Vandalism and graffiti cost the Council about $100,000 per year. Those funds could be better used to increase and improve facilities and services for our community.

The photo below shows what remains of a garbage bin, which was close to children’s play equipment in a Cessnock park. The garbage bin was filled with flammable material which was then set alight, causing the entire garbage bin to melt.

Council offers a reward of up to $1,000 for information which leads to the conviction of people who dump rubbish or vandalise Council property.

Please help us reduce the amount of vandalism and graffiti in our community. If you have information you think may help us, please phone 4993 4100.

Hebburn Estate to go ahead

Council will start to develop a new housing estate on 18.5 hectares tucked behind Peace Park at Weston (between Date Avenue and Clark Street) next year.

The subdivision, which will be known as Hebburn Estate, will consist of 86 residential allotments and three public open space lots of natural bushland. Residential lot sizes will range from 450m² to 1716m², although not all sizes will be available immediately - lots will be released in six stages.

The site was originally owned by various private mining companies including Bitumen and Oil Refineries (Australia) Limited (BORAL), Hebburn Collieries Pty Ltd and Coal and Allied Limited. Council purchased the land in 1968.

It is expected that work, which includes the construction of eight public roads, a major new intersection and improvements to Bailey Park, will commence in the second half of 2007.

Also included in the development of the area will be the regeneration of a five hectare area of Kurri Sand Swamp Woodland. Council will clear the area of weeds and scrub and reintroduce plant species which were originally found in the area.

Council’s Manager Marketing and Economic Development, Mr Peter Gogarty, believes that the Estate is a unique and exciting first for the Cessnock LGA.

“It is hard to imagine a residential estate that offers more for young families. Hebburn will offer a choice of lot sizes at affordable prices - all conveniently located near the main Cessnock to Maitland/Newcastle transport corridor. It features areas of natural bushland and is surrounded by passive and active recreation areas,” he said.

“Bringing this estate to market will be the realisation of a long held Council ambition for the site.”

Christmas and New Year Break:

Council’s Administration Building - closed from 3pm Friday 22 December 2006 until 8.30am Tuesday 2 January 2007.

Cessnock and Kurri Kurri Libraries - closed from 3pm Friday 22 December 2006 until 9.00am Tuesday 2 January 2007.

The Waste and Reuse Centre, the Kurri Kurri Aquatic Centre and the Branxton and Cessnock Pools will be closed on Christmas Day only.

Greta Multi Purpose Centre Gala Opening

Development application process improved

Coca-Cola Mayoral Academic Awards - apply now
Submission of development applications to Cessnock City Council is now a lot easier following the recent introduction of new application forms and guides.

"Council undertook a complete review of the development application and assessment process from the time a form is submitted to the notification of the result," explained Director Corporate and Regulatory Services, Robert Gallagher.

"One of the things found was that our handouts didn’t include enough detail for our customers. We also found that the customers were often confused with how to fill in the forms and about the information they needed to include. This meant delays in the processing of the applications while our staff sought additional information.”

The Council has now developed new easy to use application forms and a series of guides for different types of development, from swimming pools, garages and dwellings to commercial vineyards.

Each guide contains frequently asked questions, step by step instructions on how to fill out the form and a checklist of exactly what documents needs to be submitted to Council.

"The feedback we have received so far indicates that the new application forms are much easier to fill out and customers are less confused about the information they need to give to Council," Mr Gallagher said.

Improving our Council’s communication at the initial stage of the process means that the entire process of development application assessment for both customers and Council staff will be substantially faster.”

The new application forms, information booklets and guides can be found on the Council’s website at www.cessnock.nsw.gov.au

Greta Multi Purpose Centre gala opening

The official opening of the Greta Multi Purpose Centre on 11 November showed the community spirit of the residents of Greta, Branxton and surrounds.

Community and sporting clubs banded together to provide refreshment for over 150 people who visited the new facility throughout the day.

Billed as a Gala Opening of the $815,000 Centre, activities centred around showcasing the talent of local young performers.

“The festivities kicked off with an excellent singing performance by Stars in the Making, which was followed by more great performances from infants and primary school students in the talent quest,” said Mayor, Councillor John Clarence who officially opened the Centre at the beginning of the day. “It was fantastic to see the new Centre being used by the community and I hope that the gala opening has encouraged everyone to think of it as theirs.”

“It is thanks to the untiring efforts of many in the Greta/Branxton community that this outstanding facility has come to fruition and I would like to pay special tribute to the late Mr Brian Kennedy who had a commitment, a passion and a love for his village and the people of Greta. I would also like to pay tribute to Mrs Val Randall who has been involved from day one of planning and is still heavily involved with the Centre’s Management Committee to this day.”

