



9 April 2025

To All Councillors

Notice is hereby given, in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1993, that the next Ordinary Meeting of Council will be held in the Council Chambers, on Wednesday, 16 April 2025 at 6.30pm, for the purposes of transacting the undermentioned business.

AGENDA:

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(1) ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL LAND OWNERS	
(2) OPENING PRAYER	
(3) RECEIPT OF APOLOGIES AND APPLICATIONS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE , OR ATTENDANCE BY AUDIO-VISUAL LINK	
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‡ - Denotes that Report is for notation only.



Principles for Local Government

Exercise of functions generally

The following general principles apply to the exercise of functions by Councils:

- a) Councils should provide strong and effective representation, leadership, planning and decision-making.
- b) Councils should carry out functions in a way that provides the best possible value for residents and ratepayers.
- c) Councils should plan strategically, using the integrated planning and reporting framework, for the provision of effective and efficient services and regulation to meet the diverse needs of the local community.
- d) Councils should apply the integrated planning and reporting framework in carrying out their functions so as to achieve desired outcomes and continuous improvements.
- e) Councils should work co-operatively with other Councils and the State government to achieve desired outcomes for the local community.
- f) Councils should manage lands and other assets so that current and future local community needs can be met in an affordable way.
- g) Councils should work with others to secure appropriate services for local community needs.
- h) Councils should act fairly, ethically and without bias in the interests of the local community.
- i) Councils should be responsible employers and provide a consultative and supportive working environment for staff.

Council's Values

- Integrity
- Accountability
- Respect
- Excellence
- Teamwork

Our Community's 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 need.

Cessnock – thriving, attractive and welcoming.

Our Community's Desired Outcomes

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



Council Code of Conduct

Council adopted its current Code of Conduct on 23 October 2024. This Code provides details of statutory requirements and gives guidance in respect of the way in which pecuniary and conflict of interest issues must be disclosed. Councillors took an oath or affirmation at the commencement of their term of office under section 233A of the *Local Government Act 1993* (NSW) and are therefore obligated under Council's Code of Conduct to disclose and appropriately manage their conflicts of interest.

Generally, the Code outlines the following issues:

1. Councillors are under an obligation at law to disclose any interest they may have in any matter before the Council as soon as practicable and to refrain from being involved in any consideration or to vote on any such matter where required and out outlined in the Code of Conduct.
2. Councillors must disclose any interest in any matter noted in the business paper prior to or at the opening of the meeting.
3. The nature of the interest shall be included in the disclosure.
4. Councillors shall immediately and during the meeting disclose any interest in respect of any matter arising during the meeting which is not referred to in the business paper.
5. All disclosures of interest shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.
6. All disclosures of interest shall as far as is practicable be given in writing.
7. Any member having a pecuniary or non-pecuniary significant conflict of interest shall leave the meeting and remain absent while the subject of the interest is being considered by Council.
8. The meeting shall not discuss any matter in which a Councillor has a pecuniary or non-pecuniary significant conflict of interest while the Councillor is present at the meeting.



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**MINUTES OF ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING OF THE CESSNOCK CITY COUNCIL
HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON WEDNESDAY, 19 MARCH 2025, COMMENCING AT
6.30PM**

PRESENT: His Worship the Mayor, Councillor D Watton (in the Chair) and Councillors Dixon, Grine, Harrington, Hill, Jurd, King, Lea, Madden, Mason, Palmowski, Pascoe and Suvaal.

IN ATTENDANCE: Acting General Manager (Director Planning and Environment)
Acting Director Planning and Environment (Strategic Planning Manager)
Director Corporate and Community Services
Director Works and Infrastructure
People and Culture Manager
Chief Financial Officer
Development Services Manager
Senior Planning Assessment Officer
Communications & Engagement Manager
Help Desk Support Officer x 2
Council Services Team Leader

The Prayer was presented by Pastor Rachel Main

LEAVE OF ABSENCE: Councillor Jurd requested a Leave of Absence for the Traffic Committee Meeting to be held on 14 April 2025 and the Ordinary Council Meeting to be held on 16 April 2025.

MOTION **Moved:** Councillor Suvaal
 Seconded: Councillor King

103

RESOLVED that a Leave of Absence from 14 to 16 April 2025 for Councillor Jurd be granted.

FOR	AGAINST
Councillor Dixon	
Councillor Grine	
Councillor Harrington	
Councillor Hill	
Councillor Jurd	
Councillor King	
Councillor Lea	
Councillor Madden	
Councillor Mason	
Councillor Palmowski	
Councillor Pascoe	
Councillor Suvaal	
Councillor Watton	
Total (13)	Total (0)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MINUTES:

MOTION **Moved:** Councillor Lea
 Seconded: Councillor Madden

104

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 19 February 2025, as circulated, be taken as read and confirmed as a correct record.

FOR	AGAINST
Councillor Dixon	
Councillor Grine	
Councillor Harrington	
Councillor Hill	
Councillor Jurd	
Councillor King	
Councillor Lea	
Councillor Madden	
Councillor Mason	
Councillor Palmowski	
Councillor Pascoe	
Councillor Suvaal	
Councillor Watton	
Total (13)	Total (0)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST NO. DI2/2025

SUBJECT: DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

RECOMMENDATION

That Councillors now disclose any interests and reasons for declaring such interest in the matters under consideration by Council at this meeting.

WI2/2025 - Draft Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy 2026-31 – Councillor Jurd declared a Non Pecuniary Interest Less Than Significant Conflict for the reason that family work there. Councillor Jurd advised that she would remain in the Chamber and participate in discussion and voting as the conflict has not influenced her in carrying out her public duty because it was already voted on without her in the Chamber.

CC12/2025 - Authorisation to Borrow – Councillor Jurd declared a Non Pecuniary Interest Less Than Significant Conflict for the reason that family work there. Councillor Jurd advised that she would remain in the Chamber and participate in discussion and voting as the conflict has not influenced her in carrying out her public duty because it is already passed without her in the Chamber.

PE5/2025 - Exhibition of Draft Infrastructure Contributions Plans – Councillor Palmowski declared a Non Pecuniary Interest Less than Significant Conflict for the reason that she resides in the Huntlee Estate, however the report is on the new development. Councillor Palmowski advised that she would remain in the Chamber and participate and discussion and voting as the conflict has not influenced her in carrying out per public duty.

PETITIONS

Nil

ADDRESS BY INVITED SPEAKERS

Nil

CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF ALL REPORTS BY ENGLOBO OR INDIVIDUALLY WITH NOMINATED EXCEPTIONS

MOTION **Moved:** Councillor Lea **Seconded:** Councillor Hill
105
RESOLVED

that having read and considered the reports in the agenda related to items

NI1/2025	Notice of Intention to Deal with Matters in Confidential Session – Report CC16/2025 - Authorisation to Purchase Property Adjacent to Council Facility	33
‡ CC14/2025	Investment Report - February 2025.....	89
‡ CC15/2025	Resolutions Tracking Report	94

Council adopt the recommendations as printed in the business papers for those items.

FOR	AGAINST
Councillor Dixon	
Councillor Grine	
Councillor Harrington	
Councillor Hill	
Councillor Jurd	
Councillor King	
Councillor Lea	
Councillor Madden	
Councillor Mason	
Councillor Palmowski	
Councillor Pascoe	
Councillor Suvaal	
Councillor Watton	
Total (13)	Total (0)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO DEAL WITH MATTERS IN CONFIDENTIAL SESSION

NOTICE OF INTENTION NO. NI1/2025

**SUBJECT: NOTICE OF INTENTION TO DEAL WITH MATTERS IN
CONFIDENTIAL SESSION - REPORT CC16/2025 - AUTHORISATION
TO PURCHASE PROPERTY ADJACENT TO COUNCIL FACILITY**

MOTION **Moved:** Councillor Lea **Seconded:** Councillor Hill
106
RESOLVED

That Council considers in Confidential Session the following matters in accordance with Sections 10A (2) (c) of the *Local Government Act 1993*:

- **Report CC16/2025 – Authorisation to Purchase Property Adjacent to Council Facility as the report deals with information that would, if disclosed, confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom the Council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business.**

FOR	AGAINST
Councillor Dixon	
Councillor Grine	
Councillor Harrington	
Councillor Hill	
Councillor Jurd	
Councillor King	
Councillor Lea	
Councillor Madden	
Councillor Mason	
Councillor Palmowski	
Councillor Pascoe	
Councillor Suvaal	
Councillor Watton	
Total (13)	Total (0)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MAYORAL MINUTES

MAYORAL MINUTES NO. MM1/2025

SUBJECT: FUTURE PROOFING THE TRANSPORT NEEDS OF OUR COMMUNITY

MOTION **Moved:** Councillor Watton
107

RESOLVED

1. That Council write to Transport for NSW requesting a review of the Cessnock LGA public transport network and investigate improved, efficient local public transport options to implement for our growing community.
2. That Council write to The Hon Jenny Aitchison MP, Minister for Roads and Regional Transport and local Members of Parliament for priority action on the acquisition of the rail corridor so it can be preserved for future transport functionality.

FOR	AGAINST
Councillor Dixon	
Councillor Grine	
Councillor Harrington	
Councillor Hill	
Councillor Jurd	
Councillor King	
Councillor Lea	
Councillor Madden	
Councillor Mason	
Councillor Palmowski	
Councillor Pascoe	
Councillor Suvaal	
Councillor Watton	
Total (13)	Total (0)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MOTIONS OF URGENCY

MOTIONS OF URGENCY NO. MOU2/2025

SUBJECT: MOTIONS OF URGENCY

Councillor Suvaal moved a Motion of Urgency in relation to Political Signage.

The Mayor ruled the Motion as non-urgent.

PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT

PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT NO. PE3/2025

SUBJECT: DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION NO. 8/2023/298/1 FOR A FOOD AND DRINK PREMISES COMPRISING A PUB AND ANCILLARY BREWERY, RESTAURANT / CAFÉ AND ASSOCIATED CAR PARKING AND ON-SITE EFFLUENT DISPOSAL

5439 GEORGE DOWNES DRIVE BUCKETTY

MOTION

108

RESOLVED

Moved: Councillor Hill

Seconded: Councillor Pascoe

1. That:

- (i) Development Application No. 8/2023/298/1 for the construction of a food and drink premises comprising a pub and ancillary brewery, a restaurant / café and associated parking and on-site effluent disposal area on Lot 30 DP 574492 – 5439 George Downes Drive Bucketty, be approved pursuant to Sections 4.16 and 4.17 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, subject to the conditions contained in Enclosure 2.**
- (ii) The reasons for the decision (having regard to any statutory requirements applying to the decision) and consideration of community views are as follows:**

 - The proposed development, subject to the recommended conditions, is consistent with the objectives of the *Cessnock Local Environmental Plan 2011 (CLEP)*.**
 - The proposed development is, subject to the recommended conditions, consistent with the objectives of the *Cessnock Development Control Plan 2010 (DCP)*.**
 - Subject to the recommended conditions, the proposed development will be provided with adequate essential services required under the *Cessnock Local Environmental Plan 2011 (CLEP)*.**
 - The proposed development is considered to be of an appropriate scale and form for the site and is consistent and sympathetic with the character of the locality.**
 - The proposed development, subject to the recommended conditions, will not result in unacceptable adverse impacts upon the natural or built environments.**

- Any issues raised in submission/s have been taken into account in the assessment report and where appropriate, conditions of consent have been imposed on the determination. Council has given due consideration to community views when making the decision to determine the application.

(iii) The details contained above be publicly notified pursuant to Section 2.22 and Clause 20(2) of Schedule 1 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*

2. That Council notify in writing the persons who made a submission with regard to the proposed development, of Council's decision.

FOR	AGAINST
Councillor Grine	Councillor Dixon
Councillor Hill	Councillor Harrington
Councillor King	Councillor Jurd
Councillor Lea	
Councillor Madden	
Councillor Mason	
Councillor Palmowski	
Councillor Pascoe	
Councillor Suvaal	
Councillor Watton	
Total (10)	Total (3)

CARRIED

PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT NO. PE4/2025

SUBJECT: *EXHIBITION OF THE DRAFT CESSNOCK VINEYARDS DISTRICT
PLACE STRATEGY AND THE DRAFT VINEYARDS DISTRICT
DEVELOPMENT CONTROL PLAN*

MOTION **Moved:** Councillor Pascoe **Seconded:** Councillor Lea

- 1. That Council place the Draft Cessnock Vineyards District Place Strategy and Draft Vineyards District Development Control Plan chapter on public exhibition for a period of 40 days.**
- 2. That Council receive a further report following public exhibition of the Draft Vineyards District Place Strategy and Draft Vineyards District Development Control Plan chapter.**

PROCEDURAL MOTION Moved: Councillor Grine
 Seconded: Councillor Lea

109

RESOLVED

That the Motion be Put.

FOR	AGAINST
Councillor Dixon	Councillor Jurd
Councillor Grine	
Councillor Harrington	
Councillor Hill	
Councillor King	
Councillor Lea	
Councillor Madden	
Councillor Mason	
Councillor Palmowski	
Councillor Pascoe	
Councillor Suvaal	
Councillor Watton	
Total (12)	Total (1)

The Procedural Motion was **PUT** and **CARRIED**.

MOTION

110

Moved: Councillor Pascoe**Seconded:** Councillor Lea**RESOLVED**

1. That Council place the Draft Cessnock Vineyards District Place Strategy and Draft Vineyards District Development Control Plan chapter on public exhibition for a period of 40 days.
2. That Council receive a further report following public exhibition of the Draft Vineyards District Place Strategy and Draft Vineyards District Development Control Plan chapter.

FOR**AGAINST**

Councillor Dixon
Councillor Grine
Councillor Harrington
Councillor Hill
Councillor Jurd
Councillor King
Councillor Lea
Councillor Madden
Councillor Mason
Councillor Palmowski
Councillor Pascoe
Councillor Suvaal
Councillor Watton

Total (13)**Total (0)****CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT NO. PE5/2025

SUBJECT: EXHIBITION OF DRAFT INFRASTRUCTURE CONTRIBUTIONS PLANS

Councillor Palmowski declared a Non Pecuniary Interest Less than Significant Conflict for the reason that she resides in the Huntlee Estate, however the report is on the new development. Councillor Palmowski remained in the Chamber and participated in discussion and voting.

MOTION **Moved:** Councillor Hill **Seconded:** Councillor Pascoe
111

RESOLVED

1. That Council place the Draft Cessnock City Wide s.7.11 Infrastructure Contributions Plan and Draft Cessnock City Wide s.7.12 Infrastructure Contributions Plan on public exhibition for a minimum period of 40 days.
2. That Council endorse an application to apply for a Ministerial Direction to increase the contribution cap from \$20,000 to \$30,000 per lot for the Loxford and Huntlee local catchments.
3. That Council receive a further report following public exhibition of the draft infrastructure contributions plans.

