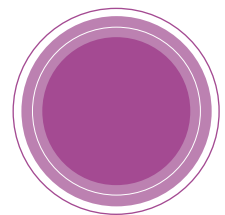
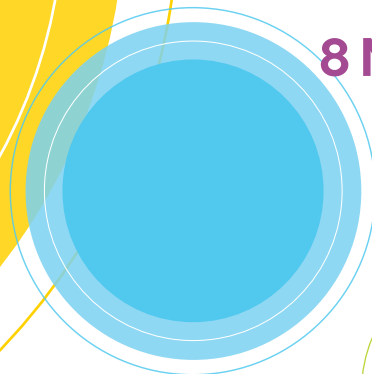




Operational Plan 2020-21

PLANNING FOR OUR PEOPLE
OUR PLACE OUR FUTURE

Public Exhibition Draft
8 May 2020



Adopted by Council on XX June 2020

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, present and future. We also acknowledge all other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who now live within the Cessnock Local Government Area.

Contents page

Volume I

Mayor's Message.....	4
-----------------------------	----------

General Manager's Message.....	5
---------------------------------------	----------

Section 1

Introduction.....	6
--------------------------	----------

OPERATIONAL PLAN.....	6
-----------------------	---

OUR COUNCILLORS.....	7
----------------------	---

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA.....	8
----------------------------	---

INTEGRATED PLANNING & REPORTING.....	10
--------------------------------------	----

Section 2

Operational Plan.....	12
------------------------------	-----------

A CONNECTED, SAFE & CREATIVE COMMUNITY... 13

Community's Desired Outcome.....	13
----------------------------------	----

1.1 Promoting social connections.....	14
---------------------------------------	----

1.2 Strengthening community culture.....	17
--	----

1.3 Promoting safe communities.....	20
-------------------------------------	----

1.4 Fostering an articulate & creative community.....	22
---	----

MEASURES.....	24
---------------	----

BUDGET.....	27
-------------	----

2020-2021 CAPITAL WORKS.....	28
------------------------------	----

Cemeteries facilities construction program.....	28
---	----

Community buildings construction program.....	28
---	----

Cultural and Community buildings renewal program.....	28
---	----

Recreation buildings renewal program.....	29
---	----

Pools facilities renewal program.....	29
---------------------------------------	----

A SUSTAINABLE & PROSPEROUS ECONOMY..... 30

Community's Desired Outcome.....	30
----------------------------------	----

2.1 Diversifying local business options.....	31
--	----

2.2 Achieving more sustainable employment.....	33
--	----

2.3 Increasing tourism opportunities & visitation.....	34
--	----

MEASURES.....	36
---------------	----

BUDGET.....	38
-------------	----

2020-2021 CAPITAL WORKS.....	38
------------------------------	----

Cessnock civic precinct revitalisation program.....	38
---	----

Kurri Kurri town centre program.....	39
--------------------------------------	----

Signage program.....	39
----------------------	----

A SUSTAINABLE & HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT..... 40

Community's Desired Outcome.....	40
----------------------------------	----

3.1 Protecting & enhancing the natural environment & the rural character of the area.....	41
---	----

3.2 Better utilisation of existing open space.....	45
--	----

3.3 Better waste management and recycling.....	47
--	----

MEASURES.....	49
---------------	----

BUDGET.....	52
-------------	----

2020-2021 CAPITAL WORKS.....	52
------------------------------	----

Waste facilities construction program.....	52
--	----

Drainage construction program.....	53
------------------------------------	----

Floodplain management program.....	54
------------------------------------	----

Recreation facilities renewal program.....	54
--	----

Recreation facilities construction program.....	55
---	----

ACCESSIBLE INFRASTRUCTURE, SERVICES & FACILITIES..... 56

Community's Desired Outcome.....	56
----------------------------------	----

4.1 Better transport links.....	57
---------------------------------	----

4.2 Improving the road network.....	59
-------------------------------------	----

4.3 Improving access to health services locally.....	60
--	----

MEASURES.....	61
---------------	----

BUDGET.....	63
-------------	----

2020-2021 CAPITAL WORKS.....	64
------------------------------	----

Airport construction program.....	64
-----------------------------------	----

Airport renewal program.....	64
------------------------------	----

Bridge construction program.....	64
----------------------------------	----

Gravel rehab & resheeting program.....	65
--	----

RMS blackspot or safer roads program.....	65
---	----

Local road construction program.....	65
--------------------------------------	----

