CESSNOCK
CITY COUNCIL

Planning for
our people,
our place,
our future

CESSNOCK

COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN 2036

www.cessnock.nsw.gov.au

Welcome

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.

Contact

62-78 Vincent Street
Cessnock NSW 2325

PO Box 152
Cessnock NSW 2325

02 4993 4100
www.cessnock.nsw.gov.au

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Mayor's message

Jay Suvaal

Cessnock City Council is committed to continuing to deliver the aspirations of the community within the Cessnock Local Government Area. The Community Strategic Plan is the highest level plan Council prepares and it is Council's guiding document. The purpose of the plan is to identify the community's main priorities and aspirations for the future along with strategies to achieve these goals.

In doing this, this plan considers the challenges and opportunities for our community against the level of resources realistically available to achieve the community's vision. In creating this plan, Council has been guided by the community through extensive consultation.

The plan sets out Council's responsibilities and the desired outcomes. These outcomes have been presented in five sections: a connected, safe and creative community; a sustainable and prosperous community; a sustainable and healthy environment; accessible infrastructure, services and facilities, and civic leadership and effective governance.

Residents are encouraged to engage with this document to gain an understanding of, and insight into, how Council plans to meet and achieve each of these objectives. Achieving the vision laid out in this plan requires continued collaboration between Cessnock City Council, the NSW Government and the Federal Government. Achieving these goals also requires a commitment from non-government organisations, community groups and community members.

Input from the community of the Cessnock Local Government Area has been instrumental to the development of this plan. Thank you for your efforts in assisting Council with the preparation of this document. It is Council's intention this plan will guide its actions to ensure a thriving, attractive and welcoming community is created for those who currently live here and those who will join us in future years. On behalf of the Council, I look forward to achieving positive outcomes for the people of the Cessnock Local Government Area.

Councillor Jay Suvaal
Mayor, Cessnock City Council

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 along with strategies to achieve these goals.

In doing this, the planning process will consider the issues, both challenges and opportunities, that may affect the community and the level of resources that will realistically be available to achieve the community's vision.

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 Chief Executive of the Office of 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.

Community engagement

The process

The Vision, Outcomes, Objectives and Strategic Directions in Cessnock 2036 reflect the future the community aspires to.

During workshops held to develop the original Community Strategic Plan participants were asked to visualise Cessnock and the surrounding area in 10 years' time and imagine the place they would like it to be. Since that time, these aspirations have been tested with the community to ensure they remain relevant.

Council endorsed 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, a creative project to capture the ideas of school children, a telephone hotline, and written submissions.

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 help refine the plan.

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 align the plan with the community vision.

As part of the 2022 update, Council has considered the results of community engagement held over the past three years.

This included consultation with over 1750 residents and stakeholders informing the development of key strategies and plans including our Local Strategic Planning Statement, Housing Strategy, Waste and Recovery Strategy, Jobs Strategy, Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy, Disability and Inclusion Action Plan and our Youth Engagement Strategy.

We also considered the results of the 2021 Community Satisfaction Survey which involved 405 participants.

2022

New and emerging issues

Community engagement conducted in 2021 identified the following priorities for residents, some of which remain consistent with earlier consultation:

- Local roads and infrastructure
- Community safety
- Local jobs and a healthy local economy
- Clean spaces and waste collection
- Parks and recreation
- Community participation in planning and decision making (opportunities to have a say on the issues that affect them)

In addition to community engagement, Council undertook an analysis of key policies and strategic plans developed since 2018.

That analysis emphasised the following as current or emerging issues that will require ongoing attention:

- Managing the increased activity in the City including population growth and tourism
- Improving local facilities and infrastructure, including roads
- Strengthening the local economy through job creation and tourism
- Acting on Climate Change and building resilience; our ability to survive, adapt and thrive in times of natural disasters and other emergency situations.
- Diversifying housing options and improving affordability
- Addressing socioeconomic disadvantage
- Attracting investment and innovation from lead firms including government agencies and business and industry
- Ensuring the ongoing financial sustainability of the Council

Themes and outcomes

The plan is structured around five themes being the desired Outcomes identified during the community engagement and research processes:

1 A connected, safe, and creative community

Developing safe and connected neighbourhoods that support healthy and fulfilling lifestyles for people of all ages.