FOR

AGAINST

Councillor Dixon
Councillor Grine
Councillor Harrington
Councillor Hill
Councillor Jurd
Councillor King
Councillor Lea
Councillor Madden
Councillor Mason
Councillor Palmowski
Councillor Pascoe
Councillor Suvaal
Councillor Watton
Total (13)

Total (0)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT NO. PE6/2025

SUBJECT: **EXHIBITION OF DRAFT CESSNOCK DEVELOPMENT CONTROL PLAN CHAPTERS - 'TOURIST ACCOMMODATION ON RURAL AND CONSERVATION LANDS' AND 'SIGNAGE AND OUTDOOR ADVERTISING'.**

MOTION **Moved:** Councillor King **Seconded:** Councillor Jurd
112

RESOLVED

1. That Council place the Draft Tourist and Visitor Accommodation on Rural and Conservation Lands Development Control Plan chapter on public exhibition for a period of 28 days.
2. That Council place the Draft Signage and Outdoor Advertising Development Control Plan chapter on public exhibition for a period of 28 days.
3. That Council receive a further report following public exhibition of the Draft Development Control Plan chapters if unresolved objections are received or significant amendment to the Draft Development Control Plan Chapters are made post exhibition. Where there are no unresolved objections nor significant amendments proposed post exhibition, the Draft Development Control Plan Chapters be adopted by Council pursuant to the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2001*.

FOR

AGAINST

Councillor Dixon
Councillor Grine
Councillor Harrington
Councillor Hill
Councillor Jurd
Councillor King
Councillor Lea
Councillor Madden
Councillor Mason
Councillor Palmowski
Councillor Pascoe
Councillor Suvaal
Councillor Watton
Total (13)

Total (0)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY

CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY NO. CC9/2025

SUBJECT: AMENDMENT TO THE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER ADVISORY COMMITTEE CHARTER

MOTION **Moved:** Councillor Hill **Seconded:** Councillor Grine
113
RESOLVED

That Council adopts the amended Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee Charter for this term of the Committee.

Councillor King left the meeting, the time being 7.55pm

Councillor King returned to the meeting, the time being 7.57pm

FOR	AGAINST
Councillor Dixon	
Councillor Grine	
Councillor Harrington	
Councillor Hill	
Councillor Jurd	
Councillor King	
Councillor Lea	
Councillor Madden	
Councillor Mason	
Councillor Palmowski	
Councillor Pascoe	
Councillor Suvaal	
Councillor Watton	
Total (13)	Total (0)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY NO. CC10/2025

SUBJECT: LAND ACQUISITION - SOUTH CESSNOCK BUND WALL

MOTION **Moved:** Councillor Lea **Seconded:** Councillor Harrington
114
RESOLVED

1. That Council acquires by voluntary agreement of Austar Coal Mine Pty Ltd land and easement rights, being portions of lots 34, 35 and 36 in DP 755215, required for the South Cessnock Flood Mitigation Scheme Bund Wall project.
2. That Council delegates authority to the General Manager to acquire the land at the assessed market value for the sum of \$43,300 and compensate the landowner for reasonably incurred valuation and legal costs on presentation of paid invoices in accordance with the *Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991*.
3. That Council authorise the General Manager to execute all documents relating to the acquisition and/or documents relating to any application to the Office of Local Government for the approval of the Minister and the Governor for compulsory acquisition if required.
4. That Council authorise the General Manager in the event of failure to acquire by agreement to make any application to the Office of Local Government for the approval of the Minister and the Governor for compulsory acquisition.
5. That on transfer of ownership, Council resolves to classify the land being portions of lots 34, 35 and 36 in DP 755215 as operational land.

Councillor Jurd left the meeting, the time being 8.03pm

FOR	AGAINST
Councillor Dixon	
Councillor Grine	
Councillor Harrington	
Councillor Hill	
Councillor King	
Councillor Lea	
Councillor Madden	
Councillor Mason	
Councillor Palmowski	
Councillor Pascoe	
Councillor Suvaal	
Councillor Watton	
Total (12)	Total (0)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Councillor Jurd returned to the meeting, the time being 8.04pm

CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY NO. CC11/2025

**SUBJECT: AUSTRALIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION 2025
NATIONAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY - ATTENDANCE AND MOTIONS**

MOTION **Moved:** Councillor King **Seconded:** Councillor Grine

1. That Council determine the Mayor as the voting delegate and Councillors King, Palmowski and Hill as attendees for the Australian Local Government Association 2025 National General Assembly.
2. That Council endorse the regional motions identified by the Hunter JO Board and that the following motions be submitted for consideration at the Australian Local Government Association 2025 National General Assembly:
 - Jobs and Skills
 - Housing and Homelessness
 - Financial Sustainability
 - Roads and Infrastructure

AMENDMENT **Moved:** Councillor Hill **Seconded:** Councillor Suvaal

1. That Council determine Councillor Hill as the voting delegate and the Mayor (as alternate voting delegate), Councillors King and Palmowski as attendees for the Australian Local Government Association 2025 National General Assembly.
2. That Council endorse the regional motions identified by the Hunter JO Board and that the following motions be submitted for consideration at the Australian Local Government Association 2025 National General Assembly:
 - Jobs and Skills
 - Housing and Homelessness
 - Financial Sustainability
 - Roads and Infrastructure

PROCEDURAL MOTION **Moved:**
Seconded:

Councillor Grine
Councillor Lea

115

RESOLVED

That the Amendment be PUT.

FOR	AGAINST
Councillor Dixon	Councillor Hill
Councillor Grine	Councillor Suvaal
Councillor Harrington	
Councillor Jurd	
Councillor King	
Councillor Lea	
Councillor Madden	
Councillor Mason	
Councillor Palmowski	
Councillor Pascoe	
Councillor Watton	
Total (11)	Total (2)

The Procedural Motion was **PUT** and **CARRIED**.

The Amendment was then **PUT**.

AMENDMENT **Moved:** Councillor Hill **Seconded:** Councillor Suvaal

1. **That Council determine Councillor Hill as the voting delegate and the Mayor (as alternate voting delegate), Councillors King and Palmowski as attendees for the Australian Local Government Association 2025 National General Assembly.**
2. **That Council endorse the regional motions identified by the Hunter JO Board and that the following motions be submitted for consideration at the Australian Local Government Association 2025 National General Assembly:**
 - **Jobs and Skills**
 - **Housing and Homelessness**
 - **Financial Sustainability**
 - **Roads and Infrastructure**

FOR	AGAINST
Councillor Grine	Councillor Dixon
Councillor Hill	Councillor Harrington
Councillor Lea	Councillor Jurd
Councillor Madden	Councillor King
Councillor Palmowski	Councillor Mason
Councillor Suvaal	Councillor Pascoe
	Councillor Watton
Total (6)	Total (7)

Amendment **PUT** and **LOST**

The Motion was then **PUT** and **CARRIED**.

MOTION **Moved:** Councillor King **Seconded:** Councillor Grine
116
RESOLVED

1. That Council determine the Mayor as the voting delegate and Councillors King, Palmowski and Hill (alternate voting delegate) as attendees for the Australian Local Government Association 2025 National General Assembly.

2. That Council endorse the regional motions identified by the Hunter JO Board and that the following motions be submitted for consideration at the Australian Local Government Association 2025 National General Assembly:
 - **Jobs and Skills**
 - **Housing and Homelessness**
 - **Financial Sustainability**
 - **Roads and Infrastructure**

FOR	AGAINST
Councillor Dixon	
Councillor Grine	
Councillor Harrington	
Councillor Hill	
Councillor Jurd	
Councillor King	
Councillor Lea	
Councillor Madden	
Councillor Mason	
Councillor Palmowski	
Councillor Pascoe	
Councillor Suvaal	
Councillor Watton	
Total (13)	Total (0)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY NO. CC12/2025

SUBJECT: AUTHORISATION TO BORROW

Councillor Jurd declared a Non Pecuniary Interest Less Than Significant Conflict for the reason that family work there. Councillor Jurd remained in the Chamber and participated in discussion and voting.

Councillor Pascoe left the meeting, the time being 8.23pm

Councillor Pascoe returned to the meeting, the time being 8.24pm

MOTION **Moved:** Councillor Hill **Seconded:** Councillor King
117
RESOLVED

1. That Council applies for a loan facility in the amount of \$13,600,000 for a maximum period of twenty (20) years for the following projects:
 - a. \$10,000,000 towards construction of the new Waste Facility
 - b. \$1,400,000 for the Bridge Replacement Program
 - c. \$1,000,000 towards Shared Pathways Program
 - d. \$1,200,000 towards South Cessnock Flood Mitigation
2. That Council delegates the General Manager to negotiate the terms of the loan including tenure, rate and repayment periods.
3. That Council authorise the Mayor and General Manager to execute the documents relating to the Loan Agreement including affixing of the Council Seal if required.

Councillor Palmowski left the meeting, the time being 8.25pm

FOR	AGAINST
Councillor Dixon	Councillor Jurd
Councillor Grine	
Councillor Harrington	
Councillor Hill	
Councillor King	
Councillor Lea	
Councillor Madden	
Councillor Mason	
Councillor Pascoe	
Councillor Suvaal	
Councillor Watton	
Total (11)	Total (1)

CARRIED

Councillor Palmowski returned to the meeting, the time being 8.26pm

CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY NO. CC13/2025

SUBJECT: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY POST EXHIBITION

MOTION

Moved: Councillor Hill

Seconded: Councillor Lea

118

RESOLVED

1. That Council adopts the Community Engagement Strategy (incorporating the Community Participation Plan) following public exhibition.
2. That Council notes the report on the outcomes of the exhibition.

Councillor King left the meeting, the time being 8.29pm

Councillor King returned to the meeting, the time being 8.30pm

FOR

AGAINST

Councillor Dixon
Councillor Grine
Councillor Harrington
Councillor Hill
Councillor Jurd
Councillor King
Councillor Lea
Councillor Madden
Councillor Mason
Councillor Palmowski
Councillor Pascoe
Councillor Suvaal
Councillor Watton

Total (13)

Total (0)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY NO. CC14/2025

SUBJECT: INVESTMENT REPORT - FEBRUARY 2025

MOTION

Moved: Councillor Lea

Seconded: Councillor Hill

119

RESOLVED

That Council receives the Investment Report for February 2025 and notes that:

- **Investments are held in accordance with Council's Investment Policy, which is in accordance with the Ministerial Investment Order.**
- **Council's month end cash and investments balance was \$65,983,370.**

FOR	AGAINST
Councillor Dixon	
Councillor Grine	
Councillor Harrington	
Councillor Hill	
Councillor Jurd	
Councillor King	
Councillor Lea	
Councillor Madden	
Councillor Mason	
Councillor Palmowski	
Councillor Pascoe	
Councillor Suvaal	
Councillor Watton	
Total (13)	Total (0)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY NO. CC15/2025

SUBJECT: RESOLUTIONS TRACKING REPORT

MOTION

Moved: Councillor Lea

Seconded: Councillor Hill

120

RESOLVED

That Council receives the report and notes the information in the Resolutions Tracking Report.

FOR

AGAINST

Councillor Dixon
Councillor Grine
Councillor Harrington
Councillor Hill
Councillor Jurd
Councillor King
Councillor Lea
Councillor Madden
Councillor Mason
Councillor Palmowski
Councillor Pascoe
Councillor Suvaal
Councillor Watton
Total (13)

Total (0)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE NO. WI2/2025

SUBJECT: DRAFT WASTE AND RESOURCE RECOVERY STRATEGY 2026-31

Councillor Jurd declared a Non Pecuniary Interest Less Than Significant Conflict for the reason that family work there. Councillor Jurd remained in the Chamber and participated in discussion and voting.

MOTION **Moved:** Councillor Lea **Seconded:** Councillor Hill
121
RESOLVED

1. That Council place the draft Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy 2026-31 on public exhibition for a minimum period of 42 days.
2. That Council adopt the draft Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy 2026-2031 in the event there are no unresolved objections nor significant amendments proposed post exhibition

Councillor Jurd left the meeting, the time being 8.45pm

Councillor Jurd returned to the meeting, the time being 8.46pm

FOR	AGAINST
Councillor Dixon	
Councillor Grine	
Councillor Harrington	
Councillor Hill	
Councillor Jurd	
Councillor King	
Councillor Lea	
Councillor Madden	
Councillor Mason	
Councillor Palmowski	
Councillor Pascoe	
Councillor Suvaal	
Councillor Watton	
Total (13)	Total (0)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE NO. WI3/2025

SUBJECT: TENDER - T2025-07 BETTERMENT OF THOMAS STREET, NORTH ROTHBURY CIVIL WORKS

MOTION

122

Moved: Councillor Lea

Seconded: Councillor Harrington

RESOLVED

That Council accept the tender (T2025-07) from KCE Pty Ltd for the Betterment of Thomas Street, North Rothbury Civil Works for the lump sum of \$3,398,700 including GST.

FOR

AGAINST

Councillor Dixon
Councillor Grine
Councillor Harrington
Councillor Hill
Councillor Jurd
Councillor King
Councillor Lea
Councillor Madden
Councillor Mason
Councillor Palmowski
Councillor Pascoe
Councillor Suvaal
Councillor Watton
Total (13)

Total (0)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

BUSINESS OF WHICH WRITTEN NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN

BUSINESS WITH NOTICE NO. BN6/2025

SUBJECT: INVESTIGATION FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO REDUCE VANDALISM IN PUBLIC SPACES

MOTION **Moved:** Councillor King **Seconded:** Councillor Jurd

1. That the General Manager investigate and report back on potential opportunities to reduce vandalism in public places like sporting fields, skate parks and playgrounds, with recommendations for practical measures that can deter such activities.
2. That the report should include an assessment of current policies and strategies, consultation with relevant stakeholders and exploration of best practices from other Local Government Areas.

AMENDMENT **Moved:** Councillor Hill **Seconded:** Councillor Palmowski

That Council reconvene to further consider options available to help address impacts of crime within the Cessnock LGA after further consultation is undertaken between Cessnock Councillors and NSW Police.

FOR	AGAINST
Councillor Grine	Councillor Dixon
Councillor Hill	Councillor Harrington
Councillor Lea	Councillor Jurd
Councillor Palmowski	Councillor King
Councillor Pascoe	Councillor Madden
Councillor Suvaal	Councillor Mason
Councillor Watton	
Total (7)	Total (6)

The Amendment was **PUT** and **CARRIED** and as such became the Motion.

The Motion was then **PUT** and **CARRIED**.

MOTION

123

Moved: Councillor King**Seconded:** Councillor Jurd**RESOLVED**

That Council reconvene to further consider options available to help address impacts of crime within the Cessnock LGA after further consultation is undertaken between Cessnock Councillors and NSW Police.

FOR

Councillor Dixon
Councillor Grine
Councillor Hill
Councillor King
Councillor Lea
Councillor Madden
Councillor Mason
Councillor Palmowski
Councillor Pascoe
Councillor Suvaal
Councillor Watton
Total (11)

AGAINST

Councillor Harrington
Councillor Jurd

Total (2)**CARRIED**

Councillor Madden left the meeting, the time being 9.21pm

BUSINESS WITH NOTICE NO. BN7/2025

SUBJECT: REPORT ON UNSEALED ROADS AND COSTS

Councillor Grine left the meeting, the time being 9.23pm

Councillor Madden returned to the meeting, the time being 9.23pm

Councillor Grine returned to the meeting, the time being 9.25pm

MOTION Moved: Councillor Jurd **Seconded:** Councillor King

That Council requests a report from the General Manager for the following information:-

1. **How many unsealed roads in the Local Government Area.**
2. **How many unsealed roads are maintained.**
3. **How many unsealed roads are currently unmaintained.**
4. **What our current budget for unsealed roads maintenance is and what it would cost to maintain all the unsealed roads.**
5. **Residents that don't have maintenance on roads they must use to access their property, what do their rates cover.**
6. **Current what grants are available to help with our unsealed road program.**

AMENDMENT Moved: Councillor Hill **Seconded:** Councillor Suvaal

1. **That the General Manager provide a report to Council on the unsealed road network review, including information on Unsealed Road Maintenance Schedule, Council's Asset Management Framework and budget in line with the Long Term Financial Plan.**
2. **Currently what grants are available to help with our unsealed road program.**

FOR	AGAINST
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Councillor Dixon	
Councillor Grine	
Councillor Harrington	
Councillor Hill	
Councillor Jurd	
Councillor King	
Councillor Lea	
Councillor Madden	
Councillor Mason	
Councillor Palmowski	
Councillor Pascoe	
Councillor Suvaal	
Councillor Watton	
Total (13)	Total (0)

The Amendment was **PUT** and **CARRIED** and as such became the **MOTION**.

