



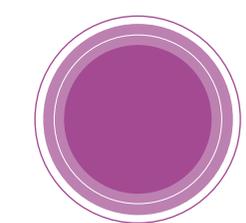
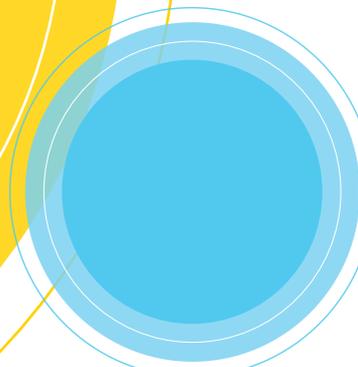
Community Strategic Plan

# CESSNOCK

## 2027

---

PLANNING FOR OUR PEOPLE  
OUR PLACE OUR FUTURE



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

*Cessnock City Council acknowledges that within its local government area boundaries are the Traditional Lands of the Wonnarua people, the Awabakal people and the Darkinjung people. We acknowledge these Aboriginal peoples as the traditional custodians of the land on which our offices and operations are located, and pay our respects to Elders past and present. We also acknowledge all other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who now live within the Cessnock Local Government Area.*

# Page of Contents

<b>Section 1 .....</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>Section 4 .....</b>	<b>20</b>
FOREWORD .....	6	A SUSTAINABLE & HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT .....	20
Our Community Strategic Plan .....	6	Objective 3.1 - Protecting and enhancing the natural environment and the rural character of the area.....	21
Consultation.....	7	Objective 3.2 - Better utilisation of existing open space.....	21
Community Profile.....	8	Objective 3.3 - Better waste management and recycling.....	21
At a Glance .....	9	<b>Section 5 .....</b>	<b>24</b>
Our Vision .....	10	ACCESSIBLE INFRASTRUCTURE, SERVICES & FACILITIES .....	24
<b>Section 2 .....</b>	<b>12</b>	Objective 4.1 - Better transport links.....	25
A CONNECTED, SAFE & CREATIVE COMMUNITY ....	12	Objective 4.2 - Improving the road network.....	25
Objective 1.1 - Promoting social connections .....	13	Objective 4.3 - Improving access to health services locally .....	25
Objective 1.2 - Strengthening community's culture.....	13	<b>Section 6 .....</b>	<b>28</b>
Objective 1.3 - Promoting safe communities.....	13	CIVIC LEADERSHIP & EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE ....	28
Objective 1.4 - Fostering an articulate and creative community.....	13	Objective 5.1 - Fostering and supporting community leadership.....	29
<b>Section 3 .....</b>	<b>16</b>	Objective 5.2 - Encouraging more community participation in decision making.....	29
A SUSTAINABLE & PROSPEROUS ECONOMY.....	16	Objective 5.3 - Making Council more responsive to the community.....	29
Objective 2.1 - Diversifying local business options .....	17	<b>Section 7 .....</b>	<b>32</b>
Objective 2.2 - Achieving more sustainable employment opportunities.....	17	Monitoring our progress .....	32
Objective 2.3 - Increasing tourism opportunities and visitation in the area .....	17		

# Peace Park Weston



# Mayor's Message



## BOB PYNSENT MAYOR

*“Cessnock City Council is committed to continuing achieving the aspirations of our community members. The Cessnock 2023 Community Strategic Plan sets clear objectives which are a reflection of these aspirations. We are building a community we are proud of now and into the future.*

*As Council we must be guided by our community. This plan has been developed following extensive consultation commencing with a community survey of 500 residents in July 2009. Consultation continued in 2010 with a public debate, a series of sixteen workshops, a targeted survey, an online forum, telephone hotline and written submissions. All residents were given the opportunity to provide input including primary schools students who participated through a school art project.*

*Further engagement during 2013 confirmed these views reflected current community aspirations and additional work was undertaken to refine these aspirations in order to better reflect the future our community desires.*

*The strength of our planning underpins the success of our community to date and going forward. This plan clearly articulates the main priorities, setting out key responsibilities and outlining the desired outcomes. These outcomes have been presented in five sections and residents are encouraged to engage with this document to gain an understanding of how Council plans to meet to achieve each of these outcomes.*

*Accomplishing this vision for our community requires collaboration between Cessnock City Council, the NSW Government and the Federal Government. It also requires a commitment from non- government organisations, community groups and community members.*

*The Cessnock communities input and engagement with Council has been instrumental to the development of this plan. Thank you for your efforts in assisting us with preparing a plan which will meet the changing needs of our community, ensuring we remain thriving, attractive and welcoming. On behalf of the Council, I look forward to what can be achieved for our community over the next ten years and delivering positive outcomes.”*

# Section 1

# Foreword

## OUR COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

The Community Strategic Plan is the highest level plan that a council will prepare. The purpose of the plan is to identify the community's main priorities and aspirations for the future and to identify strategies for achieving these goals.

In doing this, the planning process will consider the issues and pressures that may affect the community and the level of resources that will realistically be available to achieve the community's aims and aspirations.

While a council has a custodial role in initiating, preparing and maintaining the Community Strategic Plan on behalf of the local government area, it is not wholly responsible for its implementation. Other partners, such as State agencies and community groups may also be engaged in delivering the long-term objectives of the plan.

### Statutory requirements

As a result of legislation enacted in October 2009, all NSW local councils are required by the *Local Government Act, 1993* to develop a long term community strategic plan. This must be done in consultation with the community.



Following is a summary of the requirements of section 402 of the *Local Government Act, 1993* :

- Each local government area is to have a Community Strategic Plan that has been developed and endorsed by the council.
- The Community Strategic Plan is to identify the main priorities and aspirations for the future of the local government area.
- The Community Strategic Plan must cover a minimum timeframe of 10 years.
- The Community Strategic Plan must establish strategic objectives together with strategies to achieve those objectives.
- It must address social, environmental, economic and civic leadership issues in an integrated manner.

- The council must ensure the Community Strategic Plan is adequately informed by relevant information relating to social, environmental, economic and civic leadership issues.
- It must be based on the social justice principles of equity, access, participation and rights.
- The Community Strategic Plan must give due regard to the State Plan and other relevant state and regional plans.
- Each council must prepare and implement a Community Engagement Strategy based on social justice principles for engagement with the local community in developing the Community Strategic Plan.
- Councils must provide the Departmental Chief Executive (Local Government) with a copy of the Community Strategic Plan and any amendment of the plan, within 28 days of the plan (or amendment) being endorsed.



