan will be accepted by Council up until the close of business on 11 June and the submissions must be made in writing.

For further information regarding the draft 2008 Recreation and Open Space Strategic Plan, please contact Council's Community Facilities Planner, Ms Kate Jordan on 4993 4235.

\$30,000 awarded in scholarships

Photo courtesy of The Advertiser



Back: Rebecca Wyborn, Jessamy Ward, Nerida Hanlon, Benjamin Chapman.
Front: Annette Gibbs, the Mayor, Britt Walters, Kathleen Westbury, Faheem Khan.

Twelve deserving students from the Cessnock Local Government Area received a total of \$30,000 worth of scholarships at the 2008 Mayoral Academic Awards presentation at Cessnock Rugby League Supporters Club on 27 March.

"Each year, and this is our seventh, I am increasingly astounded by the high calibre of Cessnock's young people," said Mayor of Cessnock, Councillor John Clarence OAM.

Almost 70 applications were received for the 12 scholarships worth \$2,500 each. The scholarships are offered to students residing in the Cessnock LGA who have completed their HSC, first year or second year of TAFE or university study.

"I would like to formally thank our sponsors – without whom these scholarships would not be possible," the Mayor said. "It is vital to our community that we can acknowledge and celebrate the academic achievements of our young people and help them achieve their goals."

Recipients of the awards for 2008 are:

Faheem Khan Greta - Post Higher School Certificate

Mitchell Brennan Nulkaba - Undergraduate

Annette Gibbs Cessnock - TAFE

Kathleen Westbury Cessnock - Information Technology

Danielle Roderick Cessnock - Journalism

Nerida Hanlon Kurri Kurri - Building and Associated Trades

Rebecca Wyborn Cessnock - Incentive

Benjamin Chapman Cessnock - Mining

Jessamy Ward Nulkaba - Medical and Health

Emily Brennan Nulkaba - Tourism and Hospitality

Charlotte Cooper Pokolbin -

International Tourism and Marketing

Britt Walters Mt View - Local Government

The Mayoral Academic Awards are made possible by the following sponsors: Branxton Vineyards Real Estate, Cessnock Rugby League Supporters Club, Cypress Lakes Group Ltd, Donaldson Job Creation Trust, Hardie Holdings Pty Ltd, Hunter Resource Recovery, Regional Land Pty Ltd, The Rotary Club of Cessnock Inc, Solo Resource Recovery, Telstra Country Wide and Video Plus Pty Ltd.

New opening hours at Council

Council has been opening its Administration Building doors at 8.45am since 28 April which is 15 minutes later than its previous opening time of 8.30am. The change in opening hours is being trialled following a review of the over the counter transactions undertaken by the Customer Service section of Council.

"We have monitored the number of transactions undertaken by customers who visit the building between 8.30am and 8.45am and it is less than one per cent of our total number of transactions each day," Council's Financial and Administrative Services Manager, Mr Robert Maginnity explained. "The change in opening times has allowed us to reschedule the Customer Service staff roster so we can provide an improved service delivery during our peak customer period which is between 9.00am and 3.00pm."

In addition, although the closing time of 5.00pm has not changed, Council will no longer accept cash payments after 4.45pm. Eftpos, credit card and cheque payments are still accepted up until 5.00pm.

"We have invited community feedback on the new hours," Mr Maginnity said. "It is important that Council is made aware of whether our objective to provide an improved service is meeting the needs of our community."

CYCOS' new home

The Cessnock Youth Centre and Outreach Service (CYCOS) has opened its new doors in bigger premises at 49 Aberdare Road.

According to Council's Social Planner, Ms Natalie Drage, CYCOS provides an invaluable service for the young people in our community. "Our aim is to provide a safe, secure and friendly place where young people are comfortable."

"It's not just a drop in centre – we offer a support network and a referral service as well as recreation and educational programs. We also offer special programs such as Lifeskills and Beyond Blue."

The Centre, which is fully supervised by qualified youth workers, operates a drop in service for people aged between 12 and 20 years at the following times:

Wednesdays, 4 - 8pm;

Thursdays, 4 - 8pm;

Fridays, 7 - 10pm;

Saturdays, 1 - 8:30pm.

For further information about CYCOS and the service it provides, please contact Youth Worker, Ms Kate Butcher on 0437 226 218.

Council contacts

Administration Building

62 - 78 Vincent Street, Cessnock

Postal Address:

PO Box 152, Cessnock NSW 2325

Phone: 02 4993 4100

Fax: 02 4993 2500

Email: council@cessnock.nsw.gov.au

Web: www.cessnock.nsw.gov.au

General Manager: Bernie Mortomore

Council Departments

City Planning

Director: Darryl Fitzgerald

Corporate and Community

Director: Craig Bennett

Infrastructure and Services

Director: Lewis Oldfield

Councillors

To contact Councillors, please phone Council's Administration Office on 02 4993 4100.

Mayor: Councillor John Clarence OAM

Ward A

Robert Bedford

Alison Davey

Rachel Main

Ward B

Ian Olsen

Bob Pynsent (*Deputy Mayor*)

Bruce Scott

Ward C

Catherine Parsons

Jeff Maybury

Dale Troy

Ward D

Ron Besoff

James Ryan

Graham Smith

Council meetings

Council meetings are open to the public and all are welcome to attend. Meetings are held in the Council Chambers and start at 6.30pm.

Upcoming Council meetings: 4 and 18 June, 2 and 16 July, 6 and 20 August and 3 September.