The Motion was then **PUT** and **CARRIED**.

MOTION**Moved:** Councillor Hill**Seconded:** Councillor Suvaal

124

RESOLVED

1. That the General Manager provide a report to Council on the unsealed road network review, including information on Unsealed Road Maintenance Schedule, Council's Asset Management Framework and budget in line with the Long Term Financial Plan.
2. Currently what grants are available to help with our unsealed road program.

FOR**AGAINST**

Councillor Dixon
Councillor Grine
Councillor Harrington
Councillor Hill
Councillor Jurd
Councillor King
Councillor Lea
Councillor Madden
Councillor Mason
Councillor Palmowski
Councillor Pascoe
Councillor Suvaal
Councillor Watton
Total (13)

Total (0)**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

BUSINESS WITH NOTICE NO. BN8/2025

SUBJECT: PITTMAN QUARRY PROPOSAL (SSD-76210271)

MOTION Moved: Councillor Palmowski **Seconded:** Councillor Lea

1. That Council make a submission to object to the proposal for the Pittman Quarry (SSD-76210271) outlining our concerns.
2. That Council liaise with Singleton Council to ascertain and action concerns that are shared by the two Councils.
3. That Council write to the Department of Planning to request the proponent to host meaningful consultation for openness and transparency and provision of information.

Councillor Jurd left the meeting, the time being 9.41pm

Councillor Jurd returned to the meeting, the time being 9.42pm

PROCEDURAL MOTION Moved: Councillor King
Seconded: Councillor Jurd

125

RESOLVED

That the matter be DEFERRED until such time as the application is lodged.

FOR	AGAINST
Councillor Dixon	Councillor Grine
Councillor Harrington	Councillor Hill
Councillor Jurd	Councillor Lea
Councillor King	Councillor Madden
Councillor Mason	Councillor Palmowski
Councillor Pascoe	Councillor Suvaal
Councillor Watton	
Total (7)	Total (6)

CARRIED

COUNCILLOR REPORTS

Councillor Palmowski

Cessnock City Council Seniors Festival Event at Branxton Community Hall on 8th March 2025

A Soiree was held March 8 at Branxton Community Hall in celebration of Cessnock City Councils Seniors Festival.

The fabulous event was held in collaboration with Miss Jade's Music School whose very talented students performed outstanding musical performances from singing, piano and violin.

There were also other marvelous performances from other community groups and singers who even successfully encouraged the whole room of attendees to join in on the fun following the lyrics of songs displayed on the community halls new projector and screen.

The event was, as always, very well organised by caretaker Helen and her incredible team. The team successfully organised admissions, seating, beautiful table decorations and a lovely afternoon tea.

The event served as a fundraiser to raise funds for Miss Jade's Music School in giving back to those struggling with financial difficulty in access to music lessons and other needs such as instrument repairs.

The Branxton Community Hall received a grant from Cessnock City Council for this event and wanted to pass on their thanks by way of a certificate which I was given on behalf of the Community Hall to Cessnock City Council.

Congratulations to Branxton Community Hall and Miss Jade's Music School for a successful afternoon.

Councillor King

Meeting with Police – Friday 14 March 2025

****Attendees:****

- Quintin King (Councillor)
- Daniel Watton (Councillor)
- Clayton Barr (Member for Cessnock)
- Dan Repacholi (Federal Member for Hunter)
- Senior police officials

****Meeting Summary:****

The meeting was convened as a result of me writing to the minister of police to discuss several key issues related to policing in the community, including crime statistics, police staffing levels, crime prevention strategies, and local law enforcement activities. The discussions were productive and highlighted several important aspects of police work and community involvement.

1. ****Crime Statistics****

The police presented an update on the current crime statistics for the area. A point that stood out for me was that we have the 3rd highest rate for vehicle theft in the state. The crime rates had some fluctuations but overall remain stable.

2. ****Population Forecast and a plan to maintain Police Staffing****

A point of discussion was the relationship between population growth and the availability of police officers. It was clarified that police staffing numbers are primarily determined by reported crime statistics rather than population forecasts. This means that if crime incidents are underreported, it may lead to fewer resources allocated to the area. As a result, it is crucial that all incidents, no matter how minor they may seem, be reported to the police in order to accurately reflect the crime levels in the community. This, in turn, could potentially lead to an increase in police staff allocation.

4. ****Reporting Crime – Public Awareness Campaign****

The police emphasised the importance of reporting all crimes, regardless of their perceived severity. They noted that the community's engagement in reporting crime is crucial for accurate crime data, which directly impacts resource allocation and staffing decisions.

5. ****Vandalism****

Police have a designated Crime Prevention Officer to work directly with local organisations. The officer's role is to help create and implement strategies to prevent crime.

6. ****Police Trail Bikes ****

The topic of trail bikes was discussed, with clarification that trail bikes are not authorised for general police use in the community. They are only allowed for land searches in specific cases.

7. ****Neighbourhood Watch Groups****

Neighbourhood Watch groups are an important part of community safety. The police confirmed that they are willing to actively support and work with these groups to enhance local vigilance and reduce crime. Councillors are encouraged to continue fostering these community-led initiatives.

8. ****Staffing and Crime Data Support****

Finally, the meeting underscored a key point: to secure more police staff for the area, the data needs to support it. This means that it is crucial for all community members to report each crime or suspicious activity. By doing so, the area's crime statistics will more accurately reflect the true needs of the community, increasing the likelihood of obtaining additional officers to meet those needs.

Recommendations from police council can take to help:

1. **Promote Crime Reporting**
2. **Support for Neighbourhood Watch Groups**
3. **Initiatives against vandalism**

Councillor Lea

Report: Cessnock Seniors Festival 2025

The 2025 Cessnock Seniors Festival was a resounding success, celebrating our senior community members with a diverse and engaging program of activities. This year's festival embraced the theme '*Time to Shine*', encouraging seniors to connect, learn, and engage in meaningful experiences. With over 50 events across 2 weeks, the festival certainly showcased the vibrancy and contributions of our more experienced residents.

The festival was made possible through the collaboration of the Cessnock City Council, community groups, and generous sponsors. A special thanks to our sponsors whose support allowed us to deliver a diverse range of activities.

Personal Highlights

Herstories Author Talk (Saturday, March 15 – Kurri Kurri Library)
One of the standout events of the festival was the *Herstories Author Talk*, featuring celebrated authors *Paula Beavan*, *Tea Cooper*, and *Cathryn Hein*. This session provided an enriching experience for attendees, offering a deep dive into storytelling, history, and the literary world. The authors shared insights into their writing journeys, inspirations, and the importance of preserving historical narratives through fiction. The session was well-attended, fostering an engaging discussion between the authors and the audience.

The event not only celebrated literature but also encouraged lifelong learning, a key pillar of the festival. The participation and enthusiasm from attendees highlighted the ongoing appetite for cultural and educational experiences within our broad community and I will highlight that this event in particular attracted visitors from well outside of our LGA and indeed people of all ages.

Sir Edgeworth David Museum Open Day (Sunday, March 16 – Abermain School of Arts)
Another remarkable event was the *Sir Edgeworth David Museum Open Days*, where visitors explored an extensive collection of documents, artefacts, photographs, and memorabilia capturing the rich history of the Coalfields. The museum's volunteers provided guided tours, sharing fascinating stories of the region's past and its contributions to Australia's development.

The event also included a *community BBQ*, offering a welcoming atmosphere for attendees to connect and reminisce. The passion and dedication of the museum's volunteers were evident, and the event successfully promoted the preservation of local history and heritage.

In conclusion, the festival successfully fostered *social connection, learning, and wellbeing* among seniors, aligning with the *5 Ways to Wellbeing* framework. Events provided opportunities to connect with peers, be active, take notice of cultural and historical contributions, keep learning through engaging activities, and give back by sharing experiences and stories.

The positive feedback received from attendees highlighted the importance of such initiatives in enhancing the quality of life for our residents. The festival reinforced the role of the Cessnock City Council in supporting an inclusive and thriving community.

The Cessnock Seniors Festival 2025 was an outstanding success, and I commend all organisers, volunteers, and sponsors for their dedication.

Of particular note I feel it is imperative to highlight the efforts of our 2024 Senior Citizen of the year, Delma Whyte. During the 2 weeks of the festival Delma attended at staggering 18 events as the festival's 2025 ambassador. This only strengthens what we all know, Delma was an extremely worthy recipient of the Senior Citizen of the year award.

I look forward to seeing the festival grow even further in the coming years, ensuring that our senior community members continue to feel valued, celebrated, and engaged.

Councillor Dixon

International Women's Day Celebration – Cessnock Leagues Club

Date – Friday 14 March 2024, **Location** - Cessnock Leagues Club, **Purpose** – Celebration of International Women's Day and networking event.

Introduction – The Cessnock Women Connects Networking Night, held on Friday, 14 March 2025 at the Cessnock Leagues Club was a successful event celebrating International Women's Day. The Event featured inspiring guest speakers, community support initiatives and networking opportunities for attendees.

Guest Speakers

The event showcased the achievements of local women, featuring four special guest speakers:

- Liz Riley, Cessnock Electorate Local Woman of the Year
- Lilly Bridge, Cessnock Young Female Achiever and Maree Callaghan Award winner
- Caitlin Barker, Cessnock Show Young Woman of the Year
- Taylee Short, Miss Australia Global World.

The speaker's presentations were well received, highlighting their personal achievements and dedication to the Cessnock area.

Community Support

- The event incorporated a community support element by collecting pantry item donations for the Hunter Food Relief Centre. This initiative demonstrated the attendees' commitment to supporting those in need.
- A raffle was held, featuring prizes generously donated by local businesses, including Elysia Wellness Retreat, Hunter's Quarter restaurant and Boho Bungalows Lifestyle Retreat. This added to the event's fundraising success and provided valuable exposure for local businesses.

Networking

The event provided a valuable platform for women to connect, network and share experiences. The atmosphere was positive and supportive, fostering a sense of community.

Conclusion

The Cessnock Women Connects Networking Night was a successful and inspiring event that effectively celebrated International Women's Day. The event highlighted the achievements of local women, fostered community support and provided valuable networking opportunities.

MAYORAL SUMMARY - 18 February to 19 March 2025

18 February - Hunter Valley Wine Tourism Alliance Meeting

This was CCC's turn to chair the Alliance meeting:

- STOMP Festival
- \$14million grant funding for APEX Park - \$14 million will be spent by Cessnock Council upgrading Apex Park, with the Federal Government providing a grant under the regional Precincts and Partnerships Program - one of seven projects to receive funding in NSW.
- Recap on Canberra Visit

20 February - Hunter Transmission Project - Social Impact Statement Interview

12 March - Meeting with Hon. Emily Suvaal MLC re Accelerating the reactivation of current and former mining lands to create jobs in the Hunter Region arranged by Hunter JO.

Today, 7 out of 10 Mayors through the Hunter JO met with Hon Emily Suvaal, Chair of the NSW Inquiry into the beneficial and productive post-mining land use. The purpose of the meeting was to raise the urgency and to seek a commitment from NSW Government to collaborate and invest in locally led solutions.

With a global decline in coal demand with the uptake of renewable energy across the world, the Hunter region is set to experience coal mine closures, with the loss of 12,000 jobs by 2030 and impacting around 50,000 direct and indirect supply chain jobs between now and 2050.

The mining and buffer lands have existing infrastructure such as train lines, connections to electricity, water, good transport connections to highways, all of which could be re-used for other businesses instead of the current plans to remove them. We need to prioritise the development of these mining and buffer lands to reutilise these important assets where feasible, with the added benefit of reducing the need to clear undisturbed bushland to create much needed new employment lands. Importantly, our plan ensures that biodiversity corridors are maintained or enhanced through this process.

13 March - Training - Affordable Housing Induction for Councillors

Housing affordability is at the forefront of community concerns across NSW. While the NSW and Commonwealth governments must do their part, local government is a key stakeholder and decision maker in the delivery of affordable housing. This role is especially critical given recent government funding and policy commitments.

Community Housing Industry Association NSW (CHIA NSW) developed a training course for councillors. CHIA NSW is the peak body for the community housing industry in NSW, which specialises in the delivery of affordable housing and support to communities.

- Explain key housing terms and concepts in plain English: Such as the difference between housing affordability, affordable housing, and social housing.
- Identify how councils can support the delivery of more affordable housing: Learn about the tools available to councils and understand the latest policy changes and available funding programs.
- Explore the important role of community housing providers (CHPs): Learn about CHPs and how they are regulated. Hear about the homes CHPs deliver and the lived experiences of the people they house.
- Delve into how councils can partner with CHPs: Explore examples of successful partnerships and learn about the benefits these projects delivered.
- Link councillors to affordable housing resources and support available.

14 March - Cessnock Police - Staffing and Crime meeting

At February's Ordinary meeting Council unanimously resolved to write to Police, State and Federal members to request for support and advocacy to address staffing shortages and ensure sufficient police resources are allocated to the Cessnock region to support our growing community. Myself, Dan Repacholi MP, Clayton Barr MP, Councillor King attended Cessnock Police Station for a discussion with senior staff in relation to Cessnock Police current staffing and their response to crime within the Cessnock Policing Sector.

16 March - Upper Yango Landholders Association - community resilience information presentation

Our small community, on the eastern boundary of Yengo National Park, was devastated by the 2019 Gospers Mountain and Little L Bushfires.

With support from a BLERF grant, we have spent five years enhancing resilience through an ecologically sensitive fire, flood and emergency management program.

At this event, we will share lessons learned and hopefully inspire other landholders to build their own resilience strategies for a safer, stronger future.

MOTION **Moved:** Councillor Watton **Seconded:** Councillor Suvaal
126
RESOLVED

That the meeting be extended to 10.30pm

FOR	AGAINST
Councillor Dixon	
Councillor Grine	
Councillor Harrington	
Councillor Hill	
Councillor Jurd	
Councillor King	
Councillor Lea	
Councillor Madden	
Councillor Mason	
Councillor Palmowski	
Councillor Pascoe	
Councillor Suvaal	
Councillor Watton	
Total (13)	Total (0)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

9.56pm

Confidential reports (closed session)

MOTION **Moved:** Councillor Suvaal **Seconded:** Councillor King
127
RESOLVED

That the meeting move into closed session in order to consider confidential items.

FOR	AGAINST
Councillor Dixon	
Councillor Grine	
Councillor Harrington	
Councillor Hill	
Councillor Jurd	
Councillor King	
Councillor Lea	
Councillor Madden	
Councillor Mason	
Councillor Palmowski	
Councillor Pascoe	
Councillor Suvaal	
Councillor Watton	
Total (13)	Total (0)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

9.59PM

Open Session

The meeting move back into open session and the Director Corporate and Community Services reported on the outcome.

CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY NO. CC16/2025

SUBJECT: AUTHORISATION TO PURCHASE PROPERTY ADJACENT TO COUNCIL FACILITY

This matter is considered to be confidential under Section 10A(2) (c) of the Local Government Act, as it deals with information that would, if disclosed, confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom the Council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business.

MOTION **Moved:** Councillor Suvaal **Seconded:** Councillor Hill
128

RESOLVED

1. That Council delegate to the General Manager authority to purchase Lot: 4 DP: 835450, known as 69 Vincent Street, Cessnock to facilitate the future expansion of the Cessnock Library Building.
2. That Council delegate to the General Manager authority to enter negotiations for purchase of the property within 10% of the recommendation associated with this report + GST.
3. That Council authorises the General Manager authority to execute the Transfer documentation of the purchase between Cessnock City Council and the private property owner.
4. That the Council authorises use of funds from the Development Contributions Plan for purchase and fit out of the property.
5. That on transfer of ownership, Council resolves to classify the land being Lot: 4 DP: 835450, as operational land.

FOR

AGAINST

Councillor Dixon
Councillor Grine
Councillor Harrington
Councillor Hill
Councillor Jurd
Councillor King
Councillor Lea
Councillor Madden
Councillor Mason
Councillor Palmowski
Councillor Pascoe
Councillor Suvaal
Councillor Watton

Total (13)

Total (0)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

The Meeting Was Declared Closed at 10.00pm

CONFIRMED AND SIGNED at the meeting held on 16 April 2025

.....**CHAIRPERSON**

.....**GENERAL MANAGER**

Disclosures Of Interest

Report No. DI3/2025

Corporate and Community Services



SUBJECT: DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: Chief Finance Officer

RECOMMENDATION

That Councillors now disclose any interests and reasons for declaring such interest in the matters under consideration by Council at this meeting.

SUMMARY

The provisions of Chapter 14 of the Local Government Act, 1993 regulate the way in which Councillors and nominated staff of council conduct themselves to ensure that there is no conflict between their private interests and their public trust.

The Act prescribes that where a member of Council (or a Committee of Council) has a direct or indirect financial (pecuniary) interest in a matter to be considered at a meeting of the Council (or Committee), that interest must be disclosed as soon as practicable after the start of the meeting and the reasons for declaring such interest.

As members are aware, the provisions of the Local Government Act restrict any member who has declared a pecuniary interest in any matter from participating in the discussions, voting on that matter, and require that member to vacate the Chamber.

Council's Code of Conduct provides that if members have a non-pecuniary conflict of interest, the nature of the conflict must be disclosed. The Code also provides for a number of ways in which a member may manage non pecuniary conflicts of interest.

ENCLOSURES

There are no enclosures for this report.

Mayoral Minute

Report No. MM2/2025

General Manager's Unit



MAYORAL MINUTE No. MM2/2025

SUBJECT: TARGA RALLY FOR CESSNOCK

RECOMMENDATION

That Council formally engage with Targa Australia to express Council's interest as a venue for a Targa-style rally event in the Cessnock Local Government Area.

REPORT/PROPOSAL

A "Targa rally" is a type of tarmac rally, a motorsport event where purpose-built rally cars compete on closed public roads, racing against the clock over various stages, with the winner being the fastest car overall.

Targa rally originates from the iconic **Targa Tasmania**, which is held annually in Tasmania, the Targa rally series has grown to include several major events across the country. These events provide an opportunity for both amateur and professional drivers to compete on closed public and private roads, testing their precision driving, strategy, and stamina.

Cessnock's, Hunter Valley Wine Country is one of New South Wales's premier tourism destinations, known for its scenic landscapes, world-class wineries, and strong motorsport heritage. Given our region's established tourism appeal and road networks, there is an opportunity to attract a Targa-style rally event to Cessnock, similar to those successfully hosted in other wine regions across Australia.

Targa rally events not only celebrate the sport of tarmac rallying but also bring significant economic and tourism benefits to host regions, driving increased visitation, accommodation bookings, and local business engagement. By leveraging our location, existing tourism infrastructure, and the region's affinity for motorsport, a Targa-style event could become a major annual fixture, drawing national and international attention.

The benefits of attracting Targa rally event have benefits extending far beyond the racetrack, impacting the economy, tourism and community development.

ENCLOSURES

There are no enclosures for this report

Motions of Urgency

Report No. MOU3/2025

Corporate and Community Services



SUBJECT: *MOTIONS OF URGENCY*

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: *Chief Finance Officer*

RECOMMENDATION

That Councillors now indicate if there are any matters of urgency which they believe should be conducted at this meeting of Council.

SUMMARY

Under Clause 10.5 of Council's Code of Meeting Practice, business may be transacted at a meeting of Council even though due notice of the business has not been given to the Councillors. This can only happen if a motion is passed to have the business transacted at the meeting, the Mayor rules that the business is of great urgency and the business notified in the agenda for the meeting has been disposed of.

Only the mover of such a motion can speak to the motion before it is put.

ENCLOSURES

There are no enclosures for this report.

Planning and Environment

Report No. PE7/2025

Planning and Environment



SUBJECT: *DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION NO. 8/2024/197/1
PROPOSING A CENTRE-BASED CHILD CARE FACILITY
(124 CHILDREN) WITH BASEMENT LEVEL CAR PARKING*

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: *Development Services Manager*

APPLICATION NUMBER:	8/2024/197/1
PROPOSAL:	Centre-based Child Care Facility (124 Children) with Basement Level Car Parking
PROPERTY DESCRIPTION:	LOT: 520 DP: 1155464
PROPERTY ADDRESS:	14A Fletcher Street NULKABA
ZONE:	R5 Large Lot Residential
OWNER:	NCJD Pty Ltd
APPLICANT:	Mr P Kirby

RECOMMENDATION

1. That:

- (i) Development Application No. 8/2024/197/1 proposing a centre-based child care facility at 14A Fletcher Street, Nulkaba (Lot: 520 DP: 1155464) be approved pursuant to Sections 4.16 and 4.17 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* subject to the conditions contained in this report.
- (ii) The reasons for the decision (having regard to any statutory requirements applying to the decision), are as follows:
 - The proposed development, subject to the recommended conditions, is consistent with the objectives of the applicable environmental planning instrument(s), being the *Cessnock Local Environmental Plan 2011 (CLEP)*, *State Environmental Planning Policy (Transport and Infrastructure) 2021* and *State Environmental Planning Policy (Resilience and Hazards) 2021*.
 - The proposed development is, subject to the recommended conditions, consistent with the objectives of the *Cessnock Development Control Plan 2010 (DCP)*.

- Subject to the recommended conditions, the proposed development will be provided with adequate essential services required under the Cessnock Local Environmental Plan 2011 (CLEP).
 - The proposed development is considered to be of an appropriate scale and form for the site, and is consistent with the character of the locality.
 - The proposed development, subject to the recommended conditions, will not result in unacceptable adverse impacts upon the natural or built environments.
 - The proposed development is a suitable and planned use of the site and its approval is consistent with the public interest considering the location of the development within an Urban Release Area.
 - Any issues raised in submission/s have been taken into account in the assessment report and where appropriate, conditions of consent have been imposed on the determination. Council has given due consideration to community views when making the decision to determine the application.
- (iii) The details contained above be publicly notified pursuant to Section 2.22 and Clause 20(2) of Schedule 1 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*
2. That Council notify in writing the persons who made a submission with regard to the proposed development, of Council's decision.

REASON FOR REPORT

Development Application No. 8/2024/197/1 is being referred to Council for determination as objections were received in response to the public exhibition period, and it is considered the objections constitute 'significant objection' in accordance with the provisions of 'Development Practice Note – Operation of the Development Assessment Unit (DAU) and Determination of Applications under Delegated Authority'.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council is in receipt of Development Application No. 8/2024/197/1, seeking approval for the construction of a 124 place centre-based child care facility at 14A Fletcher Street, Nulkaba. Specifically, the application proposes earthworks to facilitate a basement level car park, removal of four (4) trees, and construction and operation of a new child care facility.

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The Development Application has been assessed against the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, *Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulations 2021*, relevant Environmental Planning Instruments and Council policies.

The application was publicly exhibited on two (2) separate occasions.

Notification first occurred between 15 May 2024 and 29 May 2024. As a result, twenty two (22) submissions were received from sixteen (16) households raising objection to the proposal. The submissions received represent 145% of the adjoining notified households (with a total of eleven (11) households notified).

The application was publicly exhibited for the second time between 27 September 2024 and 14 October 2024, due to the 'Application Tracker' being offline for part of the initial notification period and due to the applicant providing amended documentation. As a result, twenty (20) submissions were received from eleven (11) households raising objection to the proposal. The submissions received represent 44% of the adjoining notified households (with a total of twenty-five (25) households notified).

Due to the number of submissions received over both exhibition periods, it was determined that this constituted a 'significant objection' and as such the application is being referred to Council for determination.

The key issues raised were: noise, lighting, traffic, vehicle/pedestrian access, intersection congestion, parking, wastewater disposal, privacy, and streetscape impacts.

The development has been assessed as being consistent with the objectives of the R5 Large Lot Residential zone under the *Cessnock Local Environmental Plan 2011* (CLEP 2011). A child care facility is a permissible land use within the R5 zone. Whilst the application does not propose further residential development, the siting and design of the child care facility does not restrict the future use of the land for another purpose. The proposed child care facility will provide an additional service within the area to help meet the day to day needs of residents within the locality without putting unreasonable demand on public services or facilities.

Potential impacts of the development include increased traffic, noise impacts and potential impacts on amenity. However, the assessment of the application has concluded that the development will not result in any significant adverse impacts on the surrounding natural or built environment subject to conditions of consent. The site is considered suitable for the proposed development and is considered to be in the public interest by proposing a child care facility in proximity to a developing urban release area.

A detailed assessment of the Development Application has been undertaken and is attached to this report as Enclosure 1.

Based on the assessment, it is recommended that the Development Application be approved, subject to the conditions of consent contained in Enclosure 2.

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ENCLOSURES

- [1](#) ➡ Assessment Report
- [2](#) ➡ Draft Conditions of Consent
- [3](#) ➡ Architectural Plans

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Planning and Environment

Report No. PE8/2025

Planning and Environment



SUBJECT: *DRAFT VILLAGES STRATEGY*

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: *Strategic Planning Manager*

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide an update of the Villages project, and to seek Council's endorsement to exhibit the draft Villages Strategy.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council place the draft Villages Strategy on public exhibition for a minimum period of 28 days.
2. That Council receive a further report following public exhibition of the draft Villages Strategy.

BACKGROUND

The importance of local villages within the Local Government Area (LGA) is recognised by goals and actions within our Community Strategic Plan (CSP) and Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS).

Strategic Planning have been working on developing a Villages Strategy to further define the features and characteristics that make the villages within the LGA unique, and capturing these in local character statements.

The project to date has included:

1. Consideration of villages which are not subject to an existing Town Centre plan, Masterplan or Strategy;
2. Documentation of the social, economic and environmental features of the villages which may contribute to local character as well as relevant planning considerations;
3. Initial community consultation;
4. Development of a draft Village Strategy.

The project and underlying process has been informed by the Local Character and Place Guidelines (2019, Department of Planning, Industry and Environment).

The draft strategy is provided at **Enclosure 1**.

REPORT/PROPOSAL

There are currently fifteen villages within the LGA, which are not subject to existing Town Centre plan, Masterplan or Strategy. Each of these villages has a character that is important to the LGA, village residents and local businesses.

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Planning and Environment



The draft Villages Strategy addresses the villages of Greta, Kearsley, Mulbring, North Rothbury and Wollombi / Laguna. These villages have been selected within the initial phase of the project for inclusion within the draft strategy as they act as entry points into the LGA, or are tourism nodes in their own rights. The draft strategy recommends that the remaining villages are included in future iterations of the strategy.

The draft strategy seeks to establish local character statements for the subject villages, in terms of their current character, and a desired future character. Additionally, a range of actions are included within the draft strategy to embed and support the character statements, create a sense of community, and enhance the environmental, social and economic prosperity of the villages. These include (but are not limited to):

- proposed amendments to *Cessnock Local Environmental Plan 2011* (CLEP 2011) and/or *Development Control Plan 2010* (DCP 2010);
- actions to advocate for specific projects and/or support local community groups;
- actions to improve safety, mobility and/or alternative transport opportunities; and
- development of concept plans for areas of local open space.

It is important to note that in some instances, amendments to planning controls to embed local character may not always be a matter for consideration for local development, or may not necessarily be supported by state government agencies. This is particularly relevant in relation to actions relating to zoning changes, or where development may be carried out as exempt or complying development.

CONSULTATION

Early consultation on this project was undertaken in 2022. The exhibition material comprised a Discussion Paper, that outlined the project intent; analysis of planning considerations; and assessments of the social, environmental and economic features of the villages within the LGA to assist the understanding of the existing character of each village.

Consultation activities comprised:

- a project specific page on Council's Have Your Say website;
- a survey, aimed at understanding what residents of villages valued about the place they live;
- Interactive mapping for people to proposed public domain improvements;
- Social media announcements; and
- Drop-in information/feedback sessions in Abermain, Ellalong, Greta, Mulbring and Wollombi.

A summary of the feedback received from the consultation activities is provided at **Enclosure 2. Enclosure 3** provides a summary of the written submissions received.

Much of the feedback received identified a range of public domain improvements, many of which were proposed on reserves or park land. Rather than include these public domain improvements within the draft Villages Strategy, this feedback may be utilised to inform the development of future concept plans for local parks or infrastructure projects, such as improvements to streetscape or intersections.

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The actions contained within the draft strategy have been reviewed by the respective internal key partners. Further consultation with government stakeholders and land holders will be undertaken during the exhibition period.

The project page of the HYS website will be updated to include the draft strategy and opportunities to provide online submissions.

Submission makers who responded to the initial consultation activities, including those who responded to the survey and provided contact details will be directly notified of the exhibition of the strategy.

STRATEGIC LINKS

a. Delivery Program

The project is relevant to the following objectives of Council's Community Strategic Plan (CSP) and draft 2024-2025 Operational Plan:

- Objective 1.1: Promoting social connections and wellbeing
- Objective 1.2: Strengthening community culture
- Objective 2.3 Increasing tourism opportunities and visitation in the area
- Objective 3.1: Protecting and enhancing the natural environment and rural character to the area
- Objective 3.2: Better utilisation of open space
- Objective 4.1: Better transport links
- Objective 5.2: Encouraging more community participation in decision making

b. Other Plans

The project is an identified project in Council's LSPS. Action 13 of the LSPS requires the preparation of a villages strategy that identifies key features of each village, and identifies opportunities for facilities / embellishments to the public domain in each village.

Additionally, Council's Centres and Villages Activation Plan (2020) proposes the preparation of local character statements to inform place activation.

IMPLICATIONS

a. Policy and Procedural Implications

Guidance for the project has been taken from the Local Character and Place Guidelines (2019, Department of Planning, Industry and Environment). This process relies on an evidenced based approach and community consultation to inform local character.