## CONSULTATION

### The Process

Council adopted the community's first strategic plan in June 2011. The process started with a survey of residents in July 2009. This was followed, in 2010, by a public debate, a series of workshops, a targeted survey, an online forum, telephone hotline and written submissions. Primary school children also participated in this process through a school art project with more than 50 drawings submitted.

Further consultation in 2013, including a community survey and a series of workshops, confirmed that the plan still reflected the aspirations of the community; and provided feedback to refine the plan so that it better described the future that we all want.

In 2016 Council again sought input from the community via a community survey, on-line forum, listening posts and direct feedback at Council events to further refine the plan and ensure it reflected the aspirations of our community.

The Cessnock 2027 community strategic plan outlines what you have told us you would like to see (by the year 2027) and the direction we should head.

Cessnock 2027 is structured around five themes - being the desired outcomes identified during the community engagement processes:

- A connected, safe and creative community: developing safe and connected neighbourhoods that support healthy and fulfilling lifestyles for people of all ages
- A sustainable and prosperous economy: achieving long term economic security through a mix of diverse business and employment options
- A sustainable and healthy environment: promoting a sustainable balance between development and preserving our natural environment
- Accessible infrastructure, services and facilities: increasing the range and accessibility of the services we need along with investment in improved infrastructure.

- Civic leadership and effective governance: ensuring that we have strong leadership and good governance and that we foster community participation in decision-making.

Together residents, visitors, property owners, business owners, community organisations and government are committed to the strategic directions and desired outcomes in the Cessnock 2027 community strategic plan. We will work together to create the thriving, attractive and welcoming community we aspire to.

We will work together to create a thriving, attractive and welcoming community.

*Photo (above left). School children on the way to class.*

*Photo. Victoria Steet, Kurri Kurri.*

## COMMUNITY PROFILE

### About Cessnock City local government area

The Local Government Area of Cessnock (Cessnock City) covers approximately 1,950 square kilometres within the Hunter Valley of New South Wales, approximately 120 kilometres north of Sydney and 40 kilometres west of Newcastle.

The local government area is predominantly situated on the lands of the Wonnarua Nation, and within its boundaries are many significant Aboriginal sites. Wonnarua means “land of hills and plains”.

European settlement since the 1820's saw the establishment of pastoral lands, the coal mining industry, the viticulture industry and, more recently, tourism.

Whilst mining was the principal industrial base and source of employment in the Cessnock area for the first half of the twentieth century, changes to the mining industry, including automation and the introduction of sophisticated computerised equipment, led to the closure of the vast majority of mines in the area.

The decline of mining has been paralleled by growth in the wine industry. The Hunter Valley vineyards in the Cessnock local government area is Australia's oldest wine region and one of the most famous, with around 4,500 acres under vine. The vineyards of Pokolbin, Mount View and Allandale, with their rich volcanic soils tended by entrepreneurial vignerons, are also the focus of a thriving tourism industry.

As well as vineyards and wineries there are fine restaurants, motels, cabins, guest houses, concerts and galleries. Wine-related tourism has also created opportunities for other attractions, such as the historic Marthaville Arts and Crafts Centre, Wollombi Village, the Richmond Main Mining Museum and the Richmond Vale Railway.

Other primary industries in Cessnock City include beef and poultry.

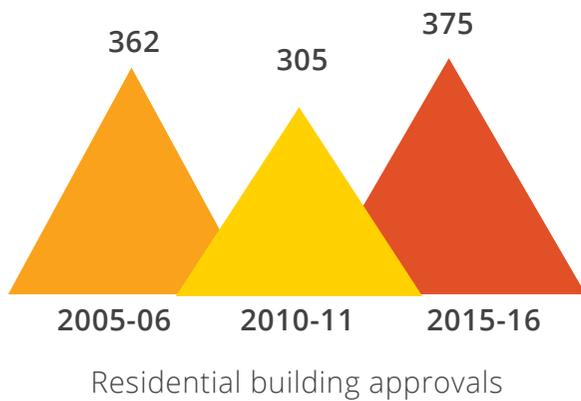
Light and secondary industry were a feature of the City's recent economic development, with the processing of explosive equipment and mining support services now a significant source of employment in the area.

Support infrastructure across the City now includes two hospitals, two TAFE campuses, community health services, a range of childcare options, aged care and other community support services. Each of the City's towns and villages (which are linked by large expanses of natural vegetation) has a range of sporting facilities and parks.

*Photo. Community meeting at Cessnock Library.*

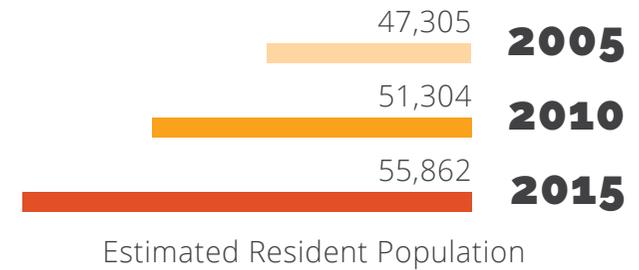


## AT A GLANCE



**\$1,930m**

Gross Regional Product at 30 June 2015



**15,592**

Travel to work by car



**35%**

Households have a mortgage



**\$1,042**

Median weekly household income

**60.3%**

Broadband or dialup internet



**14.3%**

Accommodation and food services is the largest employer in the LGA

Source: Cessnock Community Profile, Cessnock Economic Profile

# Our Vision

Cessnock will be a cohesive and welcoming community living in an attractive and sustainable rural environment with a diversity of business and employment opportunities supported by accessible infrastructure and services which effectively meet community needs.

In summary, the vision is:

**Cessnock -  
thriving, attractive  
and welcoming.**



## Community Vision

During workshops held to develop the original community strategic plan participants were asked to visualise Cessnock and the surrounding area in ten years time and imagine the place they would like it to be. During the most recent engagement process, the community were again asked about what aspects of the area should be retained and what important changes should be made to benefit future generations.

The strategic directions outlined in this document reflect the future the community aspires to.