2 A sustainable and prosperous economy

Achieving long term economic security through a mix of diverse business and employment options.

3 A sustainable and healthy environment

Acting on climate change, building resilience and promoting a sustainable balance between development and preserving our natural environment.

4 Accessible infrastructure, services and facilities

Increasing the range and accessibility of the services we need along with investment in improved infrastructure.

5 Civic leadership and effective governance

Ensuring that we have strong leadership and good governance and that we foster community participation in decision making.

Council's role

Achieving our desired community outcomes requires commitment from all levels of government community, business, industry, organisations, and institutions.

It also requires ongoing investment and innovation; important to the ongoing financial sustainability of the Council.

While Cessnock City Council plays a custodial role in initiating, preparing, and maintaining the Community Strategic Plan on behalf of the community, it is not wholly responsible for its implementation. Other partners, such as State agencies will also be engaged in delivering the long-term objectives of the plan.

This collaborative approach is essential if we are to achieve a sustainable future for the community, economy, and environment.

Cessnock City Council will continue to identify those issues it can control, where it can influence outcomes and where influence may be limited but there are opportunities to advocate and educate.

Council's Delivery Program 2022-2026 is a supporting document which outlines those areas under Council control and influence.

Diagram 1. *The role of local government in community outcomes*

Source: *Institute for Sustainable Futures, University of Technology Sydney*

Community profile

About the Cessnock City Local Government Area

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

The area is unique and modern with much of its historical charm maintained despite growth and transformation.

It is home to distinctive towns and villages steeped in local history and culture. It is also experiencing change and increased activity, with new and growing communities and an attractive range of tourism experiences.

Given the uniqueness of its natural assets and biodiversity, one third of the area is a United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) World Heritage Listed Area.

The area is situated on the traditional lands of the Wonnarua people, the Awabakal people, and the Darkinjung people and is home to many significant Aboriginal sites. Wonnarua means "land of hills and plains".

European settlement since the 1820s 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 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 dining and casual restaurants, motels, cabins, guest houses, events, 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.

The highest employing industry sectors are currently accommodation and food services, retail trade, health care and social assistance, education and training and manufacturing, with three in every five employed people working in these industries.

The Cessnock LGA is experiencing substantial growth. By 2036, it is expected that Cessnock City's population will have grown to 80,000 people. Urban development is rapidly expanding within a growth corridor between Cessnock, Kurri Kurri, and Maitland, and between Branxton, Greta and Rutherford.

There is infrastructure across the City to support growth, but more will be needed. This will require additional funding and investment.

Cessnock LGA currently has two hospitals, two TAFE campuses, community health services, a range of childcare options, aged care, and other community support services. It is also in close proximity to the University of Newcastle and Port of Newcastle. Each of the City's towns and villages are linked by large expanses of natural vegetation and have a range of sporting facilities and parks.

A rich Indigenous heritage

Cessnock City is rich in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.

It is home to many localities and places with Aboriginal names and histories. Many of our towns, villages, and localities bear Aboriginal names include Kurri Kurri (meaning "the beginning" or "the first"), Wollombi ("meeting place" or "meeting of the waters"), Congewai, Nulkaba, Laguna and Kalingo.

Mount Yengo, located in Yengo National Park, is of particular significance to Aboriginal peoples. It's surrounding areas are home to many important sites of Aboriginal spiritual and cultural association.

Mount Yengo is the place from where Baiame jumped to return to the spirit world after he had created the lakes, rivers, mountains, and caves in the area. When Baiame jumped towards the sky, he flattened the top of Mount Yengo, and that flat top can still be seen today.

The Wollombi Valley is another significant area inclusive of several significant sites of Aboriginal cultural heritage.

Aboriginal heritage, culture, history, and enterprise are showcased in the Hunter Valley Wonnarua Indigenous Cultural Hub and Madoo Museum.

Today, our estimated resident population is 61,256 with 4,012 people identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people. This represents 7.2% of the total population which is considerably higher than the Australian and NSW state populations. It is also higher than the NSW regional population of 5.5% (ABS, Census 2016).