Exhibition of the draft Strategy is informed by Council's Community Participation Plan.

b. Financial Implications

The actions identified can be incorporated within existing or future works programs of the delivery partner units.

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c. Legislative Implications

Opportunities to embed local character within the planning framework are somewhat limited.

The Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) are not supportive of including Local Character Overlays within Local Environmental Plans (LEPs) as there is no endorsed framework to support this. Such overlays would (potentially) “turn-off” opportunities for alternate development approval pathways, such as exempt and complying development.

Further, “back-zoning” land to lower density zones (such as the RU5 Village Zone) or increasing minimum lot size requirements are inconsistent with the Strategies and Actions of the Hunter Regional Plan 2041 (HRP 2041).

Given the above, consideration of local character through the planning process is limited to provisions within Development Control Plans (DCPs). Such provisions are relevant when a Development Application (DA) is being assessed.

However, DCP provisions are not considered when a development is undertaken as Exempt or Complying Development under the *State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt and Complying Development) Codes 2008* (Codes SEPP). As many villages within the LGA are afforded alternative approval pathways for development (i.e., exempt or complying development), the provisions seeking to embed local character and its consideration through the DCP would be ad-hoc in application.

d. Risk Implications

Nil

e. Environmental Implications

The consideration of the local environment, particularly landscape setting, built form and heritage (built and cultural) is a key consideration for the development of local character statements. These features have been taken into consideration as part of the preparation of the local character statements for each of the priority villages.

f. Other Implications

Nil

CONCLUSION

A draft Villages Strategy has been prepared that addresses villages within the LGA: Greta, Kearsley, Mulbring, North Rothbury and Wollombi / Laguna.

It is recommended that the draft Villages Strategy be publicly exhibited for 28 days and that a report be provided to Council following the exhibition, summarising the outcomes and recommending a pathway for the further consideration of the project.

Planning and Environment

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Planning and Environment



ENCLOSURES

- [1](#) ➡ Draft Villages Strategy
- [2](#) ➡ Community Consultation Report
- [3](#) ➡ Submission Summary (written responses)

Planning and Environment

Report No. PE9/2025

Planning and Environment



SUBJECT: ***ANOMALIES PLANNING PROPOSAL POST EXHIBITION REPORT***

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: ***Strategic Planning Manager***

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to advise of the outcome of the public exhibition of Planning Proposal 18/2024/3/1 Anomalies Planning Proposal and seek Council's endorsement to finalise the Planning Proposal.

The Planning Proposal applies to multiple sites across Cessnock LGA and seeks to make minor amendments.

APPLICATION NUMBER:	18/2024/3/1
PROPOSAL:	Anomalies Planning Proposal
PROPERTY DESCRIPTION:	LGA Wide
PROPONENT:	Cessnock City Council

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council note the outcomes of community consultation for Planning Proposal 18/2024/3/1 – Anomalies Planning Proposal
2. That Council forwards the Anomalies Planning Proposal to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces with a recommendation that the plan be made pursuant to Section 3.36 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.

BACKGROUND

In accordance with Clause 5.1 of Cessnock City Council's Planning Proposal Policy, the planning proposal was forwarded to the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) for a Gateway determination.

The Proposal seeks to resolve minor amendments within the Cessnock LEP 2011 (CLEP). This will allow minor anomalies to be resolved and allow for better planning and land use outcomes for land owners.

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REPORT/PROPOSAL

The Planning Proposal makes the following amendments:

1. Insert storage premise as permitted with consent in the E4 General Industrial zone:

As part of the employment lands reforms in 2023, 'storage premises' was inadvertently removed from the land use table for areas previously zoned IN2 Light Industrial. This planning proposal will reintroduce this important land use in the E4 General Industrial zone.

2. Remove Minimum Lot Size (MLS) controls in Weston Town Centre:

Employment zones in the Cessnock LEP do not have a corresponding MLS. To ensure a consistent approach to MLS across Cessnock LGA, the Planning Proposal will remove the minimum lot size from the all areas zoned MU1-Mixed Use and E1-Local Centre in the Weston Town Centre. The MLS does not apply to other employment areas in the LGA.

3. Amendment to wording of Clause 4.1E of CLEP 2011:

Clause 4.1E of CLEP 2011 lists the requirements for the subdivision of land that is not serviced by a sewage reticulation system. Clause 4.1E part 1 (i) is proposed to have a minor wording edit. The clause will be amended to read "not less than 4,000m²", rather than simply "4,000m²". An allotment does not need to be exactly 4,000m² to meet the requirements of the clause.

4. Huntlee New Town Urban Release Area (URA)

Areas of the state significant Huntlee New Town site in Rothbury/North Rothbury are not identified as an Urban Release Area in the mapping that accompanies the *Cessnock Local Environmental Plan 2011*. It is unclear why these areas have been excluded as they have been identified for (predominantly) residential development. Council is seeking to amend the relevant URA maps to identify these additional areas, associated with Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the development, as URA.

5. Zoning anomaly Hospital Road, Weston (To be removed from Planning Proposal following consultation with Crown Lands):

An anomaly in mapping data has resulted in a parcel of land at Weston being zoned RU2 Rural Landscape instead of the surrounding C2 Environmental Conservation zoning (Figure 1). The exhibited Planning Proposal proposed to rezone the site to C2 Environmental Conservation. The site is crown land and is surrounded by crown land, including Kurri Kurri Cemetery, which is managed by Cessnock City Council.

During the Agency referral stage Crown Land objected to the planning proposal. This amendment has now been removed from the Planning Proposal and will not proceed. Refer to consultation section for further details.



Figure 1. Lot 328 DP: 755231 currently zoned RU2 outlined in red.

CONSULTATION

Formal public consultation regarding the Planning Proposal was carried out in accordance with the Gateway Determination and Council's Community Participation Plan (CPP). Community Consultation was conducted from 3 February 2025 to 3 March 2025.

Two submissions were received during public exhibition. One submission supports storage premise as permitted with consent in the E4 General Industrial zone and raises the importance of this land use for local businesses. The second submission supports amendments to remove the MLS from Weston and the Planning Proposal generally (full submission can be found in **Enclosure 2**).

Stakeholder feedback was sought from Rural Fire Service and Crown Lands as required in the Gateway Determination. Stakeholders were given 30 working days to respond from 29 January 2025 to 12 March 2025.

Crown Lands are opposed to the rezoning of Lot 328 DP: 755231 at Kurri Kurri Cemetery to C2 Environmental Conservation. Although the lot is not currently used as a cemetery it is set aside for future use as a cemetery. The C2 Zone does not permit cemeteries; due to this, Crown Lands does not support the rezoning. Therefore, it is recommended the zone remains as RU2 Rural Landscape and no amendments made to the Minimum Lot Size Map. Lot 328 DP: 755231 at Kurri Kurri Cemetery has been removed from the Planning Proposal.

No response has been received from RFS.

Planning and Environment

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STRATEGIC LINKS

a. Delivery Program

The planning proposal supports the goals of the Community Strategic Plan:

- 2.1.4 We attract investment and innovation from government, business, and industry.

This Planning Proposal creates consistent planning controls which will encourage investment in the LGA.

b. Other Plans

Cessnock Local Strategic Planning Statement 2036 (LSPS)

The following planning priorities and principles are relevant to the proposal.

Planning Priority 3: The character and vitality of our town centres and villages is protected and enhanced.

Amendment 2: By removing the minimum lot size from Weston town centre it ensures the controls are consistent with other town centres in Cessnock LGA.

Amendment 3: Ensuring the minimum lot size of “Not Less than 4000m²” is accurately stated ensures the many isolated villages without reticulated water systems within the LGA have clear and consistent planning controls.

Planning Priority 6: Rural residential, large lot residential development and environmental living are considered in limited and appropriate locations.

Ensuring the minimum lot size of “Not Less than 4000m²” is consistently stated ensures the many isolated villages without reticulated water systems within the LGA have clear and consistent planning controls.

Planning Priority 13: Our industrial land is developed in an orderly manner and meets future development needs.

The planning proposal will support the development and optimal use of employment lands in the LGA.

Planning Priority 14: Our industrial land fosters economic growth, business diversity, and employment opportunities.

The planning proposal will support the development and optimal use of employment lands in the LGA.

IMPLICATIONS

a. Policy and Procedural Implications

The status of the Planning Proposal is identified in the following process flow chart.

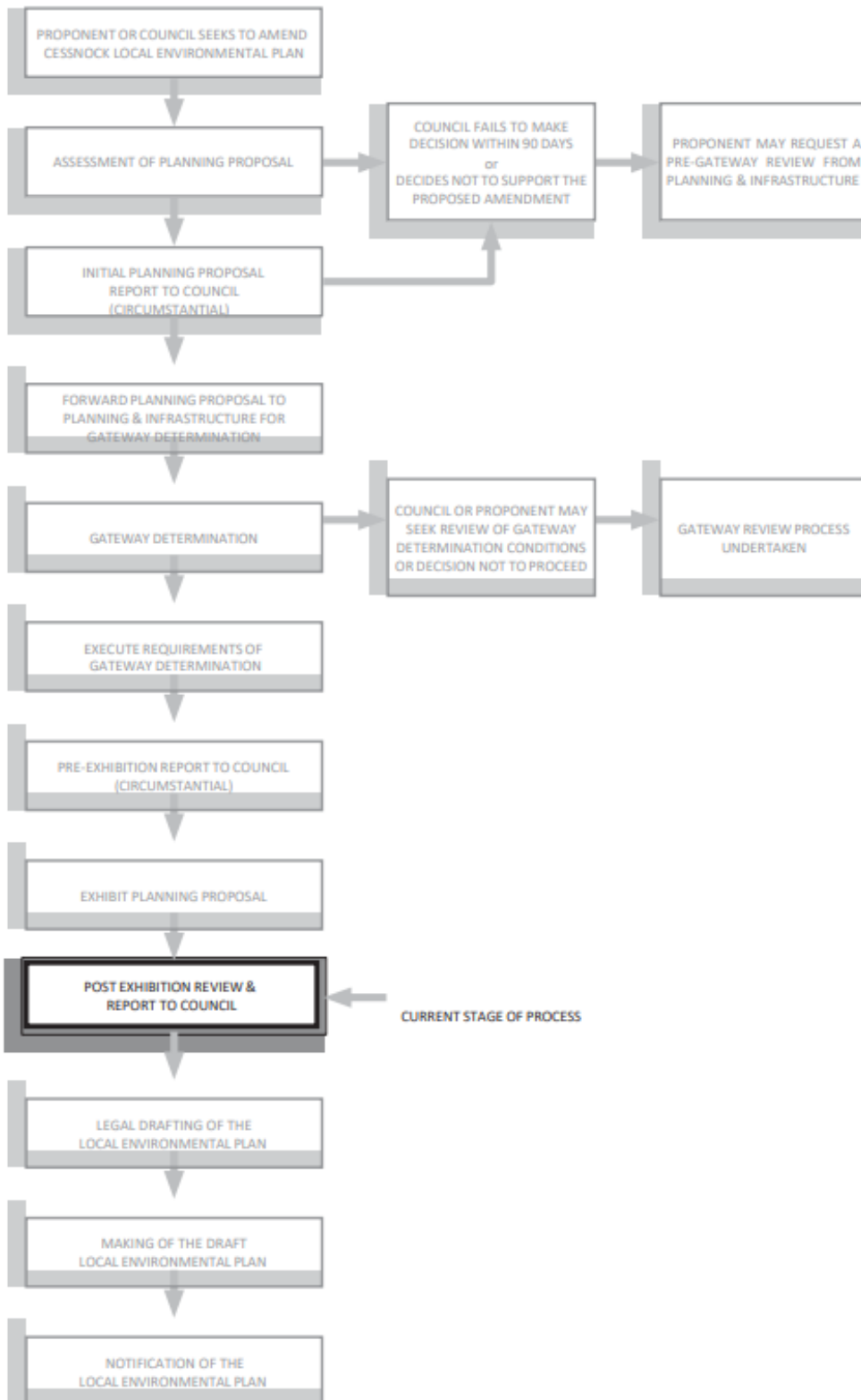
Planning and Environment

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PLAN MAKING PROCESS - LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL PLAN



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b. Financial Implications

As this is a Council initiated Planning Proposal the community consultation was funded from the Strategic Planning Budget.

c. Legislative Implications

The planning proposal was undertaken in accordance with the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979*, and *Local Government Act 1993*, in addition to the DPHI Local Environmental Plan Making Guideline and Council's Community Participation Plan.

d. Risk Implications

Nil

e. Environmental Implications

Nil

f. Other Implications

Nil

CONCLUSION

This Planning Proposal will allow minor anomalies to be resolved and allow for better planning and land use outcomes for land owners. The Planning Proposal has received no objections from agencies and has had positive feedback from the community. Therefore, it is recommended that Council forward the Planning Proposal to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces with a request to make the local environmental plan.

ENCLOSURES

- [1](#) ➡ Anomalies Planning Proposal
- [2](#) ➡ Response to Submissions Anomalies Planning Proposal

Planning and Environment

Report No. PE10/2025

Planning and Environment



SUBJECT: *EXHIBITION OF DRAFT DEVELOPMENT CONTROL PLAN - THE VINTAGE*

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: *Strategic Planning Manager*

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's endorsement to publicly exhibit a draft updated Development Control Plan (DCP) applying to the Vintage. The DCP has been amended to reflect a Planning Proposal seeking to expand an Additional Permitted Use permitting residential flat buildings at the Vintage.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council places the draft 'The Vintage' Development Control Plan on public exhibition for a period of 28 days, as required by Council's Community Participation Plan.
2. That Council receive a further report following public exhibition of the Draft Development Control Plan chapters if unresolved objections are received or significant amendment to the Draft Development Control Plan Chapter are made post exhibition. Where there are no unresolved objections nor significant amendments proposed post exhibition, the Draft Development Control Plan Chapters be adopted by Council pursuant to the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2001*.

BACKGROUND

The Vintage is an integrated tourist development that is predominantly tourist and visitor accommodation and tourist facilities in combination with other uses permissible on the land including residential development. The area is zoned SP3 Tourist and the uses of the land are prescribed under clause 7.11A and schedule 1 of the *Cessnock Local Environmental Plan 2011* (LEP).

An area based DCP chapter applies to The Vintage, providing development controls specific to the entire site.

In January 2025, Council received a draft Planning Proposal to amend the *Cessnock Local Environmental Plan 2011*, seeking to expand an area benefitting from an Additional Permitted Use clause in Schedule 1 of the LEP, to facilitate *residential flat buildings* on an expanded area at The Vintage. The proposed amendment to the LEP will be reported to Council separately for consideration once Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) Gateway Determination conditions have been met.