Local road renewal program.....	66
---------------------------------	----

Traffic facilities program.....	66
---------------------------------	----

Pathway construction program.....	67
-----------------------------------	----

Regional road renewal program.....	67
------------------------------------	----

CIVIC LEADERSHIP & EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE.. 68

Community's Desired Outcome.....	68
----------------------------------	----

5.1 Fostering & supporting community leadership.....	69
--	----

5.2 Encouraging more community participation in decision making.....	70
--	----

5.3 Making Council more responsive to the community.....	72
--	----

MEASURES.....	79
---------------	----

BUDGET.....	81
-------------	----

Section 3

2020-21 Budget.....	82
----------------------------	-----------

FINANCIAL FORECASTS.....	83
--------------------------	----

CURRENT FINANCIAL POSITION OF COUNCIL.....	85
--	----

OPERATIONAL BUDGET.....	86
-------------------------	----

BUDGET BY FUNCTION/ACTIVITY - Note 2(a).....	89
--	----

PROFIT & LOSS STATEMENT.....	90
------------------------------	----

BALANCE SHEET.....	91
--------------------	----

RESERVE BALANCES.....	91
-----------------------	----

REVENUE POLICY.....	92
---------------------	----

Volume II

Fees & Charges- Separate document

Mayor's Message



BOB PYNSENT MAYOR

It is a pleasure to present Council's 2020-21 Operational Plan, which follows another successful year of delivering tangible results for our community.

Young families make up an important part of our community and we were proud to be able to deliver significant improvements to local parks across the region last financial year. From playground upgrades and the installation of shade sails to toilet upgrades and the delivery of Stage 3 of Bridges Hill Park and Playground, the outcomes have been fantastic. It has also been wonderful to witness these community facilities being utilised and enjoyed by young and old. We will continue to build on this and deliver more improvements to local parks in this plan.

Another highlight was officially opening work completed under the Hunter Valley Wine Country Tourism Signage Implementation Project. This included the construction of tourist wayfinding signage, including five information bays, three gateway entry signs and 20 precinct signs across the region. In January last year, the NSW Government announced a \$2.2 million grant for Council to continue rolling out this project, which will greatly benefit local businesses.

Our roads are of great importance to our community and we will continue to advocate for grant funding to ensure our ageing road network continues to get much needed upgrades.

This year will see the completion of the Gingers Lane upgrade in Abermain which was made possible with Council successfully securing \$3.2 million in grant funding. This particular project has seen wonderful innovation with the use of recycled glass 'sand' and upon completion, the project will have used 6.2 million glass bottles. The war on waste is everyone's responsibility and I am proud our Council is leading the way with alternate technology and uses for waste materials.

We will continue to build a safe, connected and creative community. I am very proud of our unique community culture and look forward to Council continuing to deliver successful community events and initiatives. Australia Day, Seniors Festival, Youth Week, Spring Awakening and Carols in the Park are just some of the events we work closely with the community to deliver each year. The joy that these events bring to people of all ages and abilities is so wonderful to see.

We have some exciting projects planned for 2020-21, so please take the time to review the plan and find out what is happening in your community.

“

*We will continue to
build a safe, connected
and creative community*

”

General Manager's Message

LOTTA JACKSON GENERAL MANAGER

As General Manager of Cessnock City Council, I look forward to implementing the 2020-21 Operational Plan and working with you to accomplish great things in our community.

This plan sets out clear goals and actions to be achieved over the next 12 months which will allow us to build on and meet our objectives under the Delivery Program 2017-21. We will also continue to bring our community's vision to life which is to be a thriving, attractive and welcoming place to both live and work.

Our Council and our staff are more dedicated than ever to working with, and for the community. We are outcomes focussed and want to see the community prosper.