## Priorities

Community research conducted during 2016 identified the following priorities for residents and their families:

- employment opportunities
- maintenance of roads
- health services
- safety
- community facilities
- public transport



These priorities have been reflected in the objectives that sit under the key themes of:

- Our Community
- Our Economy
- Our Environment
- Our Infrastructure & Services
- Our Leadership & Governance

“ ..what important changes should be made to benefit future generations.”

*Photo. Workshop at Cessnock Performing Arts Centre.*

# A connected, safe & creative community

## Community's Desired Outcome

This desired outcome relates to community wellbeing, connectedness and safety. During the initial community engagement program participants expressed the desire for a healthy, active, engaged and cohesive community that maintained its unique local identity and friendliness into the future.

### State Plan

This desired outcome aligns with the following goals from the State Plan - NSW 2021:

- Build liveable centres.
- Increase opportunities for people to look after their own neighbourhoods and environments.
- Make it easier for people to be involved in their communities.
- Increase opportunities for seniors in NSW to fully participate in community life.
- Foster opportunity and partnership with Aboriginal people.



- Enhance cultural, creative, sporting and recreation opportunities.
- Improve road safety.
- Prevent and reduce the level of crime.

### Regional Plans

The Hunter Regional Plan (2016) identified revitalisation of existing areas as a mechanism to create thriving communities that are great places to live.

The NSW Department of Justice's Strategic Plan 2015-19 aims to create a safe, just and resilient place for the people of NSW, recognising that communities are stronger when they participate in and celebrate arts and culture.

### Responsibility & Contributions

The following individuals and organisations can contribute to achieving our community's objectives and strategic directions:

- Individuals
- Community groups
- Business groups
- Tourism groups
- Not-for-profit organisations
- Cessnock City Council
- Hunter Joint Organisation
- NSW Government
- Federal Government



*Objective 1.1:*

## Promoting social connections

### *Strategic Directions*

- We are connected to others in our neighbourhood and across the local government area.
- Our community has opportunities to celebrate together.

*Objective 1.2:*

## Strengthening community culture

### *Strategic Directions*

- Our community is aware of and has access to community services.
- Our residents show pride in our local government area.
- Our community organisations have opportunities to work together to develop and deliver services.
- We have adequate multi-purpose sporting and recreation facilities.
- Our facilities are utilised by community groups.



*Objective 1.3:*

## Promoting safe communities

### *Strategic Directions*

- Our residents and visitors feel safe in the Cessnock local government area.
- Our CBD areas are safe at night.
- Our roads are safe for motorists and pedestrians.

*Objective 1.4:*

## Fostering an articulate and creative community

### *Strategic Directions*

- We have thriving cultural precincts throughout the local government area that celebrate our heritage and culture.
- We have a diverse program of cultural and heritage activities.

## How we will measure progress

The following targets are adopted as they are measurable (sourced from the ABS Census, government agencies, Council operational data and community research) as well as being generally aligned with the desired outcomes of the community strategic plan.

While Council is not wholly responsible for the delivery of the community strategic plan objectives, Council has a custodial role to examine the progress that has been made towards the achievement of the community's desired outcomes.

Measures	Context/Benchmark	Base	Target
Community Wellbeing	This measure is from a random survey of residents where they are asked to rate their agreement with the statement "The area offers a good quality of life" on a scale of 1-5, where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree. In 2016 the rating was 3.66 (compared with 3.76 in 2012).	3.66 2016	Improve
Socio-Economic Index	This Socio-Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA) measures the relative level of socio-economic disadvantage based on a range of Census characteristics including income, educational attainment, unemployment and occupations. A score higher than 1,000 means a lower level of disadvantage and a score lower than 1,000 means a higher level of disadvantage. In 2011 Cessnock local government area had an Index of 936.4 (compared to 938.7 in 2006).	936.4	Improve
Malicious Damage to Property	This measure is the number of incidents of malicious property damage to property in the Cessnock local government area from the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research. In 2015 there were 601 incidents and Cessnock local government area had the 43rd highest number of incidents (out of 140 local government areas) compared with 802 incidents in 2011.	601 (Ranking 43) 2015	Maintain

Residents agreement with the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree.

	2012	2014	2016	Target
If there was a problem in my community, people would band together to solve it	3.40	3.52	3.54	Maintain
There is strong community spirit in the Cessnock Area	3.39	3.53	3.38	Maintain
Quality housing is both available and affordable	3.88	3.21	3.11	Maintain
Facilities and services for children are adequate	2.85	2.86	2.74	Improve
Facilities and services for youth are adequate	2.27	2.59	2.40	Improve
Facilities and services for the aged are adequate	2.93	3.00	2.98	Improve
Arts, entertainment and culture are well-catered for	3.39	3.28	3.33	Maintain
It is a safe place to live	3.12	3.26	3.16	Maintain

Cessnock City Council Community Research 2012, 2014 and 2016



### *Council's supporting strategies, plans and studies*

- Cessnock City Council Road Safety Strategic Plan 2014-18.
- Cessnock City Cycling Strategy, Cessnock City Council 2016.
- Library Review, Report & Strategy, Cessnock City Council
- Recreation & Open Space Strategic Plan 2017
- Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan 2016

# Section 3

## A sustainable & prosperous economy

### Community's Desired Outcome

This desired outcome identifies the need to attract a diverse range of businesses, industries and services together with improved access to education, training and employment opportunities to ensure we have a sustainable and prosperous economy in Cessnock in 2027.

### State Plan

This desired outcome aligns with the following goals from the State Plan - NSW 2021:

- Drive economic growth in regional NSW
- Strengthen the NSW skill base
- Improve education and learning outcomes for students.

### Regional Plans

The Hunter Regional Plan (2016) identified the following regional priorities for the Cessnock local government area:

- Support the visitor and agricultural economies by conducting a land use assessment across the Viticulture Critical Industry Cluster.
- Investigate the region-shaping potential of the Hunter Expressway.

- Continue delivery of the Branxton Sub-regional Plan.
- Implement the Cessnock CBD Masterplan.
- Develop and implement a masterplan for Kurri Kurri CBD

The Regional Development Framework (prepared by the NSW Department of Industry, Skills & Regional Development) seeks to activate local economies across NSW through the provision of services and infrastructure and the support of regional centres.

While the Department of Education's Five Year Strategic Plan (2012-17) identified the following targets for rural and regional NSW:

- Increase the proportion of 20-24 year olds who have attained a Year 12 qualification or above;
- Increase the number of completions in higher level VET qualifications; and
- Increase the number of apprenticeship and traineeship completions.