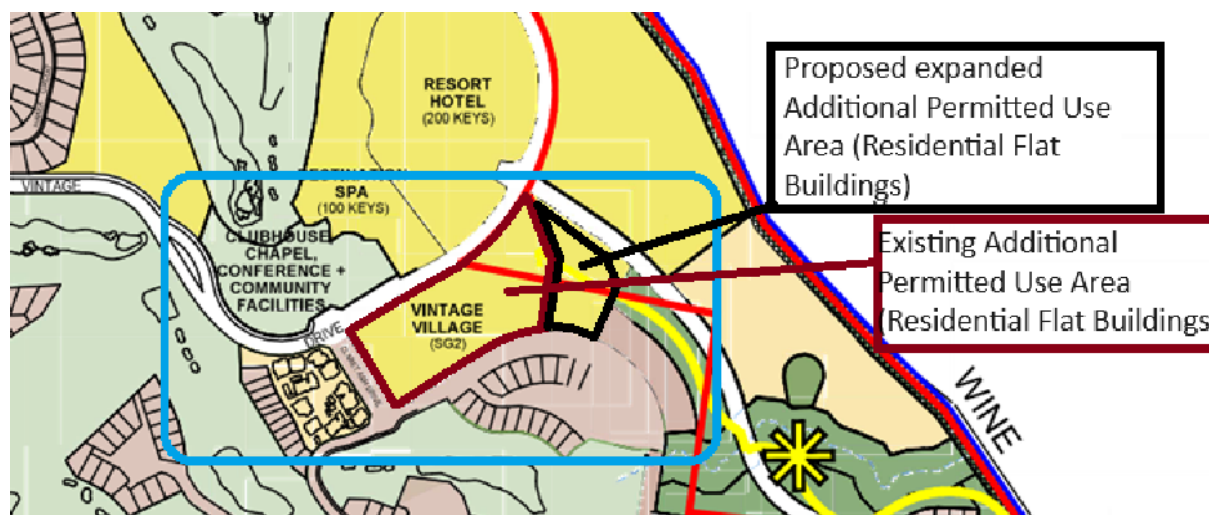
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**REPORT/PROPOSAL**

An amended DCP chapter for The Vintage has been drafted to include an updated Master Plan that reflects the proposed changes included in the draft Planning Proposal, accommodating the proposed expanded area for residential flat buildings. A marked-up excerpt from the amended MasterPlan indicating the existing and proposed Additional Permitted Use Area (Residential Flat Buildings) is shown below:



The DCP chapter (and Additional Permitted Use LEP clause) currently include a height limit of 14 metres for residential flat buildings. Further development controls for residential flat buildings are provided by the *State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing) 2021*, the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021 (the Regulation)* and the NSW Apartment Design Guide.

Other changes included in the draft Vintage DCP chapter include minor updates to formatting and references. No changes have been made to development controls.

This report is seeking Council endorsement to place the draft DCP on public exhibition for 28 days, to allow the views of the community to be taken into consideration prior to the amended chapter being finalised.

OPTIONS

Council has the following options:

1. Support the recommendation that Council place the draft 'The Vintage' Development Control Plan chapter on public exhibition for a period of 28 days.

This is the recommended option.

2. Not support the recommendation, for the following reasons:

(To be provided by Council).

This option is not recommended

CONSULTATION

The draft DCP chapter is proposed to be publicly exhibited for a period of 28 days. Council's development services team were consulted during the preparation of this draft chapter.

STRATEGIC LINKS

a. Delivery Program

The draft DCP generally aligns with the themes and objectives of the Cessnock Community Strategic Plan (CSP).

b. Other Plans

Hunter Regional Plan 2041

The Hunter Regional Plan 2041 (HRP) provides the overarching strategic framework to guide development, investment and planning within the Hunter Region to 2041. This draft DCP is consistent with the objectives of the HRP in that it will deliver greater housing choice within a specialised area of the LGA that already permits higher density land-uses.

Cessnock Local Strategic Planning Statement 2036

The Cessnock Local Strategic Planning Statement 2036 (LSPS) sets out the 20-year vision for land use in the local area. It establishes the special character and values of the LGA that are to be preserved and how change will be managed into the future.

The draft DCP is generally consistent with the provisions of the LSPS. The Planning Priorities of the LSPS that are relevant to the proposal type and location are:

- Planning Priority 7: Urban development is encouraged in areas with existing infrastructure.
 - Planning Principles:
 1. Infill development is encouraged in established urban areas.
 2. Our urban areas are compact and well serviced.
- Planning Priority 23: The scenic and rural landscape of our Vineyards District is preserved.
 - Planning Principles:
 3. Visually significant views and tree-lined local road corridors will be preserved.

Planning and Environment

Report No. PE10/2025

Planning and Environment



The height limit included in the draft DCP chapter was negotiated to ensure that the visual impact of any proposed *residential flat building* is not greater than the impact of existing or permissible residential development within The Vintage. Particularly, that it is not greater than the existing dwellings located along the western side of Wine Country Drive.

IMPLICATIONS

a. Policy and Procedural Implications

An amendment to the DCP must be undertaken in accordance with the provisions of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021*.

b. Financial Implications

The preparation of this draft DCP has been funded by the fees paid by the developer of the Vintage (in accordance with Council's adopted fees and charges) as the proponent of the Planning Proposal necessitating the amendments.

c. Legislative Implications

An amendment to the DCP must be undertaken in accordance with the provisions of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021*.

d. Risk Implications

Nil

e. Environmental Implications

Nil

f. Other Implications

Nil

CONCLUSION

Placing the draft DCP chapter on exhibition will allow Council the opportunity to take the views of the community and other stakeholders into account before considering the adoption of the DCP.

ENCLOSURES

[1](#) Draft DCP Chapter - The Vintage

Planning and Environment

Report No. PE11/2025

Planning and Environment



SUBJECT: ***TENDER T2025-10 BACKGROUND STUDIES AND
STRUCTURE PLAN FOR ANAMBAH TO BRANXTON
REGIONAL SIGNIFICANT GROWTH AREA***

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: ***Strategic Planning Manager***

SUMMARY

Evaluation and selection of tender for Tender No. T2025-10 Background Studies and Structure Plan for Anambah to Branxton Regional Significant Growth Area (RSGA).

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council accept the tender T2025-10 from Urbis Ltd for the Background Studies and Structure Plan for Anambah to Branxton RSGA for the lump sum of \$3,416,872 (inclusive of GST).
2. That Council allow for the acceptance of any additional Provisional Items for the Contract which will be fully funded under the grant Council was successful in securing under the Commonwealth Housing Support Program - Stream 1.

BACKGROUND

Council requires professional services to prepare technical background studies and develop the strategic land use and infrastructure planning framework to guide the anticipated future growth of the Anambah to Branxton Regionally Significant Growth Area (A2B RSGA).

The A2B RSGA is located at the convergence of the New England Highway, the Hunter Expressway, and the Main Northern Rail Line and includes part of Cessnock, Maitland, and Singleton local government areas. The A2B RSGA was identified in the Hunter Regional Plan 2041 as having potential for significant growth to deliver housing and employment uses but acknowledging a coordinated approach is required across Government to ensure cohesive urban outcomes supported by an infrastructure first approach to meet the future needs of emerging local communities.

Council secured funding under the Commonwealth Housing Support Program for delivering RSGA-wide deliverables, on behalf of a Project Working Group, also comprising Maitland and Singleton Councils, the Department of Planning Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) and Transport for New South Wales (TfNSW).

The Project Working Group, in liaison with other key State Government Departments and infrastructure delivery agencies provided technical input into the project scoping, including development of a draft Concept Plan, Planning Principles, and Council's Tender Specifications.

Planning and Environment

Report No. PE11/2025

Planning and Environment



The purpose of the Tender is to set the strategic land use and infrastructure planning framework for future development across the A2B RSGA by:

- identifying areas suitable for housing, employment, and other land uses
- refining the future centres hierarchy
- establishing the required transport network and infrastructure capacity to support the envisaged growth
- identify staging and sequencing of development to enable infrastructure delivery.

The Project will facilitate the progress of the strategic planning process for the A2B RSGA.

REPORT

Request for Tender

The Request for Tender (RFT) documents were prepared by Council officers, and reviewed by the Tender Audit Panel (TAP) before tenders were called. The form of contract selected was *HJO Terms of Engagement Consultant*. The RFT called for a lump sum tender for the delivery of the following deliverables for the entire A2B RSGA:

- Structure Plan
- Population and Dwelling Analysis
- Employment and Economic Analysis
- Transport Strategy
- Infrastructure Needs Analysis
- Community and Social Infrastructure Needs Analysis
- Program-wide Strategic Business Case
- Biodiversity Assessment
- Flooding and Water Cycle Management Study
- Bushfire Assessment
- Odour, Air, Noise and Vibration Assessment
- Strategic Geotechnical and Mine Subsidence Assessment
- Strategic Contamination Assessment
- Heritage Assessment
- Infrastructure Delivery Plan

Invitation

Tenders were invited on 23 January 2025 on Council's VendorPanel and advertised in the following publications:

Publication	Day	Date
Newcastle Herald	Saturday	1 February 2025
Sydney Morning Herald	Tuesday	4 February 2025

Planning and Environment**Report No. PE11/2025****Planning and Environment****Addenda**

The following addenda were issued via the VendorPanel Portal to all prospective tenderers during the invitation period:

No.	Date	Description
1	30 January 2025	Amendment to Section 3 Part E – Tender Specification – Mesoscopic Traffic and Transport Model

Closure

Tenders closed 2pm Tuesday 4 March 2025

TIME FRAME

The contract is proposed to commence on 1 May 2025 and be completed within a twelve-month timeframe in order for Council to meet the May 2026 deadline for expending the Commonwealth Housing Support Program grant, which provides the funding for the Tender.

LOCAL CONTENT

Nil

OPTIONS

Option 1: Accept the tender from Urbis Ltd in the amount of \$3,416,872 (including GST). This is the preferred option.

Option 2: Decline to accept any offers and negotiate with other service providers. This option is not recommended as it will negatively impact on the project program.

CONSULTATION

The following Council and State officers were consulted for verification of specialist technical matters during the tender process:

- Asset Planning Manager, Cessnock City Council
- Community and Cultural Development Manager, Cessnock City Council
- Infrastructure Manager, Cessnock City Council
- Open Space and Community Facilities Manager, Cessnock City Council
- Senior Environmental Planner, Cessnock City Council
- Stormwater and Flood Mitigation Coordinator, Cessnock City Council
- Coordinator City Planning, Maitland City Council
- Coordinator Natural Environment & Resilience, Maitland City Council
- Senior Strategic Planner, Maitland City Council
- Traffic Infrastructure Engineer, Maitland City Council
- Principal Planner, Singleton Council
- Director Regional Strategic Planning, Department of Planning Housing and Infrastructure

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- Senior Biodiversity Officer, Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
- Senior Floodplain Officer, Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
- Senior Manager Transport Planning, Transport for NSW
- Senior Transmission Planner, Ausgrid

Communication about progress of the Project will be ongoing and include updates on progress via Council's website, including when opportunity for feedback is planned.

The Tender also includes provision for holding a key landowner workshop as part of preparing the draft Structure Plan for subsequent public exhibition.

STRATEGIC LINKS

a. Delivery Program

Acceptance of the tender will contribute to a well-planned RSGA which will achieve the following objectives of *2022-2026 Delivery Program*:

- Objective 2.1: Diversify and grow out economy
- Objective 2.2: Achieving more sustainable employment opportunities
- Objective 2.3: Increasing tourism and visitation in the area
- Objective 3.1: Protecting and enhancing the natural environment and rural character of the area
- Objective 3.2: Better utilization of existing open space
- Objective 4.1: Better transport links
- Objective 4.2: Improving the road network

b. Other Plans

Planning priorities from the Cessnock Local Strategic Planning Statement;

- Planning Priority 5: Infrastructure and services meet the needs of our community and are appropriately funded
 - Infrastructure for new development is appropriately planned and funded
 - Rezoning land for urban purposes will be prioritised in areas where existing infrastructure capacity exists.
- Planning Priority 8: Our rural land is protected from incompatible development.
 - Effective buffers are maintained to protect rural lands from further encroachment by non-agricultural development.
 - Productive and potentially productive rural land is appropriately zoned and protected from land-use conflicts.
 - The agricultural production value of the Vineyards District is protected from incompatible uses.

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- Planning Priority 11: Our City has a defined hierarchy of commercial centres
 - Our centres meet local retail and service needs, without reducing the viability of other centres nearby.
 - Development is consistent with the objectives of the land-use zone and consistent with the commercial centre hierarchy
- Planning Priority 14: Our industrial land fosters economic growth, business diversity, and employment opportunities.
 - Employment generating activities that take advantage of the City's strengths, including its inter-regional connectivity will be supported.
 - Major freight movement corridors will be protected to support regional connectivity and land-use for industrial and mixed-use activities
- Planning Priority 15: Key infrastructure is leveraged to support economic growth.
 - Land-use and infrastructure planning are aligned to maximise the use and capacity of existing infrastructure and development is appropriately sequenced.
- Planning Priority 17: Our lands of environmental value are protected and enhanced
 - Natural assets and lands of environmental value are identified and protected.
 - Areas of high biodiversity are identified and conserved.
- Planning Priority 18: Our areas of biodiversity and biodiversity corridors are enhanced and protected.
 - Significant biodiversity corridors will be identified and protected.
 - The impacts that planning proposals or development applications have on biodiversity corridors are considered early in the planning process.
 - Development in biodiversity corridors is not intensified and development that would sever a biodiversity corridor will not be supported\

IMPLICATIONS

a. Policy and Procedural Implications

The tender process has been carried out in accordance with:

- *Cessnock City Council Procurement Policy,*
- *Cessnock City Council Procurement Guidelines,*
- *Tendering Guidelines for NSW Local Government 2009, and*
- *NSW Government – Code of Practice for Procurement 2005.*

b. Financial Implications

The lump sum price of the preferred Tender is \$3,416,872 (inc. GST), which is consistent with the project budget.

The Tender would be full funded from a \$3,972,000 grant Council was successful in securing under the Commonwealth Housing Support Program – Stream 1, announced mid last year.

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The grant is administered by the State and Council received a funding agreement and subsequently an initial payment of 70% in late December 2024. The final payment (30% of the grant) will be forthcoming on Council reporting the completion of the project in May 2026.

Council is not required under the funding agreement to contribute financially to the Tender, as the allocation of Strategic Planning staff involved in administering the Tender and staff resources involved from across Council to provide technical input and review the outputs, is accepted to be Council's in-kind contribution toward to the project delivery, as is the staff resources allocated by Maitland and Singleton Councils, DPHI and TfNSW.

c. Legislative Implications

The tender process has followed the legislative provisions, referenced in *Cessnock City Council Procurement Policy* and *Cessnock City Council Procurement Procedure*, as follows:

- *Local Government Act 1993*
- *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021*
- *NSW Modern Slavery Act 2018 No 30*

In particular, reference is made to Part 7, Division 4, Clause 178 of the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 (Acceptance of tenders)*:

1. After considering the tenders submitted for a proposed contract, the Council must either:
 - (a) accept the tender that, having regard to all the circumstances, appears to it to be the most advantageous, or
 - (b) decline to accept any of the tenders.
2. A Council must ensure that every contract it enters into as a result of a tender accepted by the Council is with the successful tenderer and in accordance with the tender (modified by any variation under clause 176). However, if the successful tender was made by the Council (as provided for in section 55 (2A) of the Act), the Council is not required to enter into any contract in order to carry out the requirements of the proposed contract.
3. A Council that decides not to accept any of the tenders for a proposed contract or receives no tenders for the proposed contract must, by resolution, do one of the following:
 - (a) postpone or cancel the proposal for the contract,
 - (b) invite, in accordance with clause 167, 168 or 169, fresh tenders based on the same or different details,
 - (c) invite, in accordance with clause 168, fresh applications from persons interested in tendering for the proposed contract,
 - (d) invite, in accordance with clause 169, fresh applications from persons interested in tendering for contracts of the same kind as the proposed contract,
 - (e) enter into negotiations with any person (whether or not the person was a tenderer) with a view to entering into a contract in relation to the subject matter of the tender,
 - (f) carry out the requirements of the proposed contract itself.