Aboriginal business and creative opportunities continue to grow and include exemplars in the areas of mine rehabilitation, honey manufacture, cultural tourism, bush tucker products and biodiversity management

A strategic direction of Cessnock 2036 is to continue to build unity and respect between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians: working together to achieve reconciliation and create better futures.

CESSNOCK AT A GLANCE

Estimated resident population

2005: **47,305**
2010: **51, 304**
2015: **55,862**
2022: **61,256**

We have a higher proportion of children **under 18** compared to the region

Gross regional product **$2.36 billion**

We attract over **1 million visitors** every year

85% of us were born in Australia

3,092 local businesses

35-49

Our largest age group is **35 to 49 years**

Residential building approvals

2005-6: **362**
2010-11: **305**
2015-16: **375**
2020-21: **939**

71% of us have internet connection

195,000ha land area

33% of us have a mortgage

Our largest industry sector is **accommodation and food services**

Our principles

The following underpin Cessnock 2036, and what we are trying to achieve. They are the fundamental principles guiding the development and implementation of our Community Strategic Plan.

Social justice
Promoting access, equity, participation, and rights

Partnerships and collaboration
Working together to achieve our Vision

Opportunity
Creating and taking opportunities for the advancement of the City

Resilience
Supporting each other to survive, adapt and thrive in the face of extreme challenges

Sustainability
Enabling a sustainable community, economy, and environment through effective leadership

Community vision

Cessnock is a cohesive and welcoming community living in an attractive and sustainable rural environment. There is 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.

Outcome 1

A connected, safe and creative community

Community's desired outcome

This desired outcome relates to community wellbeing, connectedness, and safety. Community engagement participants continue to express the desire for a healthy, active, engaged, and cohesive community that maintains its unique local identity and friendliness into the future.

Sustainable development goals

The Sustainable Development Goals are the world's shared plan to end extreme poverty, reduce inequality and protect and support achievement of a healthier planet by 2030.

There are 17 Goals. This outcome supports the following:

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

Regional plans

The draft Hunter Regional Plan 2041 prioritises economic self-determination for Aboriginal communities. It highlights the objectives of the OCHRE – the NSW Government plan for achieving opportunity, choice, responsibility, and empowerment.

Another priority of this plan is to create more vibrant local communities. This includes encouraging a larger mix of shared facilities, working hubs, education facilities, health services and social or community services.

Provision of more diverse and affordable housing is another key objective of the plan given the need to support people through all stages of life, helping them to stay living in communities where they have established social connections and support networks.

Finally, it discusses the need for more resilient communities with high levels of wellbeing.

The Hunter Joint Organisation Strategic Plan recognises that our communities have diverse needs and therefore we need to ensure equity, access, participation, and rights for everyone, regardless of their circumstances.

The plan also supports creation of learning opportunities for all, with a focus on improving educational opportunities and outcomes for young and disadvantaged people.

Responsibility and contributions

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

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

Objectives

Objective 1.1 Promoting social connections and wellbeing

Strategic directions

1.1.1 We are connected to others in our neighbourhood and across the Cessnock Local Government Area

1.1.2 Our community has opportunities to celebrate together

1.1.3 Our community has high levels of wellbeing

1.1.4 Our community has access to diverse and affordable housing

1.1.5 We work together to achieve inclusivity and reconciliation

Objective 1.2 Strengthening community culture

Strategic directions

1.2.1 Our community is aware of and has access to community services and facilities

1.2.2 Our residents show pride in our local government area

1.2.3 Our community organisations have opportunities to work together to develop and deliver services

1.2.4 We have multi-purpose sporting and recreation facilities that meet the needs of a growing population

Objective 1.3 Promoting safe communities

Strategic directions

1.3.1 Our residents and visitors feel safe in the Cessnock Local Government Area

1.3.2 Our CBD areas are safe at night

1.3.3 Our roads are safe for motorists and pedestrians

Objective 1.4 Promoting safe communities

Strategic directions

1.4.1 We have thriving cultural precincts throughout the Local Government Area that celebrate our heritage and culture.

1.4.2 We have a diverse program of cultural and heritage activities

1.4.3 We have access to quality education and lifelong learning opportunities

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 achievement of the community's desired outcomes.