### Responsibility & Contributions

The following individuals and organisations can contribute to achieving our community's objectives and strategic directions:

- Community groups
- Businesses
- Tourism groups
- Not-for-profit organisations
- Cessnock City Council
- Hunter Joint Organisation
- NSW Government
- Federal Government



*Objective 2.1:*

## Diversifying local business options

### *Strategic Directions*

- Our local government area is attractive to and supportive of businesses.
- We have a diversity of businesses and industries across the local government area.
- We have adequate industrial and employment lands and thriving commercial precincts.



*Objective 2.2:*

## Achieving more sustainable employment opportunities

### *Strategic Directions*

- We have learning opportunities for people of all ages.
- We have employment opportunities in the local government area.

*Objective 2.3:*

## Increasing tourism opportunities and visitation in the area

### *Strategic Directions*

- We have a range of diverse visitor experiences across the entire local government area.
- Our local government area is attractive to visitors.



## How we will measure our progress

The following targets are adopted as they are measurable (sourced from the ABS Census, government agencies, Council operational data and community research) as well as being generally aligned with the desired outcomes of the community strategic plan.

While Council is not wholly responsible for the delivery of the community strategic plan objectives, Council has a custodial role to examine the progress that has been made towards the achievement of the community's desired outcomes.

Measures	Context/Benchmark	Base	Target
Education	This measure is the percentage of the population with a post-school qualification (degree, diploma or vocational) This measure is obtained from the ABS Census and in 2011 the comparative NSW figure was 45.9%.	36.7% 2011	Improve
Unemployment Rate	This is the measure of residents actively seeking employment but unable to find work. It is published quarterly by the Dept of Education, Employment & Workplace Relations. In September 2016 the unemployment rate for Cessnock local government area was 7.9% (compared with 5.2% for NSW and 5.7% for Australia).	7.9% Sept 2016 (cf. 5.2% NSW)	Improve (relative to NSW)
Tourist Visitation and Expenditure	This measure is the total number of visitors (overnight and day trips) and their total expenditure in the local government area from Destination NSW and Tourism Research Australia's National Visitor Survey and International Visitor Survey. In 2015 there were 1,050,000 visitors with a total spend of \$294m (compared with 9,399,000 visitors to Hunter with total spend of \$2,319m).	1,050,000 visitors \$294m spend 2015	Maintain

Resident agreement with the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree.

	2012	2014	2016	Target
High quality and environmentally friendly industries are encouraged	3.08	3.11	3.15	Maintain
Industry and business development is working well	2.79	2.83	2.89	Improve
There are enough employment opportunities	2.40	2.16	2.16	Improve
Education and training opportunities are good	3.02	2.98	2.80	Improve
Tourism is promoted well	3.93	3.99	4.09	Maintain
The vineyards play an important role in the local economy	4.49	4.45	4.51	Maintain
Conferences and events are important for the area	4.25	4.28	4.40	Maintain

Cessnock City Council Community Research 2012, 2014 and 2016



### *Council's supporting strategies, plans and studies*

- Cessnock CBD Masterplan, Cessnock City Council 2012
- Destination Management Plan - Tourism Hunter
- Destination Management Plan - Cessnock & Singleton LGAs
- Economic Development Strategy, Cessnock City Council

# Section 4

## A sustainable & healthy environment

### Community's Desired Outcome

This desired outcome focuses on the conservation and preservation of the natural environment whilst balancing the impact of development to ensure a sustainable and healthy community.

#### State Plan

This desired outcome aligns with the following goals from the State Plan - NSW 2021:

- Protect our natural environment.

### Regional Plans

The Hunter Regional Plan (2016) identified protecting the environment and building greater resilience to natural hazards and climate change as mechanisms to ensure a biodiversity-rich natural environment.

### Responsibility & Contributions

The following individuals and organisations can contribute to achieving our community's objectives and strategic directions:

- Community
- Community groups (including LandCare)
- Businesses
- Sporting organisations
- Not-for-profit organisations
- Cessnock City Council
- Hunter Joint Organisation
- NSW Government (including Environmental Protection Authority, Office of Environment & Heritage, Local Land Services)



*Objective 3.1:*

## Protecting & enhancing the natural environment & the rural character of the area

### *Strategic Directions*

- Our area's rural character and heritage is protected.
- Our community is aware of the value of natural resources and biodiversity.
- Our environmental amenity is protected and enhanced.
- Our waterways and catchments are maintained and enhanced.



*Objective 3.2:*

## Better utilisation of existing open space

### *Strategic Directions*

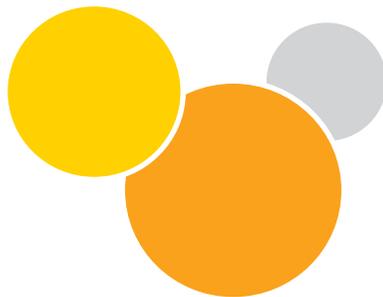
- Our open spaces are distributed where people live.
- We have green corridors connecting our open space areas.
- Our open spaces have suitable amenities and plenty of shade.

*Objective 3.3:*

## Better waste management and recycling

### *Strategic Directions*

- We divert more of our waste for recycling or re-processing.



## How we measure our progress

The following targets are adopted as they are measurable (sourced from the ABS Census, government agencies, Council operational data and community research) as well as being generally aligned with the desired outcomes of the community strategic plan.

While Council is not wholly responsible for the delivery of the community strategic plan objectives, Council has a custodial role to examine the progress that has been made towards the achievement of the community's desired outcomes.

Measures	Context/Benchmark	Base	Target
Open Space & Green Corridors	This measure is the number of lots zoned residential (R2, R3, and RU5) within 500m of open space and green corridors (zoned RE1, RE2 and E1). This measure identifies the number and proportion of residents with access to open space for passive and active recreation purposes. This measure is sourced from Council's geographic information system.	16,675 lots 80.0% (2016)	Maintain
Conservation Land	This measure is the area of land protected for conservation purposes (i.e. land zoned E1, E2 and E3 plus land identified for biodiversity offsets). This measure is sourced from Council's geographic information system.	60,759 ha 2017	Increase
Waste & Recycling	This is a measure of the number of tonnes recycled and re-processed via the kerbside recycling and organics collection service. The kerbside recycling service was provided to 21,022 properties in 2015-16. This measure is sourced from Hunter Resource Recovery.	5,501t 2015-16	Increase

Resident agreement with the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree.