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4. If a Council resolves to enter into negotiations as referred to in sub clause (3) (e), the resolution must state the following:
 - (a) the Council's reasons for declining to invite fresh tenders or applications as referred to in sub clause (3) (b)–(d),
 - (b) the Council's reasons for determining to enter into negotiations with the person or persons referred to in sub clause (3) (e).

d. Risk Implications

To minimise Council's exposure to business risks, the RFT required:

- Satisfactory financial capacity, and
- Adequate levels of insurances.

The authenticity of the Contractor's certificates of currency for the following insurance policies will be verified:

- Workers Compensation,
- Public Liability (\$20M or greater),
- Comprehensive Motor Vehicle,
- Professional Indemnity, and
- Insurance of the Works.

Risks identified in relation to safety, environment and quality are mitigated by the RFT requirement for adherence to the following system standards:

- AS/NZS ISO 9001:2008 - Quality Management Systems

e. Other Implications

Nil

CONCLUSION

The tender from Urbis Ltd in the lump sum amount of **\$3,416,872 (including GST)** offers the best value for money for the delivery of Background Studies and Structure Plan for Anambah to Branxton RSGA as outlined in Tender T2025-10.

ENCLOSURES

- 1 ➡ T2025-10 Tender Evaluation Methodology
- 2 T2025-10 Tender Evaluation Matrix - *This matter is considered to be confidential under Section 10A(2) (di) of the Local Government Act, as it deals with commercial information of a confidential nature that would, if disclosed (i) prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied it.*

Corporate and Community

Report No. CC17/2025

Corporate and Community Services



SUBJECT: ***DONATIONS UNDER SECTION 356 - RATES SUBSIDY POLICY***

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: ***Chief Finance Officer***

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is for Council to consider applications from Community Groups received for rate relief via a donation under Section 356 of the *Local Government Act 1993* (the Act) as per the Rates Subsidy Policy (the Policy).

RECOMMENDATION

1. **That Council applies a 50% Rates Subsidy for the following Assessments in accordance with the Rates Subsidy Policy effective for the 2025-26 rating year.**

Assessment	Organisation	Location
59204	Cessnock Homing Pigeon Club	Cessnock
123596	Trustees Masonic Hall	Paxton
139907	Masonic Holdings Limited	Weston
191502	Kurri Kurri Motor Cycle Club Inc	Buchanan
252916	Richmond Vale Preserv. Co-op Soc.	Kurri Kurri

2. **That the General Manager write to each applicant advising of Council's decision according to the Rates Subsidy Policy.**

BACKGROUND

Council provides a donation via rate relief for a number of specified properties under Section 356 of the Act. The subsidy is up to 50% rebate of the general rates levy and is applied during the rate levy process.

The Policy which was last revised in November 2022, provides a transparent process for the subsidy to be applied for and applied in the following financial year. The Policy provides that applicants need to demonstrate adherence to the Policy and the applications have been assessed against the criteria set by Council.

Council publicised the availability of the Rates Subsidy on social media platforms encouraging eligible applicants that meet the principles of the Policy to complete Council's Rate Subsidy application and supply all supporting documentation prior to 15 March 2025.

The Policy principles outlined in Section 4 provides that it is a requirement that all applicants must reapply annually prior to 15 March each year.

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Corporate and Community Services



REPORT/PROPOSAL

Assessments recommended for approval

Council received five applications from not-for-profit community groups who have been able to supply all the information required and comply with the principles of the Policy.

Applications were received from:

Assessment	Organisation	Location
59204	Cessnock Homing Pigeon Club	Cessnock
123596	Trustees Masonic Hall	Paxton
139907	Masonic Holdings Limited	Weston
191502	Kurri Kurri Motor Cycle Club Inc	Buchanan
252916	Richmond Vale Preserv. Co-op Soc.	Kurri Kurri

Assessment	Organisation	Property Description	Mission Statement or Charter	Insurance cover	Financial Statement	Subsidy %	Total Subsidy Amount
59204	Cessnock Homing Pigeon Club	24 Ferguson Street, Cessnock	Y	Y	Y	50%	\$1,772.28
123596	Trustees Masonic Hall	7 Frances Street, Paxton	Y	Y	Y	50%	\$1,940.72
139907	Masonic Holdings Limited	47 Second Street, Weston	Y	Y	Y	50%	\$2,126.01
191502	Kurri Kurri Motor Cycle Club Inc	George Booth Drive, Buchanan	Y	Y	Y	50%	\$1,042.35
252916	Richmond Vale Preserv. Co-op soc.	Lang Street, Kurri Kurri	Y	Y	Y	50%	\$4,781.83

The rate subsidy for 2025-26 is estimated to be \$11,663 which has been included in the draft 2025-26 Operational Plan. As the rate structure for 2025-26 has not yet been adopted by Council, the estimate uses the current year rating structure and therefore will be slightly different for the forthcoming financial year.

The organisations listed below who previously qualified for the subsidy did not return an application for next year, with this requirement being included in the Policy following the 2019 review by Council.

The Policy principles outlined in Section 4 provides that it is a requirement that all applicants must reapply annually prior to 15 March each year.

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It is estimated that had these organisations submitted an application as they have previously, an additional \$33,685 in subsidy would be applicable.

Assessment	Organisation	Location
5173	Cessnock Masonic Properties Pty Ltd	Cessnock
17178	Country Women's Assoc NSW (Evening	Cessnock
139378	Weston Pre-school	Weston
157156	Cessnock Mini Bike Club	Cessnock
158337	Cessnock Clay Target Gun Club	Cessnock
176263	Greta Pre-School Kindergarten	Greta
197467	Cessnock Rifle Club Inc	Cessnock
198655	Aberdare Pre-School Inc	Aberdare
275529	Cessnock Pistol Club Inc	Cessnock
286674	Branxton Preschool	Branxton

OPTIONS

Approve the recommendation as drafted is the preferred option. Alternatively, Council can refuse the applications, noting that all the approved applicants comply with the Policy.

CONSULTATION

Revenue Team Leader
Chief Financial Officer

STRATEGIC LINKS**a. Delivery Program**

Objective 1.2 Strengthening community culture
Objective 5.3 Ensuring Council is accountable and responsive to the community

b. Other Plans

Nil

IMPLICATIONS**a. Policy and Procedural Implications**

The Policy provides a rate subsidy for those identified groups at the rate of up to 50% of the general rates component for the forthcoming financial year.

b. Financial Implications

The cost is estimated at \$11,663 and is included in the draft Operational Plan for 2025-26.

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c. Legislative Implications

Section 356 of the Act allows Council to make such a donation.

d. Risk Implications

If Council elects not to make donations as recommended, not-for-profit community groups may be adversely affected, which might cause some financial hardship for these groups.

e. Environmental Implications

Nil

f. Other Implications

Nil

CONCLUSION

For Council endorsement under the Policy.

ENCLOSURES

There are no enclosures for this report.

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Report No. CC18/2025

Corporate and Community Services



SUBJECT: *PLACEMENT OF INTEGRATED PLANNING AND REPORTING DOCUMENTS 2025/26 ON PUBLIC EXHIBITION*

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: *Chief Finance Officer*

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to place the draft Integrated Planning and Reporting documents on public exhibition for a minimum of 28 days, as required under Section 405 of the *Local Government Act 1993*.

The draft documents, with reports on submissions received and any recommended amendments following exhibition, will be reported to Council for final consideration and adoption in June 2025.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council places the draft Integrated Planning and Reporting documents comprising the:

- **Community Strategic Plan Cessnock 2040;**
- **Resourcing Strategy consisting of the Long Term Financial Plan, Asset Management Strategy and Workforce Management Strategy;**
- **Delivery Program incorporating the 2025-26 Operational Plan including the budget, Revenue Policy, and Statement of Fees and Charges;**

on public exhibition for 28 days in accordance with Section 405 of the *Local Government Act 1993*.

BACKGROUND

The draft suite Integrated Planning and Reporting documents have been prepared under the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1993* (the Act).

Council officers have been engaging with the community and internally from 2023 on the outcomes identified in the Cessnock 2040 and the Delivery Program. The outcomes and actions identified as a result of adopted strategies have been used as a basis for the plans, budget, revenue policy and the Fees and Charges document.

The draft plans provide information to the community about Council's ongoing activities.

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REPORT/PROPOSAL

Community Strategic Plan

The Community Strategic Plan (CSP) *Cessnock 2040* has been drafted after significant engagement commencing in early 2023. *Cessnock 2040* provides the common vision for the council, community and other stakeholders for a minimum of 10 years as per the act. The CSP must include state priorities and provides the framework for the development of the Delivery Program.

Delivery Program

The Delivery Program is the 4 year plan required under the act that outlines action and projects of Council for the period.

The Delivery Program also incorporates the 12 month operational plan, budget and revenue policy. Progress reporting on the Delivery Program is reported to the Council each quarter in line with the Quarterly Budget Review Statements

Resourcing Strategy

The Resourcing Plan consists of three documents:

1. Long Term Financial Plan
2. Workforce Management Strategy
3. Asset Management Strategy

These strategies articulate how council will implement and resource the vision of the CSP.

The Long Term Financial Plan

The Long-Term Financial Plan (LTFP) is a 10-year rolling plan that informs decision-making and demonstrates how the objectives of the CSP and commitments of the DP and OP will be resourced and funded. The LTFP captures financial implications of asset management and workforce planning. The LTFP is required to provide different scenarios for Council to consider for future decision making.

The LTFP to be exhibited has been substantially updated due to the continued influence of inflation on the costs of council.

Workforce Management Plan

The Workforce Management Strategy (WMS) is a proactive, 4-year document that shapes the capacity and capability of the workforce to achieve council's strategic goals and objectives.

It clearly identifies how future staffing and skills requirements will be met, such as through recruitment, staff progression and development, internal redeployment, and succession planning.

Asset Management Strategy

Accurate data and a robust planning process is required to ensure that assets are managed and accounted for in an efficient and sustainable way on behalf of local communities and with a service delivery focus.

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The key objective of asset management planning is to provide the required level of service for the community in accordance with the CSP and in the most cost-effective manner. Levels of service are key business drivers for asset planning, along with technical requirements that ensure asset sustainability.

Rates and Charges

Ordinary Rates

The rating proposals for ordinary rates, detailed in the Revenue Policy, have been increased in line with the State Government's rate peg which was set at a maximum of 4.7 percent.

The existing rating methodology of a base rate and ad-valorem charge has been maintained.

Stormwater Management Levy

It is proposed to continue the Stormwater Management Levy in 2025-26. The proposed charge is \$25 per residential property, \$12.50 per residential strata property and \$25 per 350 square metres (or part thereof) up to a maximum charge of \$500 on business properties.

Hunter Catchment Contribution

Council will also collect, on behalf of the Hunter Local Land Services, a levy calculated on land value for applicable properties. The levy has not yet been determined, with the rate in the dollar expected to be confirmed by Local Land Services in May 2025.

Domestic Waste Management Charge

The proposed Domestic Waste Management Charge for 2025-26 is \$767 (\$707 in 2024-25), an increase of 8.5 percent. This charge provides for weekly domestic waste and food and green organics collection with fortnightly recycling waste collection for residential properties within the area where the service is provided.

Fees and Charges

The draft Fees and Charges has undergone a review and items have been adjusted where necessary to ensure the fees reflect the recovery of the cost of the service (where applicable) and that fees for commercial operations reflect recovery of costs from users to reduce the subsidisation by general revenues.

2025-26 Budget

The draft 2025-26 budget currently shows a deficit of \$25,065,609 before capital grants and contributions.

The draft budget presents a cash budget position which also reflects a deficit as Council uses grant funds paid in advance for the capital projects. The operating deficit is reflective of continuing to support the increasing capital works and maintenance programs to continue to meet community expectations. Continued inflation of costs associated with provision of

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services, in particular in the construction/maintenance areas has also contributed to the need to run a deficit position in the draft budget.

Key drivers of the draft revenue budget include the IPART set rate peg of 4.7%. Employee costs increased based on the award increase of 3% prescribed in the Local Government (State) Award 2023 and 0.5% under the Superannuation Guarantee Act. This has been offset with an efficiency and vacancy rate savings applied to employee costs. Materials and contracts costs have increased in works and operations due to increased contract costs for Waste collection and roads maintenance works. The draft depreciation budgets represent depletion of Council's asset base excluding any future revaluations and therefore are conservative.

This will be the third straight budget forecasting an operating deficit. Council can continue to fund this operating deficit for the coming financial year while remaining in an appropriate cash position, however it is very clear that without substantial increase in future income in the next year there will need to be significant adjustments in future budgets that may impact on future capital works, maintenance programs and other services of Council.

Capital Works Program

The draft 2025-26 Operational Plan includes a draft Capital Works Program of \$70.1m.

In line with Council's Asset Management Strategy, the budget is prioritised to renewals over new works for future Capital Works Program as well as a focus on completing grant and Developer funded projects. Major projects in the 2025-26 year include continuing works on Wollombi Road improvements, completing the construction of a new waste cell at the Waste Management Centre and the grant funded Booth Park Kurri Kurri Netball Facility. Of the \$70m in capital works only \$10m is being contributed from Council general funds.

Public Exhibition

The draft documents are required to be publicly exhibited for a minimum of 28 days. During the exhibition period, copies of the draft documents will be made available for viewing on Council's website. The exhibition will also be promoted via social media.

Following the exhibition period and the consideration of any submissions, it is anticipated that Council will consider the adoption of the Integrated Planning and Reporting documents at the Council meeting on 18 June 2025.

Community Engagement

The community as outlined in the draft documents have been engaged in the process over the last 18 months. While on exhibition the engagement will continue as outlined below:

- Place documents on public exhibition from 18 April 2025 to meet the minimum 28 day advertising requirement.
- Hard copy documents will be placed at Council Libraries and the Council Administration Building.
- Actively promote awareness early within the public exhibition period to elicit early feedback where possible. To assist this process posts in Facebook will be boosted.
- Utilise the "Have your say" page on the Council website to obtain feedback.
- Face to face sessions will also be held with times to be determined and advertised.

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Corporate and Community Services



The community is encouraged to review the draft documents and provide feedback within the exhibition period, which will be considered by Council prior to the adoption of the final plan.

OPTIONS

N/A

CONSULTATION

Councillors have been briefed on the CSP, Delivery Program, Budget, Capital Works Program and the Long Term Financial Plan. If required a further briefing can be held during the exhibition period. Council financial and asset staff are also available to respond to any questions Councillors may have during this time. Councillors should use existing avenues for questions as provided for by the [Councillor and Staff Interaction Policy](#).

The community, Executive Team, Management Team, Senior Finance Staff, Senior Asset planning staff and Senior rates staff have provided input into the development of the draft suite of documents.

STRATEGIC LINKS

a. Delivery Program

These draft documents are a critical part of the organisation's governance framework – in line with the community's desired outcome of *Civic Leadership and Effective Governance*.

IMPLICATIONS

a. Policy and Procedural Implications

N/A

b. Financial Implications

Financial implications are as outlined in the documents.

c. Legislative Implications

Sections 402, 403, 404 and 405 of the *Local Government Act 1993* outlines Council requirements under the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework.

d. Risk Implications

Following public exhibition Council needs to consider submissions and **must** adopt the suite of documents prior to 30 June 2025 to provide an operational budget and allow for levying of rates and charges for 2025-26.

e. Environmental Implications

N/A

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f. Other Implications

N/A

CONCLUSION

It is recommended that Council adopt the enclosures outlined for public exhibition.