At the time of reviewing this plan, 2020 Census data was not yet available. The plan will be updated with the latest results once they are published.

Measure	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	Improve
Socio-Economic Index	The 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. The 2011 index was 936.4, a slight decline from 938.7 in 2006. In 2016 the index was 925. 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.	925	Improve
Malicious damage to property	This measure is the number of malicious 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). In 2021 the number had decreased to 582.	582	Decrease

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

Measure	2012	2014	2016	2021	Target
If there was a problem in my community, people would band together to solve it	3.40	3.52	3.54	N/A	Maintain
There is strong community spirit in the Cessnock Area	3.39	3.53	3.38	N/A	Maintain
Quality housing is both available and affordable	3.88	3.21	3.11	N/A	Maintain
Facilities and services for children are adequate	2.85	2.86	2.74	3.18	Improve
Facilities and services for youth are adequate	2.27	2.59	2.40	2.83	Improve
Facilities and services for the aged are adequate	2.93	3.00	2.98	3.32	Improve
Arts, entertainment, and culture are well-catered for	3.39	3.28	3.33	3.98	Maintain
It is a safe place to live	3.12	3.26	3.16	2.98	Improve

Council's supporting strategies, plans and studies

- Local Strategic Lanning Statement 2036
- Recreation and Open Space Strategic Plan 2019
- Cessnock Housing Strategy 2021
- Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2021-2025
- Cessnock City Cycling Strategy 2016
- Community Satisfaction Survey
- Cessnock City Library Strategic Plan 2014 - 2024
- Greater Cessnock Infrastructure Priorities Advocacy Agenda

Outcome 2

A sustainable and 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 into the future.

Sustainable development goals

The Sustainable Development Goals are the world's shared plan to end extreme poverty, reduce inequality and protect and support achievement of a healthier planet by 2030.

There are 17 Goals. This outcome supports the following:

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

An objective of the draft Hunter Regional Plan 2041 is to diversify the Hunter's mining, energy, and industrial capacity. It also promotes the rise of the circular economy (creating value through recycling and reuse) and the need to build an inter-connected and globally focused Hunter. This is important because connectivity and diversity can open up economic opportunities that leverage the international visitor market and global economy.

The Hunter Joint Organisation Strategic Plan cites the ambitious targets placed on the region by State Government to have a more multifaceted, resilient economy. This poses significant opportunity however requires investment and innovation into the long term. It also requires retaining our young people as key contributors to economic prosperity.

Responsibility and 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
- Industry
- Lead firms including government agencies
- Cessnock City Council
- Hunter Joint Organisation
- NSW Government
- Federal Government

Objectives

Objective 2.1 Diversifying and growing our economy
Strategic directions
2.1.1 Our local government area is attractive to and supportive of businesses
2.1.2 We have a diversity of businesses and industries across the local government area
2.1.3 We have adequate industrial and employment lands and thriving commercial precincts
2.1.4 We attract investment and innovation from government, business, and industry
Objective 2.2 Achieving more sustainable employment opportunities
Strategic directions
2.2.1 We have education and training opportunities for people of all ages and abilities
2.2.2 We have a diverse range of local employment opportunities
Objective 2.3 Increasing tourism opportunities and visitation in the area
Strategic directions
2.3.1 We have a range of diverse visitor experiences across the entire local government area
2.3.2 Our local government area is attractive to visitors

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 achievement of the community's desired outcomes.

At the time of reviewing this plan, 2020 Census data was not yet available. The plan will be updated with the latest results once they are published.