	2012	2014	2016	Target
The area has an attractive appearance	3.23	3.50	3.49	Maintain
The natural environment is well managed	3.06	3.26	3.14	Maintain
Environmental issues are handled well	2.89	3.03	2.71	Improve
The bushland that supports a diversity of native plants and animals is valuable	4.19	4.11	4.04	Maintain
The area's heritage is well conserved	3.62	3.61	3.65	Maintain
Development overall is well planned and well managed	2.71	2.85	2.82	Improve
Residential development is well managed	2.76	2.94	2.89	Improve
There are enough good quality open spaces	3.21	3.34	3.35	Maintain
There is a wide range of recreation and leisure opportunities	3.10	2.98	3.07	Maintain
Waste collection and disposal are well managed	3.61	3.64	3.67	Maintain



### *Council's supporting strategies, plans and studies*

- Aquatic Needs Analysis 2014
- Black Creek Flood Study 2010
- Carbon Management & Energy Reduction Plan
- Cessnock Biodiversity Strategy
- Cessnock CBD Masterplan 2012
- Cemetery Strategy 2009
- Cessnock City Flood Plain Risk Management Study & Plan 2016
- Cessnock Heritage Study 1994
- Cessnock Local Environmental Plan 2011
- Citywide Settlement Strategy 2010
- On-Site Sewage Management System Strategy 2012
- Plans of Management
- Recreation & Open Space Strategic Plan 2017.
- Waste Management Strategy 2014-19
- Weed Action Plan 2015-20

# Section 5

## Accessible infrastructure, services & facilities

### Community's Desired Outcome

This desired outcome identifies the local, state and federal infrastructure, services and facilities needed to serve the current and future community of Cessnock while ensuring there is adequate access to these facilities and services.

#### State Plan

This desired outcome aligns with the following goals from the State Plan - NSW 2021:

- Invest in critical infrastructure,
- Keep people healthy and out of hospital.

#### Regional Plans

The Hunter Regional Transport Plan 2014 identified the following objectives for the Cessnock local government area:

- Improve opportunities for walking and cycling;
- Improve public transport services (including the addition of bus connections from Cessnock to Morisset Station to significantly reduce travel time to Sydney); and
- Manage road capacity and network safety (as a result of the completion of the Hunter Expressway).

The Hunter Regional Plan (2016) identified the following regional priorities for the Cessnock local government area:

- Protect regionally significant transport corridors including the Newcastle Freight Rail Bypass.
- Plan for, and deliver regional cycleway links along the Richmond Vale Rail Trail.

Consistent with Objective 4.3 of this document, the NSW Rural Health Plan Towards 2021 identified as a key direction improved access to health services as close to home as possible for rural populations. The Hunter Regional Plan 2036 identified health as one of the fastest growing sectors of the economy and recognised the potential to grow allied health services on land around hospitals at Kurri Kurri and Cessnock.

#### Responsibility & Contributions

The following individuals and organisations can contribute to achieving our community's objectives and strategic directions:

- Community groups
- Not-for-profit organisations
- Private transport operators
- Cessnock City Council
- Hunter Joint Organisation
- NSW Government (e.g. Transport NSW, Roads & Maritime Services, Department of Health)
- Federal Government



### Objective 4.1:

## Better transport links

### Strategic Directions

- We have access to a range of public and community transport within the local government area.
- We have access to a range of public and community transport beyond the local government area.
- We have a new passenger train service in Cessnock.
- Our communities are linked by walking and bike tracks.



### Objective 4.2:

## Improving the road network

### Strategic Directions

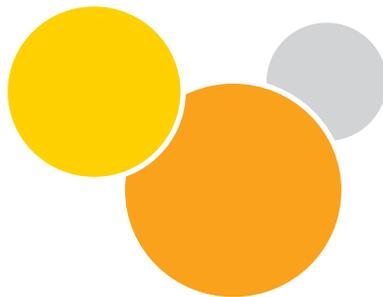
- We have a quality road network.
- We have managed the traffic impact of the Hunter Expressway on local communities.

### Objective 4.3:

## Improved access to health services locally

### Strategic Directions

- We have better availability of and access to hospitals and health services in the local government area.
- We have better availability of and access to general practitioners and dental services in the local government area.
- We have regional standard health services, facilities and health professionals.



## How we measure our progress

The following targets are adopted as they are measurable (sourced from the ABS Census, government agencies, Council operational data and community research) as well as being generally aligned with the desired outcomes of the community strategic plan.

While Council is not wholly responsible for the delivery of the community strategic plan objectives, Council has a custodial role to examine the progress that has been made towards the achievement of the community's desired outcomes.

Measures	Context/Benchmark	Base	Target
Public Transport Usage	This measure is the annual distance and percentage of trips made by public transport (trains and bus) by residents of the local government area. This date is sourced from the Household Travel Survey.	75,000km 3% 2013-14	Improve
Pavement Network Condition	The Overall Condition Index (OCI) is a measure of urban road quality - it reflects the quality of the pavement structure (not the surface condition/ driveability). It excludes unsealed roads. At 30 June 2016 the average OCI was 2.72. Overall Condition Index (OCI) is used to classify Council's road network condition. OCI is based on a scale of 1-5, in line with best practice asset management principles (where 1 is excellent, 2 is good, 3 is average, 4 is poor and 5 is very poor).	2.72 Average-good 2016	Improve
Ratio of GPs per 100,000 population	This measure is the number of general practitioners (GPs) per 100,000 population in the Cessnock Local Government Area. This data is sourced from the Social Atlas produced by the Public Health Information Development Unit of Torrens University Australia. The industry benchmark is 1 GP per 1,400 population and in 2011 the Cessnock LGA had 1 GP per 1,418 people.	71.1 2011	Improve
Hospital Emergency Treatments	This measure is the time the 95th percentile of emergency and urgent patients waited to start treatment at Cessnock and Kurri Kurri Hospitals. The benchmarks are within 10 minutes and 30 minutes respectively. In the period July - September 2016 the time that the 95th percentile of emergency patients and urgent patients waited to commence treatment in NSW was 41 minutes and 103 minutes respectively. This data is sourced from the Bureau of Health Information.	25min & 79min Cessnock N/A & 54min Kurri Kurri July-Sept 2016	Improve

Resident agreement with the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree.