The afternoon performances included a great show of poetry by students from Greta Public School, who recited some of their pieces as seen at the Abermain Eisteddfod this year.

While the adults enjoyed a relaxing demonstration by the Australian Academy of Tai Chi, the young and young at heart were thrilled and excited by the lizard, turtle, snake and crocodile in the Crocodile Encounters show.

The day ended in a twirl of bright colours and dancing with an enjoyable performance by the students of Galaxy Talent Academy.

“Although there was an official party including Member for the Hunter, Joel Fitzgibbon, Minister for Local Government and Member for Cessnock, the Hon Kerry Hickey, Hunter Area Assistance Scheme’s Mr Will Willis, and Councillors Maybury, Parsons, Smith and Troy, the day was planned for the people of Greta, Branxton and surrounding areas,” said Councillor Clarence. “The Greta Multi Purpose Centre is their Centre.”

In brief...

During the last three months almost 2,000 young people participated in our Cessnock Youth Centre and Outreach Service (CYCOS) activities including horse riding, ice skating, ten pin bowling as well as structured educational and vocational programs.

The Adopt-a-Road program has had a boost recently and now has 18 sponsors and covers 63 kilometres of roadway in the Cessnock LGA.

Development application process improved

Member for Cessnock, the Hon Kerry Hickey, Mrs Val Randall and Mayor, Councillor John Clarence
Over $50,000 in $ for $ grants

Each year Council grants funding under its dollar for dollar scheme to local groups for minor works and equipment for Council’s community halls, buildings and sporting facilities.

“Council’s Dollar for Dollar grant scheme is designed to help community and sporting organisations who use our facilities on a regular basis,” explained Council’s Community Facilities Planner, Kate Harris. “These groups are able to identify important improvements which enhance the Council facilities as well the users’ experience.”

Those facilities and organisations which received funding (totalling over $14,000) this year under the Community Facilities Dollar for Dollar Grant scheme include Cessnock Gem and Mineral Club, Weston Civic Centre, North Cessnock Community Hall, Bellbird Community Hall, Branxton Community Hall, Branxton Playgroup, Kurri Kurri Community Hall, Wollombi Progress Association, Marthaville Guildry and Wollombi Community Hall.

Grants totalling over $40,600 were awarded under the Sporting Facilities Dollar for Dollar scheme to Kurri Kurri Tennis Club, Coalfields Horse Riding Club, Branxton Tennis Club, Wollombi Valley Pony Club, Weston Workers Cricket Club, Bellbird Junior Soccer Club, Cessnock City Soccer Club, Neath Target Archers, Greta Branxton Minor Rugby League, Kurri Kurri Little Athletics Club, Cessnock Athletics Club, Cessnock Rugby League Club, Wollombi Valley Tennis and Sports Association, Cessnock Basketball Association and Cessnock Tigers Soccer Club.

The closing date for applications for the 2007 round of Community and Sporting Facility Dollar for Dollar Grants will be advertised in July next year.

For further information regarding the scheme please phone Gerard Young on 4993 4238.

Very tidy towns

The 2006 Tidy Towns Awards were announced recently with a total of nine awards presented to the Tidy Towns Committees of Greta, Cessnock, Abermain-Neath and Kurri Kurri.

“These awards demonstrate just how much work our Tidy Towns Committees do in our community,” said Cessnock City Council’s Environmental Projects Officer, Sarah Roberts. “They should be extremely proud of their outstanding contribution to both our environment and our lifestyle.”

Greta Tidy Towns won four awards:
- highly commended in the Wildlife Corridors and Conservation Award for Whithburn Dam;
- winner in the Litter Prevention Award for the ‘We Collect Our Refuse’ project;
- highly commended in the Waste Minimisation Award for the ‘Your Aim Will Help’ project; and,
- highly commended in the Clubs Partnership Award for the Greta Workers Sport and Recreation Club Limited.

Cessnock Tidy Towns won three awards:
- winner in the Civic Partnership Awards for Conway’s Corner Park Improvements;
- winner in the Friendly Town Award; and,
- third in the Overall Category according to population.

Abermain-Neath Tidy Towns was presented with a winner’s award in the Civic Partnership Awards for its partnership with Cessnock City Council and Kurri Kurri Tidy Towns won a highly commended in the same awards for the Towns with Heart Community Mural Project.

“These awards justifiably recognise the enormous positive effect our Committees’ work has on our community and I congratulate each and every member,” Ms Roberts said. “Quite frankly, I would be lost without them – not only because of the work they do but because of their constant energy and optimism.”