Measure	Context/Benchmark	Base	Target
Education	This measure is the percentage of the population with post school qualifications (degree, diploma or vocational). This measure is obtained from the ABS Census. In 2011 36.7% of us had post school qualifications. By 2016 this had risen to 40.9%.	40.9%	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 2021 the unemployment rate for Cessnock local government area was 5.8% (compared with 5.5% for NSW and 5.6% for Australia).	5.8%	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	Maintain

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

Measure	2012	2014	2016	2021	Target
High quality and environmentally friendly industries are encouraged	3.08	3.11	3.15	N/A	Maintain
Industry and business development is working well	2.79	2.83	2.89	3.03	Improve
There are enough employment opportunities	2.40	2.16	2.16	2.99	Improve
Education and training opportunities are good	3.02	2.98	2.80	N/A	Improve
Tourism is promoted well	3.93	3.99	4.09	3.70	Maintain
The vineyards play an important role in the local economy	4.49	4.45	4.51	N/A	Maintain

Council's supporting strategies, plans and studies

- Jobs Strategy 2021
- Economic Growth Agenda 2021
- Local Strategic Planning Statement 2036
- Hunter Valley Visitor Centre Strategy
- Economic Development Strategy
- Community Satisfaction Survey
- Greater Cessnock Infrastructure Priorities Advocacy Agenda
- Hunter Valley Destination Management Plan 2022-2030

Outcome 3

A sustainable and healthy environment

Community's desired outcome

This desired outcome focuses on the conservation and preservation of the natural environment whilst balancing development and acting on climate change. It supports our aspiration to achieve a sustainable, resilient, and healthy community and environment.

Sustainable development goals

The Sustainable Development Goals are the world's shared plan to end extreme poverty, reduce inequality and protect and support achievement of a healthier planet by 2030.

There are 17 Goals. This outcome supports the following:

State Plan

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

- Protect our natural environment

It also aligns with NSW Climate Change Policy Framework.

Regional plans

The draft Hunter Regional Plan 2041 addresses the need to increase green infrastructure, provide quality public spaces and improve the natural environment. Specifically, it talks about the importance placed on protecting high value environmental features and functions and the need to protect the Hunter's ecological heritage. It also notes the relationship to overall planetary health and how integration of elements and aspects of nature into our towns and neighbourhoods will foster a healthy environment.

The Hunter Joint Organisation has developed a Climate Change Integrated Planning and Reporting package which acknowledges the devastating impact of climate change including an increase in extreme weather events and the need to take action and build resilience.

Responsibility and contributions

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

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

Objectives

Objective 3.1 Protecting and enhancing the natural environment and rural character of the area
Strategic directions
3.1.1 We act on climate change and build disaster resilience
3.1.2 Our area's rural character and heritage is protected
3.1.3 We act to protect our unique biodiversity and natural resources
3.1.4 Our environmental amenity is protected and enhanced
3.1.5 Our waterways and catchments are maintained and enhanced
Objective 3.2 Better utilisation of existing open space
Strategic directions
3.2.1 Our open spaces are distributed where people live
3.2.2 We have green corridors connecting our open space areas
3.2.3 Our open spaces have suitable facilities, infrastructure, and plenty of shade
Objective 3.3 Better resource recovery and waste management
Strategic directions
3.3.1 We divert more of our waste for recycling or re-processing
3.3.2 We promote waste avoidance
3.3.3 We create value from waste

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 achievement of the community's desired outcomes.

At the time of reviewing this plan, 2020 Census data was not yet available. The plan will be updated with the latest results once they are published.

Measure	Context/Benchmark	Base	Target
Open space and 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 of 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.	60,759ha (2017)	Increase
Waste and 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.	5,500 tonnes per annum	Increase

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

Measure	2012	2014	2016	2021	Target
The area has an attractive appearance	3.23	3.50	3.49	N/A	Maintain
The natural environment is well managed	3.06	3.26	3.14	3.10	Maintain
Environmental issues are handled well	2.89	3.03	2.71	N/A	Improve
The bushland that supports a diversity of native plants and animals is valuable	4.19	4.11	4.04	N/A	Maintain
The area's heritage is well conserved	3.62	3.61	3.65	3.26	Maintain
Development overall is well planned and well managed	2.71	2.85	2.82	N/A	Improve
Residential development is well managed	2.76	2.94	2.89	2.83	Improve
There are enough good quality open spaces	3.21	3.34	3.35	3.01	Maintain
There is a wide range of recreation and leisure opportunities	3.10	2.98	3.07	3.63	Maintain
Waste collection and disposal are well managed	3.61	3.64	3.67	3.69	Maintain

Council's supporting strategies, plans and studies

- Community Satisfaction Survey
- Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy 2022
- Biodiversity Strategy
- Climate Change Policy
- Local Strategic Planning Statement 2036
- Trails Strategy 2020
- Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy 2020-2025

Outcome 4

Accessible infrastructure, services, and 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 whilst ensuring there is adequate access to these facilities and services.