We will continue to focus on enhancing the customer experience. The launch of our new customer-focused website earlier this year was an achievement and has made it easier for you to do business with us and find the information you need. Our customer service team has also been focussed on making positive change. This was recognised at the National Local Government Awards last year, when they achieved a highly commended in the 'Customer Service Team of the Year' category. We will continue to look for ways to improve the way we do things to make all of your experiences and interactions with us positive.

As a Council, it is our job to work for the community and deliver the projects listed in our Capital Works Program. Our team is looking forward to delivering a number of key projects including the final stages of Bridges Hill Park Playground and Access Improvement Project, works to the Kurri Kurri CBD, Paynes Crossing Bridge and the completion of Gingers Lane, Weston. Council has secured grant funding from the NSW Government's Bushfire Community Resilience and Economic Recovery Fund. This vital funding is to assist in delivering bushfire recovery activities. It comes at a time when our business and tourism industry are in need of critical support as a result of the bushfires but also the dire impacts of COVID-19. We will continue to look at opportunities to provide support to our community as it recovers.

I hope you take the time to read this plan and see what is in store for the year ahead, as we are certainly looking forward to delivering fantastic results across the whole community.



*This plan sets out
clear goals and actions
to be achieved over the
next 12 months*



Section 1

Introduction



OPERATIONAL PLAN 2020-21

The 2020-21 Operational Plan is a one year plan (the final year of the 4 year 2017-21 Delivery Program) developed to implement the adopted actions from the 2017-21 Delivery Program.

The delivery program is a statement of how Council aims to achieve the outcomes developed by the community in the community strategic plan *Cessnock 2027*, by implementing relevant actions, ensuring adequate resources, monitoring progress, advocating on behalf of the community, building partnerships and ensuring accountability in everything Council does.

The operational plan is organised in the five desired outcomes as identified in the community strategic plan, *Cessnock 2027*.

They are:

- A connected, safe and creative community
- A sustainable and prosperous economy
- A sustainable and healthy environment
- Accessible infrastructure, services and facilities
- Civic leadership and effective governance

Our Councillors



Paul Dunn
Councillor
Ward A



Mark Lyons
Councillor
Ward A



Allan Stapleford
Councillor
Ward A



Di Fitzgibbon
Councillor
Ward B



Ian Olsen
Councillor
Ward B



Jay Suvaal
Councillor
Ward B



Melanie Dagg
Councillor
Ward C



John Fagg
Councillor
Ward C



Anne Sander
Councillor
Ward C



Anthony Burke
Councillor
Ward D



Rod Doherty
Councillor
Ward D



Darrin Gray
Councillor
Ward D

Local Government Area

ABOUT OUR REGION

Cessnock City is located in the Hunter Valley, New South Wales, about 120 kilometres north of Sydney and 40 kilometres west of Newcastle.

Cessnock City is bounded by Maitland City in the north; the Cities of Newcastle and Lake Macquarie in the east, Central Coast and Hawkesbury in the south; and Singleton Council area in the west.

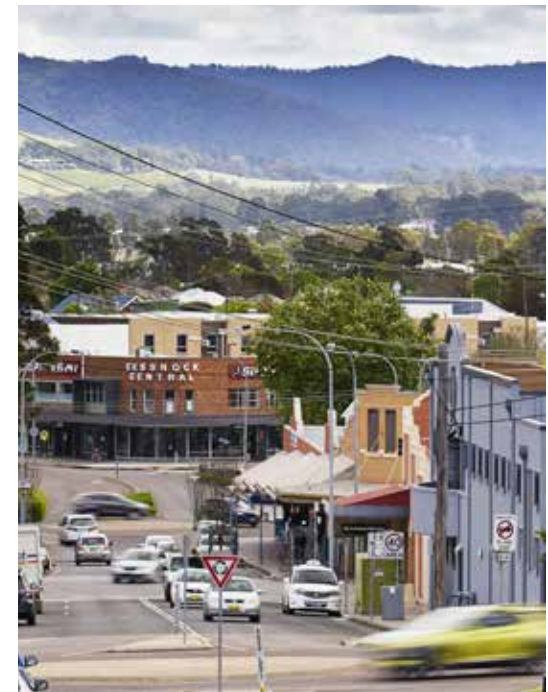
The Cessnock local government area is located on the traditional lands of the Wonnarua people, the Awabakal people and the Darkinjung people. European settlement dates from the 1820s when pastoralists arrived using land mainly for farming, market gardening and timber getting. The Great North Road was constructed in the 1830s, linking the Hawkesbury and Hunter Valleys. Wollombi was the centre of the area till the late 1800s. The township of Branxton emerged from 1848, spurred by its accessibility to water, rich agricultural land and its location as a road junction.