	2012	2014	2016	Target
There is enough public transport	2.59	2.71	2.64	Improve
The road network is effective and in good repair	1.45	1.91	1.87	Improve
Health facilities are sufficient	2.64	2.80	2.69	Improve

Cessnock City Council Community Research 2012, 2014 and 2016



*Council's supporting strategies, plans and studies*

- Asset Management Policy
- Asset Management Strategy
- Asset Management Plans
- Cessnock Airport Strategic Plan 2014
- Contributions Plans

# Section 6

## Civic leadership & effective governance

### Community's Desired Outcome

This desired outcome focuses on the need for strong civic leadership and effective governance with an engaged community actively participating in decision making processes affecting their future.

### State Plan

This desired outcome aligns with the following goals from the State Plan - NSW 2021:

- Restore trust in State and Local Government as a service provider.
- Involve the community in decision making on government policy, services and projects.

- Improve government transparency by increasing access to government information.

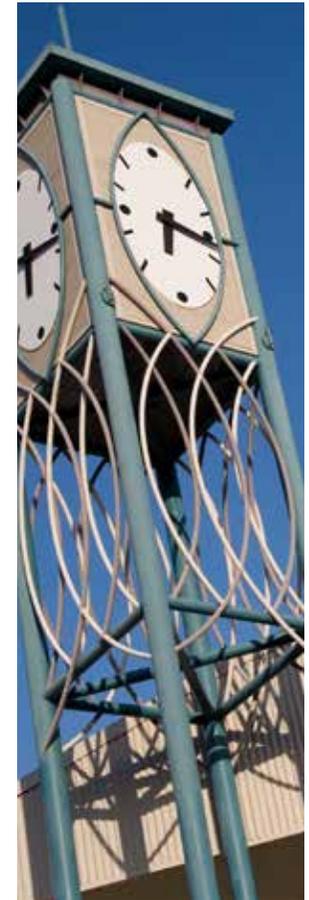
### Regional Plans

The Background Paper on Joint Organisations (2016) noted that Joint Organisations would provide a forum for councils and State Government to work together on regional planning and help to provide better services and infrastructure for regional communities through resource sharing, lowering costs and reducing red tape.

### Responsibility & Contributions

The following individuals and organisations can contribute to achieving our community's objections and strategic directions:

- Community
- Community groups
- Businesses
- Training organisations
- Not-for-profit organisations
- Cessnock City Council
- Hunter Joint Organisation
- NSW Government (e.g. Dept of Premier & Cabinet, Auditor General, Dept of Education & Training)
- Federal Government



*Objective 5.1:*

## Fostering and supporting community leadership

### *Strategic Directions*

- We have well-trained and qualified leaders in our community and in our workforce.
- Our young people have aspirations to become leaders.
- Our Council is committed to implementing our community's vision.



*Objective 5.2:*

## Encouraging more community participation in decision making

### *Strategic Directions*

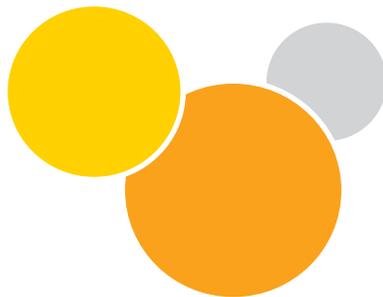
- We are informed about our community.
- We are involved in decisions affecting our community.
- We have improved relationships between different levels of government.

*Objective 5.3:*

## Making Council more responsive to the community

### *Strategic Directions*

- Our Council is responsive to the community.
- Our Council's processes are efficient and transparent.



## How we measure our progress

The following targets are adopted as they are measurable (sourced from the ABS Census, government agencies, Council operational data and community research) as well as being generally aligned with the desired outcomes of the community strategic plan.

While Council is not wholly responsible for the delivery of the community strategic plan objectives, Council has a custodial role to examine the progress that has been made towards the achievement of the community's desired outcomes.

Measures	Context/Benchmark	Base	Target
Participation	This measure is the percentage of people aged 15+ who volunteer for an organisation or group. In the Australian Bureau of Statistic's 2011 Census, there was a total of 5,015 people volunteering for an organisation or group in the Cessnock Local Government Area (compared with 16.9% in NSW and 17.8% in Australia).	12.5% 2011	Improve
Governance	This is the number of complaints received by the Office of Local Government regarding Cessnock City Council and the percentage of the total complaints across all councils received by the Office. In 2014-15 the Office of Local Government received 9 complaints about Cessnock City Council (0.9% of total complaints).	9 2014-15 0.9% of total 2014-15	Reduce

Resident agreement with the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree.

	2012	2014	2016	Target
People volunteer and get involved in their community	3.29	3.48	3.44	Maintain
The opportunity exists for me to be involved in making decisions about my community	3.04	3.15	3.16	Maintain
Laws and regulations are enforced consistently and fairly	2.96	3.26	3.11	Maintain
There is good cooperation between all levels of government in the area	2.50	2.74	2.76	Improve
There is a clear plan and direction for the future	2.41	2.74	2.76	Improve

Cessnock City Council Community Research 2012, 2014 and 2016



### *Council's supporting strategies, plans and studies*

- Communications & Engagement Strategy, Cessnock City Council
- Customer Service Strategy (under development)
- Strategic Audit Plan

# Monitoring our progress



### At a glance

The Cessnock 2027 community strategic plan belongs to all Cessnock residents and relies on all of us to achieve the outcomes we seek in the future.

Council, along with the community, has an important role in advocating for the assistance of State and Federal governments in achieving the desired outcomes and objectives for which they have responsibility such as education, public transport, health services and policing.

In order to play its part in implementing the Cessnock 2027 community strategic plan; Council will undertake the following planning and reporting activities:

- Development of a four-year Delivery Program - the 2017-2021 Delivery Program details all of the principal activities to be undertaken by Council to meet its statutory obligations and deliver on the objectives and strategic directions outlined in the Cessnock 2027 community strategic plan.
- One-year Operational Plan - this effectively is the Council's annual budget and identifies the specific strategic projects and services that will be funded each year.
- Regular Council Review - the General Manager will report to the Council at least every six months to outline progress that has been achieved in implementing its Delivery Program.
- Annual Progress Review - the Council will prepare an Annual Report summarising its operations and initiatives during the year.