Sustainable development goals

The Sustainable Development Goals are the world's shared plan to end extreme poverty, reduce inequality and protect and support achievement of a healthier planet by 2030.

There are 17 Goals. This outcome supports the following:

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

Responsibility and contributions

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

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

Regional plans

The Hunter Joint Organisation Strategic Plan notes that an integrated and accessible transport system is key to the mobility of people and product. It is also critical to community wellbeing; enabling communities to stay connected. For many young people and those living with a disability, access to education and work can be challenging and hence there is a need to improve public transport options across the City.

The draft Hunter Regional Plan 2041 aims to achieve a more inter-connected Hunter with a focus on expanding movement and therefore opportunities. Importantly it also acknowledges the impact of weather events on built infrastructure, including transport infrastructure.

Objectives outlined here also consider the intent of the Greater Newcastle Metro Plan 2036 and the Greater Newcastle Future Transport Plan both of which consider strategies and actions to capitalise on investment in aviation, transport, education, health, and tourism and delivering the required infrastructure.

Objectives

Objective 4.1 Better transport links

Strategic directions

4.1.1 We have access to a range of public and community transport

4.1.2 Our communities are linked by walking and bike tracks

4.1.3 Our transport network is integrated and supported by appropriate infrastructure

4.1.4 Our Airport acts as a key transport, emergency response and business hub

Objective 4.2 Improving the road network

Strategic directions

4.2.1 We have an acceptable, safe, and affordable road network

4.2.2 We have managed the traffic impact of the Hunter Expressway on local communities

4.2.3 We have well managed traffic conditions across our suburbs

Objective 4.3 Improved access to health services locally

Strategic directions

4.3.1 We have better availability of and access to hospitals and health services in the local government area

4.3.2 We have better availability of and access to general practitioners and dental services in the local government area

4.3.3 We have regional standard health services, facilities, and health professionals

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 achievement of the community's desired outcomes.

At the time of reviewing this plan, 2020 Census data was not yet available. The plan will be updated with the latest results once they are published.

Measure	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 data is sourced from the Household Travel Survey.	75,000km 3%	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. On 30 June 2016 the average OCI was 2.72. 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 to Good	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.	1:1418	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.	25mins and 79mins N/A and 54mins Kurri Kurri	Improve

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

Measure	2012	2014	2016	2021	Target
There is enough public transport	2.59	2.71	2.64	N/A	Improve
The road network is effective and in good repair	1.45	1.91	1.87	1.84	Improve
Health facilities are sufficient	2.64	2.80	2.69	N/A	Improve

Council's supporting strategies, plans and studies

- Asset Management Policy
- Asset Management Strategy
- Asset Management Plans
- Cessnock Airport Strategic Plan
- Cessnock Cycling Strategy 2016
- Community Satisfaction Survey
- Contributions Plans
- Cessnock LGA Traffic and Transport Strategy 2018
- Economic Growth Agenda 2021
- Greater Cessnock Infrastructure Priorities Advocacy Agenda 2021
- Kurri Kurri District Strategy
- Local Strategic Planning Statement 2036
- Trails Strategy 2020

Outcome 5

Civic leadership and 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.

Sustainable development goals

The Sustainable Development Goals are the world's shared plan to end extreme poverty, reduce inequality and protect and support achievement of a healthier planet by 2030.

There are 17 Goals. This outcome supports the following:

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 Hunter Joint Organisation provides a forum for councils and State Government to work together on regional planning and the provision of better services and infrastructure through resource sharing, lowering costs and reducing red tape.

The Hunter Joint Organisation (JO) Strategic Plan 2018-2021 (under review at the time of updating this plan) emphasises the need for contemporary councils to effectively engage with stakeholders in the delivery of an incredibly wide range of services, infrastructure, and facilities. It also acknowledges the chronic challenges facing local government, including the "big shifts" in our community and economies.