Greta Tidy Towns Committee members at the Awards presentation: Peter Hodges, Pam Graham, Michael Dean, Audrey Beckett, Denise Barwick and Rhoda Hodges Snr

Very tidy towns

On the roads

The Works and Services Department has, as usual, been busy during the last three months with many projects completed or well underway including:

Civil Construction
- Bailey Park Cycleway
- Footpath at Alexander Street, Kurri Kurri
- Drainage at Yates Street, Branxton from Gordon Street to the New England Highway
- Pipeline re-sleeve at Elizabeth Street, Abermain
- Traffic medians and linemarking at Water Street, Greta
- Cessnock Swimming Pool Car Park
- Road overlay and sealing at Hamilton Street, Abernethy
- Lovedale Road intersection
- Kerb and guttering plus stormwater drainage at Comfort Avenue, Cessnock
- Kerb and guttering at Rawson Street, Kurri Kurri

Civil Maintenance
Civil maintenance has been conducted in Pokolbin, Keinbah, Quorrobolong and Wollombi as well as Mulbring while our bridge team has worked on Narone Creek Road, Milgang Bridge Ellalong, Fourth Street Weston, Sweetmans Bridge, Williams Bridge and Cumneys Bridge.

For the first time ever, Council’s website has received over 1 million ‘hits’ in a calendar year (and that was prior to the end of October!). The increase has largely been due to the introduction of Council’s On Line Mapping service.

Why don’t you visit? www.cessnock.nsw.gov.au
Coca-Cola Mayoral Academic Awards - apply now

Applications are now open for the annual Coca-Cola Mayoral Academic Awards which provide scholarships of $2,500 for one year to students in our Local Government Area for further study.

“This is the sixth year we have been able to offer these scholarships to students in high school, TAFE and university,” Mayor, Councillor John Clarence said. “The sponsors and I gain great satisfaction knowing that we are able to contribute to the further development of young people in our area.”

Hunter Resource Recovery has joined the list of sponsors this year by offering an undergraduate scholarship in the field of science.

“There is no need to sponsor our local achievers and is pleased to be involved in this excellent program,” Hunter Resource Recovery Company Manager Mr Roger Lewis said.

“Obviously from our organisation’s point of view, the responsible and sustainable management of our environment is of utmost importance and to support young people to move into this arena is vital to both the future of our organisation and the community.”

Previous scholarship recipient, Laura Brisbane is studying law at the University of Newcastle and says the scholarship made life a lot easier.

Laura Brisbane was awarded a scholarship in 2002

“Everyone knows that going to university is expensive but the scholarship really took some of the financial pressure off.”

“Many of the students I know have to juggle working full time with their study. The scholarship allowed me to get involved in university sport and student politics as well as concentrate on my studies. I’ve made a lot of close friends through the additional activities which has made a huge difference to my experience of university and all that it offers.”

There are 12 scholarships available with a broad range of fields and stages of study covered.

Application forms for the scholarships are available from Council’s website www.cessnock.nsw.gov.au or by contacting Pauline Ross on 4993 4210 or email pauline.ross@cessnock.nsw.gov.au

Applications for the scholarships must be delivered to Cessnock City Council by Thursday 22 February 2007.

Scholarships available

Coca-Cola Australia sponsors the following scholarships:

- Post Higher School Certificate Scholarship – for a student leaving high school and entering first year studies at either University or TAFE;
- TAFE Scholarship – for a student who has completed first year TAFE and is continuing into second year.

In addition, the following organisations sponsor scholarships:

Hunter Resource Recovery — University Scholarship. For a student who has completed first/second/third year University and is continuing their studies at University:
- Cessnock Rugby League Supporters Club — Incentive Scholarship. This scholarship is available to those who would not be able to continue further education without this assistance at either University or TAFE.
- Telstra Country Wide — Information Technology Scholarship. Available to students Pre or Post HSC or University in this field.
- Hardie Holdings Pty Ltd — assisting a Post HSC student or Undergraduate student to pursue academic excellence relating to a Local Government discipline in University.
- Cypress Lakes Group Ltd — Hospitality & Tourism Scholarship. Available to students pursuing their first year of study at TAFE or University in this field.
- Branxton Greta Vineyards News — Journalism Scholarship. Available to students pursuing their first year of study at University in this field.
- Hightrade Constructions Pty Ltd — Building and Associated Trades Scholarship. Available to students Pre or Post HSC or Undergraduate students in this field attending either TAFE or University.
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