



Council News

Spring 2007 Community Report from Cessnock City Council



Ty Scutts from the Mai-Wel Group

Liberty Swing brings smiles

Thanks to a partnership between Council and Variety, the Children's Charity, a Liberty Swing has now been installed at Peace Park, Weston. The official opening of the swing by Councillor Jeff Maybury was held on 10 October 2007.

Please see page three.



Performing Arts Centre underway

During November work commenced on the Cessnock Community Performing Arts Centre in the planned Cessnock Civic Precinct.

At this stage, works undertaken include decontamination of the site and demolition of two buildings. Construction of new floors and works in the building on Aberdare Road are expected to commence in the coming weeks.

Key elements of the Centre, which is expected to be operational by September 2008, include -

- A main auditorium with a minimum total of 468 seats and a large stage area with the capacity to meet the performing arts needs of locally based community groups such as dance schools, primary and secondary schools, amateur theatre, etc as well as

professional touring groups, for example Bell Shakespeare and Opera Hunter;

- An on stage green room, two additional changerooms and a multi purpose room within close proximity to the stage;
- Foyer area incorporating a prominent Wall of Fame, capacity for a café, bar and box office;
- Senior citizens room incorporating a small kitchen and storage;
- Community offices;
- Sizeable program space and meeting rooms; and
- Linkages to outdoor civic space in Castlemaine Street.

Council will keep the community informed with updates on the project as work progresses.

Cessnock Council Christmas Closures

Closed from 3pm on Monday 24 December 2007 until Wednesday 2 January 2008

- Administration Building (reopens at 8.30am)
- Cessnock and Kurri Kurri Libraries (reopen at 9am)

Closed Christmas Day Only

- Branxton and Cessnock Pools and the Kurri Kurri Aquatic Centre
- Kurri Kurri Animal Shelter
- Cessnock Waste and Reuse Centre

Please note there will be no roadside garbage collection on Christmas Day. Collection days will be one day later until Saturday 29 December, when Friday's collection will be made.

For urgent matters, please contact Council's emergency phone message system on 4940 7816. Calls will be directed to the appropriate Council duty officer for attention.



Storm heroes

Ninety-two locals were awarded a State Medal recently in recognition of their efforts in helping others during and after the June long weekend storms.

The Premier of NSW announced that State Medals would be struck and awarded following the devastating storms which affected the Hunter and Central Coast areas.

Local councils were asked to coordinate nominations by their LGA residents of individuals and then submit the nominations to the State Government. Those nominated through the councils were not to be associated with an established organisation or charity as those organisations nominated their own members.

Community members from Abermain, Weston, Kurri Kurri, Branxton and Wollombi were nominated for their acts of kindness, bravery and community spirit. Some rescued people from flooded vehicles, others evacuated their neighbours, provided food and



lodging for storm victims, assisted the elderly in the clean up of their homes and yet others helped in sand bagging operations.

Mayor of Cessnock, Councillor John Clarence, who hosted the Medal presentation, said "It is vitally important to formally recognise the selfless contribution these people made to their community in the face of such terrible destruction and heartache. Our area was severely affected by the long weekend storms and, in fact, for some the journey to recovery is far from over. The Medal recipients demonstrated the epitome of the word 'community'."



Above left: Emma and Roger Neville with the Hon Kerry Hickey

Above: Branxton Scout Group members, Kaileb and Samuel Owen and Jarrad Upward (at front), and Shane Weiss (at back) with the Hon Kerry Hickey

Nominations of people to receive State Medals may still be made to Louise Bell at Council by phoning 4993 4208. Names must be received by the State Government by 30 November 2007, so please contact Ms Bell by 23 November.

Mayoral Academic Challenge a success again

Cessnock West Public School was awarded \$5,000 after its team was victorious in the final of the 2007 Mayoral Academic Challenge held in Cessnock during September.

"This is the second year of the Challenge and I remain in awe of these primary students – their schools should be very proud of both their breadth of knowledge and their outstanding representation," Mayor Councillor John Clarence said.

"The students from the 23 schools which participated in the Challenge were model students who amazed the adults present with both their behaviour and academic excellence."

Teams which made it to the semi finals were Abermain, Bellbird, Cessnock East, Cessnock West, Greta, Mulbring and Nulkaba.

Cessnock West came first, Nulkaba came second and Bellbird came in at a very credible third place. The teams received funds to be used for school equipment – \$2,000 for Bellbird (third place), \$3,000 for Nulkaba (second place) and \$5,000 for Cessnock West.

"I thank all our sponsors of the Mayoral Academic Challenge, without whom we would not be able to hold the Challenge - the Johnson Property Group, Hardie Holdings, Rover Motors, Videoplus and Cessnock Rugby League Supporters Club."



Cessnock West Public School team members Connor Lance, Madelyn Parsons and Joel Hafey with Mayor Councillor John Clarence and the Mayoress Lyn Clarence

Recreation roundup

Liberty Swing at Weston

A specifically designed swing for people with a disability has been installed in Peace Park at Weston, thanks to a partnership between Cessnock City Council and Variety, The Children's Charity.

Known as a Liberty Swing, the swing caters for people with special needs, particularly enabling wheelchair bound people an opportunity to experience a swing in the park. The Liberty Swing is for people of all ages with several examples throughout New South Wales where nursing home patients are taken to Liberty Swings on a regular basis.

"Peace Park was established by Council in 1998 as a regional, accessible playground," explained



Dylon Forrest from Mulbring tries out the new Liberty Swing while Variety's Alan Samuels, Dylon's mum and Super Hubert watch on

Council's Community Facilities Planner, Ms Kate Jordan. "The inclusion of the Liberty Swing was strongly supported by Council's Access Advisory Committee and complements the existing facilities including the playground, pathways, the boardwalk and picnic shelters as well as the vast open space."