The township of Cessnock developed from 1850 as a service centre at the junction of the Great North Road. There was some growth in the 1850s and 1860s with wheat, tobacco and grapes being grown, especially around Cessnock, Nulkaba and Pokolbin.

Significant development in Cessnock occurred when coal was struck in 1892 and several coal mines were established.

By 1926 the Cessnock local government area had a population of 12,000 increasing to 18,000 by the 1940s. Until the 1960s mining was the principal industrial base and source of employment in the Cessnock area.

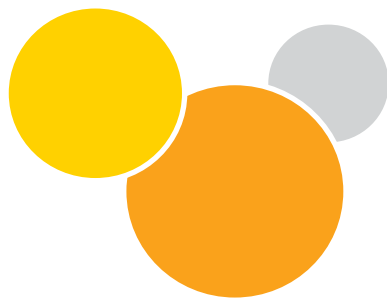
Changes to the mining industry led to the closure of the vast majority of mines, resulting in a decline in population in many villages and townships, especially since the 1980s. Many areas have undergone a change in character, with rural residential housing developments becoming popular. There has been a rise in the wine and tourism industry, with many vineyards at Allandale, Mount View, Pokolbin, and Rothbury as well as small cottages and farms used mainly as weekend retreats.



Our community 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.

CESSNOCK - *attractive, thriving and welcoming*



Integrated Planning & Reporting Framework

The integrated planning and reporting framework comprises an inter-connected set of documents that plan holistically and sustainably for the future of the local government area.

Community Strategic Plan

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

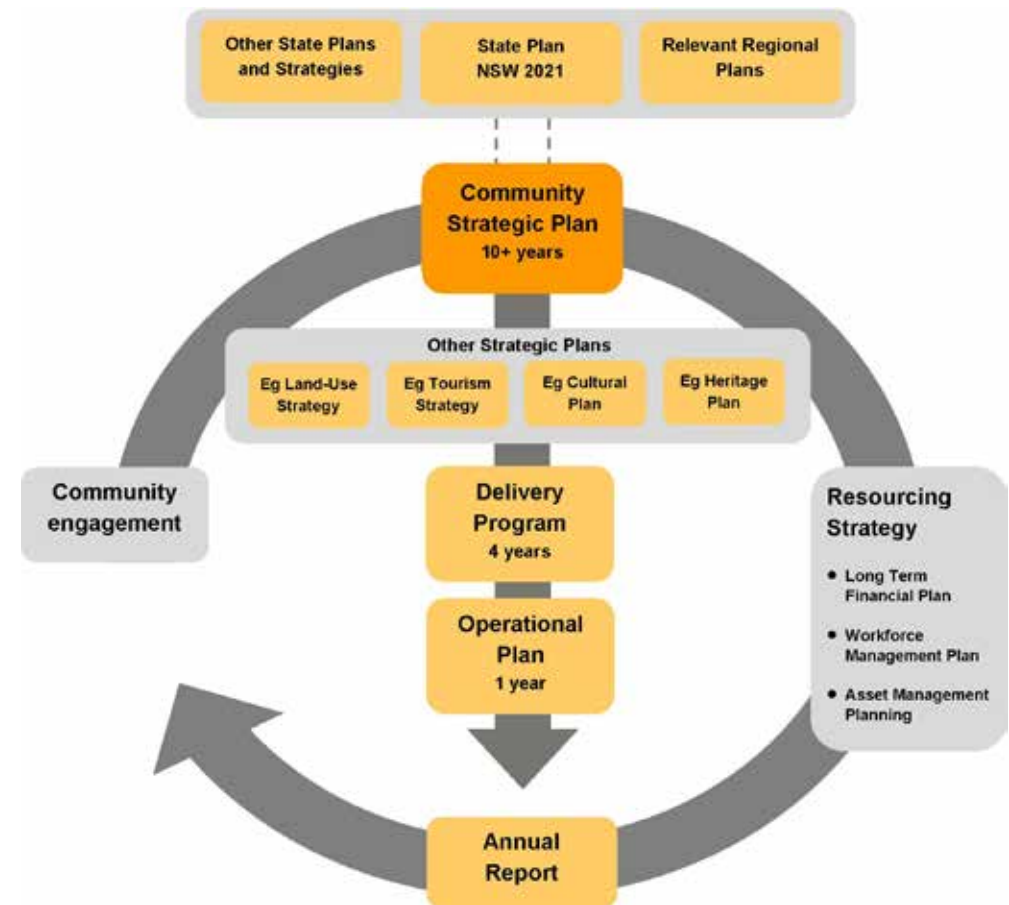
In doing this, the planning process will consider the issues and pressures that may affect the community and the level of resources that will realistically be available to achieve its aims and aspirations.