The Hunter JO is positioning to take advantage of the many opportunities unique to the region including an enviable natural environment, proud histories, and attractive lifestyles.

Responsibility and contributions

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

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

Objectives

Objective 5.1 Fostering and supporting community leadership
Strategic directions
5.1.1 We have well-trained and qualified leaders in our community and in our workforce
5.1.2 Our young people aspire to become leaders
5.1.3 Our Council is committed to implementing our community's vision
Objective 5.2 Encouraging more community participation in decision making
Strategic directions
5.2.1 We are informed about our community
5.2.2 We are involved in decisions affecting our community
5.2.3 We have effective relationships across different levels of government
Objective 5.3 Ensuring Council is accountable and responsive to the community
Strategic directions
5.3.1 Our Council is customer focused
5.3.2 Our Council's processes are efficient and transparent
5.3.3 Our Council is financially sustainable

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 achievement of the community's desired outcomes.

At the time of reviewing this plan, 2020 Census data was not yet available. The plan will be updated with the latest results once they are published.

Measure	Context/Benchmark	Base	Target
Participation	This measure is the % of people aged 15 or over 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. Latest data (2016) shows this has grown to 6,087 people or 13.8% of the population.	13.8%	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 2015 Cessnock made up 0.9% of all complaints received. In 2021 this had fallen to 0.6%.	0.6%	Reduce

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

Measure	2012	2014	2016	2021	Target
People volunteer and get involved in their community	3.29	3.48	3.44	3.40	Maintain
The opportunity exists for residents to be involved in making decisions about their community	3.04	3.15	3.16	2.71	Maintain
Laws and regulations are enforced consistently and fairly	2.96	3.26	3.11	N/A	Maintain
There is good cooperation between all levels of government in the area	2.50	2.74	2.76	N/A	Improve
There is a clear plan and direction for the future	2.41	2.74	2.76	2.75	Improve

Council's supporting strategies, plans and studies

- Community Engagement Strategy 2021
- Community Satisfaction Survey
- Customer Service Strategy
- Strategic Audit Plan
- Youth Engagement Strategy 2021
- Council's Resourcing Strategy including its Long-Term Financial Plan, Asset Management Strategy and Workforce Plan
- Cessnock City Council's Delivery Program 2022-2025
- Cessnock City Council's annual Operational Plan and Budget

Monitoring our progress

At a glance

Cessnock 2036 belongs to all Cessnock residents and relies on each 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 Cessnock 2036; Council will undertake the following planning and reporting activities:

Development of a four-year Delivery Program
The 2022 - 2026 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 2036 Community Strategic Plan.

Review of Council's Resourcing Strategy
This identifies the Council's long term financial plan, asset management strategy and workforce strategy supporting achievement of our objectives.

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.

State of the City
The Council will facilitate a report every four years which shows what has been achieved towards Cessnock 2036 and what's changed for the community, economy, and environment.

Feedback

Share your thoughts on our draft Community Strategic Plan

Cessnock City Council has prepared the Community Strategic Plan on behalf of the community and is looking forward to working in partnership to make our Cessnock 2036 vision a reality.

Feedback and suggestions on this draft Community Strategic Plan are now invited and should be supplied via the below options.

POST

Mail us your feedback, clearly marked 'Community Strategic Plan Feedback', to:

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

EMAIL

Send an email to **council@cessnock.nsw.gov.au** with 'Community Strategic Plan Feedback' in the subject line.

PHONE

Phone Council Customer Services on **02 4993 4100**.

www.cessnock.nsw.gov.au

Appendix 1

Glossary

Community Strategic Plan

The community's vision for the future of the local government area. This document has a ten-year minimum timeframe. The original plan (Cessnock 2020) was developed in October 2010, the second iteration of the Plan (Cessnock 2023) was adopted in June 2013 and again in June 2017. Cessnock 2036 was developed in 2022.

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 ambitions under each of the desired outcomes.
- 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 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 and Federal government, and government agencies, etc.).

The Delivery Program has a four-year timeframe. In a normal election cycle the Delivery Program would align closely to the council term of office i.e. developed after the local government elections in September and adopted by 30 June the following year.

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 objectives. of the Community Strategic Plan (and includes statutory requirements).