- Community Research - the Council will undertake independent community research every two years to gauge the community's perceptions of progress against the community strategic plan.
- End-of-term Report - at the final meeting prior to the local government elections, the outgoing Council will be presented with a report detailing the progress that has been made towards the outcomes and objectives in the community strategic plan.

## Conclusion

Cessnock City Council has adopted the Cessnock 2027 community strategic plan on behalf of the community and is looking forward to working in partnership to make our community's vision a reality.

Feedback and suggestions on the Cessnock 2027 community strategic plan are always welcome and should be directed to:



The General Manager  
Cessnock City Council  
PO Box 152  
Cessnock NSW 2325



Or  
Email: [council@cessnock.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@cessnock.nsw.gov.au)



Or  
Telephone: 2993 4100.



# Glossary



## Appendix 1

Community Strategic Plan - The community's vision for the future of the local government area. This document has a ten-year timeframe. The original plan (Cessnock 2020) was adopted in October 2010, the second iteration of the community strategic plan (Cessnock 2023) was adopted in June 2013 and this plan (Cessnock 2027) will be adopted in June 2017.

Comprises:

- 1 x Community Vision - an overarching statement of what our community desires for the local government area.
- 5 x Desired Outcomes - our community has articulated what it would like to see for the local government area grouped into five major themes (of community, economy, environment, infrastructure and governance).
- 16 x Objectives - our community has identified the 3-4 ambitions under each of the desired outcomes.
- 44 x Strategic Directions - our community has articulated the course in which it wishes to head in order to achieve its desired outcomes. The strategic directions start with the word "Our" or "We" to demonstrate their inclusiveness - i.e. we are all a part of this.
- Community Strategic Plan Measures - These measures relate to the local government area (and do not reflect the performance of Council).

These sections include a description of the measure some context/background, the base line (i.e. what the measure is now) and the direction that is being targeted (i.e. where we want the measure to be in 10 years' time). These measures will be used to assess progress towards the outcomes and objectives in the Community Strategic Plan.

Delivery Program - The Delivery Program is Cessnock City Council's contribution to the achievement of the Community Strategic Plan. Note that Council is one of many who will contribute towards our community's vision (others include: individuals, community groups, businesses, not-for-profit groups, State & Federal government and government agencies, etc.).

The Delivery Program has a four year timeframe - in line with the term of the elected Council. (A council is elected in September and must adopt a 4-year Delivery Program by the following June).

Comprises:

- Deliverables - These describe the programs, projects and services that Council will provide (during the term of the elected Council). The Deliverables start with a verb (e.g. "Commence", "Complete", "Provide", etc.) and progress against Deliverables is reported quarterly to Council.

Deliverables are linked to the 16 Community Strategic Plan objectives (and also include statutory requirements).



# Appendix 2

Feedback from the community during 2016 and 2017 on the most important things that need to be considered in the community strategic plan:

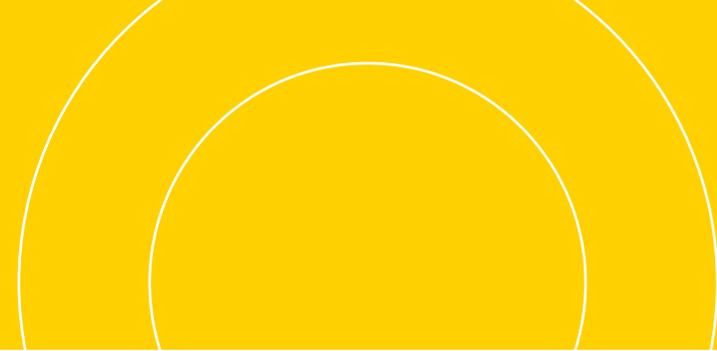
## **A connected, safe & creative community**

- An inclusive, healthy and creative community
- More entertainment/things for young people (kids/teenagers) to do
- Programs for young people to engage them in their community
- Support and training for not-for-profit and community groups
- Strengthen the libraries' role as a social hub
- Upgraded parks and playgrounds (like Peace Park)
- Events like Spring Awakening
- More cultural events
- Encourage community markets
- Pride in surroundings (e.g. Tidy Towns, Clean Up Australia Day)
- Infrastructure that promotes the community/families getting together (parks, events, etc.)
- Feeling and being safe
- Improve lighting in public areas

- More police
- Young driver training courses
- Ensure facilities are accessible to less able-bodied people
- Address the drug problem (which results in anti-social behaviours)

## **A prosperous & sustainable economy**

- Local jobs (employing locals)
- Encourage more industry to create much-needed jobs
- More and better-funded schools
- Programs to support young people transition into the workforce
- Support businesses to grow and diversity
- Diversity the economy - we need more than wine and tourism
- Promote creativity in the business community
- Emphasise tourism in the towns
- Promote a new generation of agricultural producers
- Develop main streets
- Cheaper rental accommodation



### **A healthy & sustainable environment**

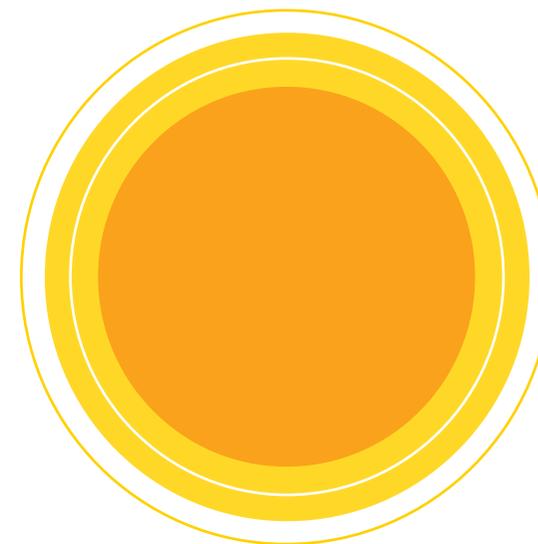
- Respect for the environment
- Retain environmental qualities (build/develop less, look at the overall impacts)
- Connectivity of environmental areas for wildlife
- Retain/plant more trees
- Repair riparian zones and rehabilitate bushland
- More parks
- A beautiful regional park for people to enjoy
- More playgrounds and cycleways
- Outdoor gym facilities
- Focus on renewable energy (e.g. solar)
- Encourage recycling/re-use
- Introduce green waste service
- More opportunities for re-use and recycling