While 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 government agencies, business and community groups may also be engaged in delivering the long-term outcomes.

Delivery Program & Operational Plan

The delivery program is a statement of council's commitment to the community and is the single point of reference for all principal activities undertaken by the elected council during its term of office. All plans, projects, activities and funding allocations must be directly linked to this Program.

Supporting the delivery program is an annual operational plan. It spells out the details of the program: the individual projects and activities that will be undertaken each year to achieve the commitments made in the delivery program.



Resourcing Strategy

The delivery program provides a vehicle to achieve long-term community aspirations. However, these will not be achieved without sufficient resources (time, money, assets and people) to actually carry them out.

The resourcing strategy consists of three components:

- asset management planning;
- long term financial planning;
- workforce planning.

The resourcing strategy focuses in detail on matters that are the responsibility of the council.

Annual Report

The annual report is one of the key points of accountability between a council and its community.

The annual report focuses on the council's implementation of the delivery program and operational plan (because these are the plans that are wholly the council's responsibility).

The report also includes some information that is prescribed by the Local Government (General) Regulation 2005.

Community Consultation

Community consultation is an important part of the integrated planning and reporting framework. Extensive consultation was undertaken in 2010 to develop the original community strategic plan. Council then went back to the community in 2013 and 2016-17 to confirm that the documented outcomes and objectives were still relevant.

In addition, Council has undertaken biennial community research with a representative sample of 400 residents to monitor perceptions of the progress against the desired outcomes in the community strategic plan and satisfaction with the services offered by Council.

More recently, Council has consulted with the community to determine what is meant by a "satisfactory standard" with regards to the condition of infrastructure assets. The community has determined that, at this stage of Council's asset management maturity, Council should aim for all assets to be in an "average" condition.

Community consultation for the next community strategic plan commenced in February 2019.

Reporting Our Progress

The Local Government Act 1993 requires the General Manager to provide regular progress reports to Council with respect to progress against the principal activities detailed in its delivery program with reports provided at least every six months.

The quarterly budget review statements, required under clause 203 of the Local Government (General) Regulation 2005, provide financial information in regards to estimates of income and expenditure and are separately reported to Council.

At the end of each quarter (September, December, March and June) a report is prepared to assess our progress against delivery program actions and the capital works program.

Financial Sustainability

In September 2014 the NSW Government announced the Fit for the Future reform package, its response to the Independent Local Government Review Panel's final report on NSW Local Government Reform. The reform package included proposals for councils across NSW to strengthen efficiency, performance and move towards a more sustainable position.

While Council achieved a positive outcome by being assessed as a "fit for the future" organisation, there is still work that needs to be done to achieve greater efficiencies across the organisation and provide the best value-for-money for our community.

The Financial Sustainability Initiative (FSI) was adopted to ensure Council continues to generate sufficient funds to provide the levels of service and infrastructure agreed with our community.

The FSI is an umbrella initiative for a series of projects that contribute to Council's fiscal future by focusing on reducing costs, increasing revenues and improving value-for-money.

FSI and other projects that contribute to Council's ongoing financial sustainability have been incorporated into Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting documents. These projects are identified throughout this document as follows:

* Project supporting financial sustainability