Appendix 2

Our journey towards Cessnock 2036: Planning for our people, our place, our future

The 2022 review and update marks just over 10 years since the first Community Strategic Plan was developed and endorsed by Council on behalf of the Cessnock community.

Since that time, we have been on a journey; continuing to review the plan and its progress, ensuring it remains reflective of the issues impacting the community, economy, environment, and our civic leadership.

Given this significant milestone, a full review is scheduled for 2025 with project planning and community engagement commencing as early as 2023/24.

This year we are extending the timeframe for the plan to 2036 to align with other significant planning cycles and their outputs including the Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS).

Our Community Strategic Plan journey

2009	Community consultation program commences on the first Community Strategic Plan
2010	Comprehensive community visioning and engagement
2011	Cessnock's first community strategic plan endorsed by Council
2013/14	Community strategic plan updated with the community and endorsed by Council
2016/17	Community strategic plan updated with the community and endorsed by Council
2021	Community Engagement Strategy, supporting the Community Engagement Plan, is reviewed
2022	Community Strategic Plan updated to Cessnock 2036, reflecting new and emerging issues and results of community engagement
2023/24	Planning commences for broad stakeholder and community engagement, informing a comprehensive review
2025	Cessnock 2040 (lifespan to be confirmed) developed with the community

The following reflects key issues raised by the community across multiple engagement activities including the results of the Community Satisfaction Survey 2021:

A connected, safe and creative community

- Feeling and being safe
- Access to sport and recreation
- 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
- Better public transport for young people to move around and stay connected
- Addressing mental health as a rising concern, especially for young people
- Access to housing
- Support and training for not-for-profit and community groups
- Strengthen the libraries' role as a social hub
- Upgraded parks and playgrounds
- More cultural events
- More community markets
- Pride in surroundings (e.g. Tidy Towns, Clean Up Australia Day)
- Infrastructure that promotes the community/ families getting together e.g., parks and events
- Improve lighting in public areas
- More police
- Young driver training courses
- Ensure facilities are accessible to less able-bodied people
- Addressing drug problems (which result in anti-social behaviours)

A prosperous and stable economy

- More local jobs (employing locals)
- Vibrant and welcoming shopping strips/ main streets
- Education and training
- Attracting investment to the area
- 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 diversify
- Diversity of the economy - beyond wine and tourism
- Promote creativity in the business community
- Promote tourism in the towns
- Promote a new generation of agricultural producers
- Cheaper rental accommodation

A healthy and sustainable environment

- Reducing litter and illegal dumping
- 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
- Addressing climate change and building resilience
- More parks
- A beautiful regional park for people to enjoy
- More playgrounds and cycleways
- Outdoor gym facilities
- Focus on renewable energy (e.g. solar)
- Green waste service
- More opportunities for re-use and recycling
- Waste collection

Accessible infrastructure, services and facilities

- More footpaths, walkways, cycleways
- Transport
- Public transport - more buses
- Train to Newcastle
- Cessnock Airport as an opportunity
- Access from Cessnock to the Hunter Expressway
- Better roads and bridges
- Car parking, especially near transport hubs and in town centres
- Kerb and 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 and effective governance

- Engaging the community in decision making
- Council's responsiveness and customer service
- Communication
- Strong leadership and commitment
- Financial management and reporting
- Community's vision being implemented/long term planning
- Integration of community, economy and environment
- More people volunteering, getting involved

Appendix 3

Ideas captured

The following reflects ideas captured as part of the very first community visioning project undertaken to develop the Community Strategic Plan. Many of the issues raised below remain relevant today.

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 improved 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 childcare 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 and accessible cultural activities/facilities, across 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

Community and lifestyle cont.

- 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 jail

Communication and community participation

- Better technological forms of communication
- Council website should be a forum for the community to provide comments
- Council appropriately notifies 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 diverse, local 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

Economy cont.

- Encourage mid-week activity for tourists
- Better destination marketing - strategic branding
- More funding for tourism
- Retaining 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 from Advisory Committees
- More effective DA approval system – quicken development process
- Improve coordination between surrounding councils
- Improve responsiveness for planning issues
- 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 strategic plans