The Swing can only be used by people who have a Master Locksmith Association Key (MLAK) which is a special key that can only be made or copied by a Master Locksmith. This key is used throughout NSW to enable people with a disability to access public amenities. The key will be needed to access the safety belt compartment and also to release the ramp within the Liberty Swing.

"Already Peace Park is one of the most highly used recreation areas in the LGA and the Liberty Swing will ensure that all people can visit the Park and enjoy their surroundings," Ms Jordan said.

"Apart from the sheer delight that the Swing provides, there are many therapeutic benefits including increased muscle tone, improved head control, self regulation, attention and emotion."

For further information, please contact Ms Jordan on 4993 4300.

Smoke free swimming

Cessnock and Branxton Pools have joined the Kurri Kurri Aquatic Centre this swimming season by becoming totally smoke free.

This is the first time smoking has been banned within the pool grounds at Cessnock and Branxton although Kurri Kurri Aquatic Centre has been smoke free since it opened in 2002.

"Council has introduced the smoke free policy at Cessnock and Branxton Pools to promote a healthier and more enjoyable experience for our pool patrons," explained Cessnock City Council's Recreation Services Manager, Nicole Benson. "I'm sure the vast majority of our pool visitors welcome the introduction of a smoke free environment."



Mr Gerry Egan, Pool Superintendent at Cessnock Pool, with a new 'No Smoking' sign

Patrons are required to leave the pool grounds if they wish to smoke and bins have been placed outside the grounds for disposal of cigarette butts.

"It is important that patrons realise that this year no pass outs will be issued at any of the pools," Ms Benson said. "That means that if anyone leaves the pool grounds for any reason, whether it be to smoke, to purchase food elsewhere or for some other reason, they will have to pay to re-enter the pool unless they are a season pass holder at Cessnock or Branxton or are a member of the Kurri Kurri Aquatic Centre."

Signs are in place at each of the pools advising patrons of the smoke free policy and pool staff are also issuing friendly reminders to smokers. "I ask that every pool visitor respect the no smoking policy and, more importantly, respect the right to a healthy environment for all pool patrons," Ms Benson said. "I would also like to remind our pool patrons that mobile phones and cameras are not to be used in the change rooms and change rooms are not to be used for smoking."

Apex Park, Cessnock



Traffic almost came to a standstill recently when drivers slowed to watch a large crane place an advanced date palm into Apex Park.

The palm completes Council's mature tree stock plantings at the Park.

Soon to happen are refencing, refurbishment of picnic shelters and pathways. The works in Apex Park will complement improvements already undertaken at Cessnock Pool and Conway's Corner.

Kurri Kurri Aquatic Centre will hold its 5th Birthday Party on Saturday 19 January 2008 - details coming soon . . .



Inflatable pools may need fencing too

The popularity of inflatable, portable swimming pools is increasing as more and more buyers are attracted to the convenience and low cost of these pools but they can be a hazard for children if not properly fenced.

Council emphasises that it is the responsibility of owners and purchasers of these pools to ensure that an approved safety fence is installed around the pool.

Backyard swimming pools are the most common location where children drown and it is well documented that child drownings have occurred in inflatable pools.

"Children are known to have drowned in as little as 50mm of water so it is important that supervision and safety fencing are made a priority to ensure these pools result in summer fun rather than summer tragedy."



"NSW legislation requires that all pools capable of being filled to a depth of 300mm or greater are required to have a child resistant barrier, including any type of above ground pool and pools that are installed without approval can attract a fine of \$1,500," said Council's Acting Director of Corporate and Regulatory Services, Darryl Fitzgerald.

For further information regarding above ground swimming pools please contact Council on 4993 4100.

Apply now for a Scholarship

Cessnock City Council is calling for applications for its 2008 Mayoral Academic Awards.

The scholarships, to the value of \$2,500 for one year, are open to students from Year 10 through to TAFE and University providing they are from the Cessnock LGA.

"The Mayoral Academic Awards are now in their seventh year thanks to the support of our sponsors," Mayor of Cessnock, Councillor John Clarence said. "This year I'm happy to say that we have four new sponsors who are furthering the range of scholarships available."

"I welcome Donaldson Job Creation Trust, Regional Land Pty Ltd, Solo Resource Recovery and the Rotary Club of Cessnock Incorporated who have recognised the value of investing in the education of our young people and have joined with our other sponsors in helping our local students with their studies."

Information about and application forms are available from Council's website, www.cessnock.nsw.gov.au or by contacting Ms Pauline Ross on 4993 4210 or email pauline.ross@cessnock.nsw.gov.au.

Applications close on 21 February 2008.

BioBanking

Biodiversity Banking and Offsets Scheme

The Department of Environment and Climate Change NSW and Cessnock City Council invite you to attend an information session on the proposed

NSW BioBanking Scheme

5.30 - 7.30pm

4 December 2007

Council Chambers

The session will provide

- information on the detailed operation of the scheme
- an opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback on the publicly exhibited materials and
- the relationship of BioBanking to existing environmental legislation and the development assessment process

Please RSVP to

rebecca.lucas@cessnock.nsw.gov.au

For enquiries regarding the scheme or the information session, please contact

Biobanking@environment.nsw.gov.au

The publicly exhibited materials are available for download from www.environment.nsw.gov.au/

Council contacts

Administration Building

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Web: www.cessnock.nsw.gov.au

General Manager:

Bernie Mortomore

Council Departments

Corporate and Regulatory Services

Acting Director: Darryl Fitzgerald

Strategic and Community Services

Acting Director: Simon Eade

Works and Services

Director: Lewis Oldfield

Councillors

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

Mayor: Councillor John Clarence

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:

12 December

23 January

6 and 20 February

5 and 19 March