### **Accessible infrastructure, services & facilities**

- More footpaths, walkways, cycleways
- Transport
- Public transport - more buses
- Bring back the train to Newcastle
- Roads
- Access from Cessnock to the Hunter Expressway
- Better roads & bridges
- Car parking
- Kerb & guttering
- Fix potholes
- Safer roads
- Health
- Infrastructure for an ageing population (e.g. hospitals, nursing homes)
- Retain and improve local hospitals
- Improve local hospitals so they attract the best medical personnel
- Better ambulance services
- More doctors
- Better phone reception

### **Civic leadership & effective governance**

- Commitment
- Strong leadership
- Transparency in reporting and in expenditure of public money
- Community question time during Council meetings
- Community's vision being implemented
- Integration of community, economy and environment
- More people volunteering, getting involved





# Appendix 3

2009 Workshop comments about the Cessnock local government area of the future.

## Services

- More equitable distribution of services across the local government area
- More affordable housing estates
- Cluster 'like' services together
- Lessen the segregation and distance between shops so that less travel is required
- Ensure services provision grows as the population of the community grows

## Transport

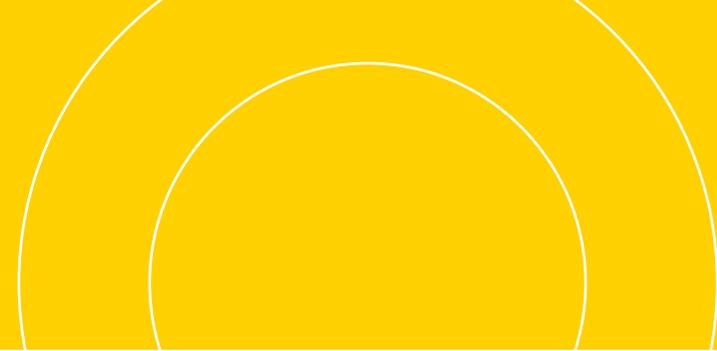
- Better public transport in Cessnock and improve accessibility in and out of the area (via air, roads and fast rail)
- More accessible community transport opportunities
- Integrated public transport timetables
- Increased number and better cycleway networks through Cessnock
- A planned maintenance schedule for quality road improvements in the area
- Remove heavy vehicle traffic out of the CBD

## Health care

- Long term security and expansion of local health services
- A local hospital with a maternity ward
- Adequate provision of child care services
- Better facilities for kids with disabilities
- Improved access to health services for all people but in particular aged care
- Support services for elderly including adequate provision of retirement villages
- After hours General Practitioner services in all local communities

## Community and lifestyle

- Provide more affordable cultural activities/facilities available for all age groups
- Improve safety through greater police presence and monitoring of CCTV
- Develop a more diverse shopping mix
- More and improved community celebrations including multicultural events and Australia Day
- Build and improve community image
- More participation of community leaders in programs such as this



- Need a larger population to support services
- Maintain local identity and improve sense of community pride
- Better early intervention services
- Raise awareness about the community activities and facilities available
- Use existing spaces and facilities more effectively
- Reduce community apathy
- Better community integration and cohesion between Cessnock and other areas
- Active and vibrant arts community
- Engage and celebrate the local Aboriginal community's heritage
- Acquire green space for the future - open recreational community space including parks, gardens, cycle paths, active and passive spaces and community pools
- Encourage engagement of youth
- Maintain current village lifestyle
- Great North Road heritage listing
- Remove the gaol - major community issue

#### Communication and community participation

- Better technological forms of communication
- Council website should be a forum for the community to provide comments
- Council appropriately notify ratepayers about community events and consultation activities/meetings
- Greater feedback to community from Council

#### Natural environment

- Education about environmental care including through awareness raising activities such as posters
- Rehabilitation of mining sites
- Monitoring of pollution levels by industry and big businesses
- Create community gardens
- Invest in alternative energy sources
- Encourage environmental sustainability
- Improve regularity of rubbish and recycling collections
- Maintain a quality scenic landscape
- Regulation to protect rural environments

- Improve drainage and prevent pollution of waterways by installing grates over drains
- More playgrounds, parks, trees and shade
- Better fire hazard reduction planning across all levels of government and agencies

#### Built environment

- Maintain and create more recreational areas and public gardens/parks
- Retain villages by ensuring rates go back into local infrastructure
- Improve kerb and guttering
- Improve visual aesthetics of the whole area including tree replacement, upgrades of main streets, place power underground
- Extend footpaths and complete gaps in the footpath network
- Find the right balance of development
- More public toilets/access to toilets through better signage
- Improve street lighting
- Maintain community facilities better - including technology
- Review State Government planning decisions

## Economy

- Create local diverse job opportunities across the LGA
- Section 94 contributions to be spent locally
- Strong service industry
- Vibrant profitable wine related tourism industry
- Need to develop strategy to take opportunity from F3 extension
- Understanding Cessnock's point of difference
- Encourage mid-week activity for tourists
- Better destination marketing - strategic branding
- More council funding for tourism
- Retaining for older workers
- Mentoring programs
- Consider impacts of reduction in coal mining employment
- Tourism to be expanded to include history/heritage of the LGA
- Equal distribution of funding across the LGA
- Rates to be spent in local areas

## Education

- Develop a hospitality training college
- Provide greater access and range of education and training service providers

## Leadership

- Respect and recognition of different areas in the LGA
- Get rid of party politics and have a less bureaucratic Council
- More input by the Vineyards District Advisory Committee
- More effective DA approval system - quicken development process
- Improve coordination between surrounding councils
- Improve responsiveness of the planning department within Council
- Educate public on election processes and the system for voting
- Improve accountability of Council
- Better Councillor representation and support for smaller areas
- Develop local/village community strategic plans





**CESSNOCK CITY COUNCIL**



62-78 Vincent Street  
Cessnock, NSW  
Australia



Contact:  
tel:0249934100



Online:  
[council@cessnock.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@cessnock.nsw.gov.au)  
[www.cessnock.nsw.gov.au](http://www.cessnock.nsw.gov.au)