ENCLOSURES

- 1 ➡ Community Strategic Plan - Provided Under Separate Cover
- 2 ➡ Long Term Financial Plan - Provided Under Separate Cover
- 3 ➡ Asset Management Strategy - Provided Under Separate Cover
- 4 ➡ Workforce Management Strategy - Provided Under Separate Cover
- 5 ➡ Delivery Program incorporating the Operational Plan - Provided Under Separate Cover
- 6 ➡ Fees and Charges - Provided Under Separate Cover

Corporate and Community

Report No. CC19/2025

Corporate and Community Services



SUBJECT: *ENGAGEMENT OF ADVISOR FOR SPECIAL RATE VARIATION*

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: *Chief Finance Officer*

SUMMARY

Council officers engaged an independent advisor to advise the Council on the financial sustainability of Cessnock City Council. The attached report provides a recommendation that Council needs to commence work in preparation for a Special Rate Variation application.

It is highlighted that this is not the approval for a Special Rate Variation application to be made. Council will need to determine at a future date after the next report has been completed, on whether to progress the application and any applicable rate increase.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council notes the report of the Institute for Regional Futures of the University of Newcastle, outlining the financial sustainability challenges for Cessnock City Council.
2. That Council authorises the General Manager to:
 - a. engage an independent advisor to provide further advice to Council on the potential for a special rate variation
 - b. report to Council on the recommendations of the advisor prior to any decision being made on a Special Rate Variation application by Council.

BACKGROUND

For at least the past two terms of the elected Council, Council officers have highlighted that there have been ongoing significant pressures on future Council budgets as expenditure has been accelerating faster than income. This has been exacerbated by the period post shutdowns which has led to a higher inflationary environment, particularly in terms of materials to construct and maintain assets, particularly roads. Coupled with increasing cost shifting from higher levels of government the financial sustainability problem has become more challenging to achieve.

This has further been highlighted in the recent Auditor General's report to the New South Wales parliament on the general financial sustainability of the local government sector.

REPORT/PROPOSAL

Council officers engaged the University of Newcastle via the Institute for Regional Futures. The Institute for Regional Futures is one of the University's flagship research institutes. For decades, the Institute has partnered with governments, industries and communities providing evidence and strategy to support them to make the best decisions for their future and the future of their regions.

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The attached report is written by Professor Joseph Drew, Professor of Local Government Economics and Dr Masato Miyazaki, Adjunct Associate Professor. The report makes comparison of Council's financial position in comparison to peer councils as well as a broader comparison of sixty-eight similar councils that highlights Cessnock Council is in the lowest quartile for financial sustainability in the peer group.

The executive summary of the report succinctly notes the challenge.

Executive Summary

This report presents a picture of a community clearly struggling with financial sustainability challenges that have emerged over many years. Explanations include severe revenue constraints exacerbated by cost pressures associated with growth, state government policies, and an ageing base of infrastructure. We suspect that Council executive have been aware of the issue for some time but that the Council as a whole has delayed action in an effort to be kind to the ratepayers. However, as this report will make clear, delay is no longer an option – it is also extremely unlikely to manifest as a kindness in the long-run. We thus commend this report to both Council and the community that it serves and encourage all stakeholders to read it in full and with a receptive mind.

The recommendation on page 54 of the report is clear as per:

In view of the metrics surveyed, our knowledge of the council's context, higher tier government political context, macro-economic forces, and economic theory we have no choice other than to make a strong recommendation for Council to engage on the work required to put forward an SRV proposal for the round closing February 2026. Cessnock faces a serious financial sustainability challenge, and the community simply cannot afford for any further delay. We remind end-users of this report that whilst the next round for SRVs closes in February 2026, a decision will only be expected around May 2026, and that the first instalment of rates subject to the decision would not occur until August 2026. It is a long process with significant lags, which need to be understood in terms of the acute need for additional funds to mitigate implicit liabilities and also provide a safe level of reserves for Cessnock.

We remind Council that significant work is required before a full proposal can be put together. This includes, inter alia, a more thorough interrogation of the LTFP, surveys of staff and community (Council to issue based on our advice), detailed discussion and workshops with Councillors, studies of efficiency, debt and capacity to pay, as well as community presentations.

To that end officers recommend undertaking the work to advise Council on the best proposal for the community for sustainability into the future as outlined by the above recommendation. Note this is not an approval for a Special Rate Variation application to be made. Council will need to determine at a future date, after the above work has been completed, on whether to progress the application and any applicable rate increase.

The full report is provided as a Confidential Enclosure for Councillors information to inform the decision required of Council and will be made public if Council supports the recommendation to this report to advance to the next stage of this process.

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Corporate and Community Services



OPTIONS

The preferred option is for Council to adopt the recommendation as drafted. It does not commit Council to a Special Rate Variation at this stage.

Alternatively, Council cannot adopt the recommendation as drafted. Council officers would need to assess internally the modelling required to provide Council with sufficient information to make a decision as to what levels of service would need to be reduced and/or discontinued to address the sustainability concerns around current and future operational budgets.

CONSULTATION

Councillors
Executive Leadership Team
Management Team

As highlighted in the executive summary, significant work is required before a full proposal can be put together, including a more thorough interrogation of the LTFP, surveys of staff and community, detailed discussion and workshops with Councillors, studies of efficiency, debt and capacity to pay, as well as community presentations.

STRATEGIC LINKS

a. Delivery Program

5.3.8 Continue to identify and implement Financial Sustainability Initiatives

5.3.11 Review the need to apply for a Special Rate Variation to manage the burden of increasing cost of Council to maintain assets and meet community requirements

- 5.3.11.a Complete financial modelling to determine future income and expenditure requirements to assess the need for a Special rate Variation
- 5.3.11.b Enhance Council Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP) to ensure that the LTFP becomes part of the IP&R documents to facilitate scenario analysis for Special Rate Variation

b. Other Plans

N/A

IMPLICATIONS

a. Policy and Procedural Implications

N/A

b. Financial Implications

The fee for the advisor is currently in the operating budget and is estimated at \$90,000.

Corporate and Community

Report No. CC19/2025

Corporate and Community Services



c. Legislative Implications

N/A

d. Risk Implications

In not adopting the recommendations, Council officers will be required to undertake modelling in a manner that is not as efficient or expert as the independent advisor. In the absence of this work, the basis for any future decisions around ongoing sustainability for Council would be compromised.

e. Environmental Implications

N/A

f. Other Implications

Adoption of the proposed recommendation will also trigger significant community engagement led by the engaged advisor and Council's engagement team.

CONCLUSION

The attached report outlines the challenges for Council in terms of financial sustainability. The recommendations clearly note the next steps required for Council and the importance of the timeline, accordingly it is recommended to undertake this work as a priority.

ENCLOSURES

- 1 Cessnock Financial Sustainability Report - *This matter is considered to be confidential under Section 10A(2) (j) of the Local Government Act, as it deals with Council Policy. (Report for Councillors Information)*

Corporate and Community

Report No. CC20/2025

Corporate and Community Services



SUBJECT: *INVESTMENT REPORT - MARCH 2025*

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: *Chief Finance Officer*

SUMMARY

Section 625 of the Local Government Act 1993 (the Act), Clause 212 of the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 (the Regulation) and Council's Investment Policy (the Policy) requires a monthly report to Council detailing all money invested.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives the Investment Report for March 2025 and notes that:

- **Investments are held in accordance with Council's Investment Policy, which is in accordance with the Ministerial Investment Order.**
- **Council's month end cash and investments balance was \$63,187,380.**

BACKGROUND

A monthly report to Council detailing money invested as per the Act, Regulation and Policy.

REPORT

Statement by the Responsible Accounting Officer

The Responsible Accounting Officer has certified that this report is produced in accordance with Clause 212 of the Regulation and that all investments have been made in accordance with the Act, Regulation and Policy.

General Investment Commentary

Council officers monitors and manages the cash and investment portfolio by taking into consideration credit ratings of financial institutions, interest rates offered for periods of investment, counterparty exposures and cash flow requirements.

Following assessment of projected cash flow requirements, surplus funds are invested in accordance with Council's Investment Policy. Investment returns of the portfolio to the end of March 2025 are exceeding budget.

Corporate and Community

Report No. CC20/2025

Corporate and Community Services



Investment Portfolio Information

Table 1 Total cash and investments held by Council as at 31 March 2025

Invest No	Financial Institution Investment Held With	Invest Type	Interest Coupon Term	Maturity	Current Coupon Rate	Par Value \$'000
	Commonwealth Bank	CASH			3.75%	4,138
	Commonwealth Bank	At Call			4.35%	13,941
	Commonwealth Bank	At Call			3.75%	737
1243	AMP Bank	At Call			2.75%	538
1515	AMP Bank	TD	301	03-Jun-25	5.20%	2,500
1516	National Bank	TD	253	16-Apr-25	5.07%	5,000
1517	National Bank	TD	283	16-May-25	5.07%	2,500
1519	AMP Bank	TD	302	26-Jun-25	5.02%	2,500
1521	Suncorp Bank	TD	273	03-Jun-25	5.01%	4,000
1523	National Bank	TD	363	23-Sep-25	4.90%	4,000
1525	Bank of Queensland	TD	183	24-Jun-25	5.05%	2,000
1526	Bendigo Bank	TD	182	01-Jul-25	5.05%	3,000
1527	Suncorp Bank	TD	302	19-Nov-25	5.05%	5,000
1528	Suncorp Bank	TD	245	05-Nov-25	4.70%	3,000
1529	Bank of Queensland	TD	189	10-Sep-25	4.75%	2,000
1530	Suncorp Bank	TD	182	23-Sep-25	4.70%	4,000
1463	Treasury Corporation	Growth Fund				4,333
TOTAL						63,187

Table 2 Level of funds held and the percentage invested with financial institutions

Financial Institution	Credit Rating	Institution Maximum	Amount \$'000	% of Portfolio
National Australia Bank	AA-	40%	11,500	26.24%
Suncorp Bank	AA-	40%	16,000	36.49%
AMP Bank	BBB+	10%	5,000	11.41%
Bank of Queensland	A-	20%	4,000	9.13%
Bendigo and Adelaide Bank	A-	20%	3,000	6.84%
Treasury Corporation	Unrated	10%	4,333	9.89%
TOTAL			43,833	100.00%

In accordance with the Policy, figures in Table 2 above exclude cash and at call balances in Council's main operating account held with the Commonwealth and AMP banks.

Corporate and Community

Report No. CC20/2025

Corporate and Community Services

Investment in NSW Treasury Corporation (TCorp)

TCorpIM Funds are unit trusts. Distributions are made annually and are automatically reinvested into the fund to buy additional units. As this investment is held for medium to long-term capital appreciation, gains or losses will only be realised on redemption of the investment.

The March 2025 unrealised return was a loss of \$36,132 or -0.83% (4.72% annualised).

Table 3 NSW Treasury Corporation Performance Summary

	10 year (% pa)	7 year (% pa)	3 year (% pa)	1 year %	FYTD %	1 month %
IM Medium Term Growth Fund	3.75	3.85	4.05	3.93	4.67	(0.83)
Benchmark: CPI + 2.0% p.a. (over rolling 5 years)	4.70	5.10	6.46	4.76	3.35	0.33
Return above benchmark p.a.	(0.95)	(1.25)	(2.41)	(0.83)	1.32	(1.16)

Table 4 Investment types, risk, amount and percentage invested compared to the total balances.

Investment Type	Risk Assessment		Amount	% of
	Capital	Interest	\$'000	Portfolio
Term Deposits	Low	Low	39,500	62.51%
Cash/At Call Deposits	Low	Low	19,354	30.63%
Capital Growth Fund	Medium	Medium	4,333	6.86%
TOTAL			63,187	100.00%

Table 5 Comparison of interest rates, earnings and balances this year to last year

Performance Measures	This Year	Last Year
Investment Portfolio Average Interest Rate (year to date)	5.14%	5.16%
BBSW Average Interest Rate (year to date) *	4.47%	4.35%
Actual Investment Interest Earned (for the current month)	\$236,003	\$322,175
Actual Investment Interest Earned (year to date) ^	\$2,349,850	\$2,729,104
Revised Budget Investment Interest (year to date)	\$2,062,500	\$1,035,092
Original Budget Investment Interest (annual)	\$2,500,000	\$1,380,122
Revised Budget Investment Interest (annual)	\$2,750,000	\$1,750,122
TCorp unrealised movement (year to date)	4.32%	7.12%

Investment and Cash Balances (Par Value) #	This Year	Last Year
Opening Balance as at 1 July	\$83,084,775	\$73,085,190
Closing Balance as at 31 March	\$63,187,380	\$76,716,092

* BBSW 90 day Bank Bill Reference Rate (performance measure as per Council's Investment Policy)

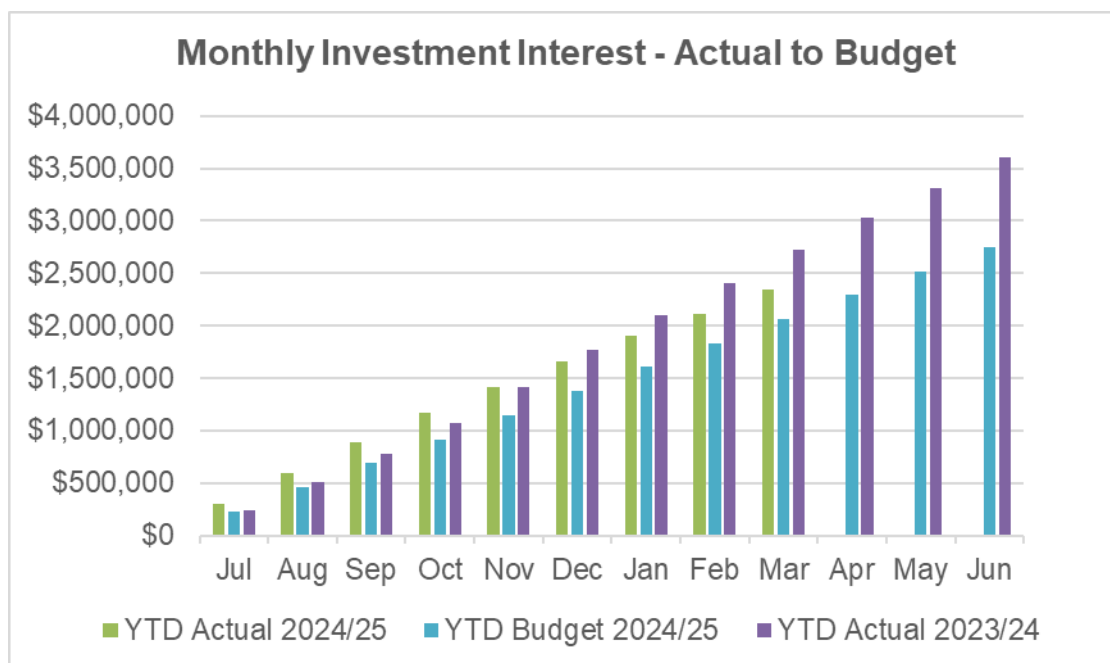
^ Excludes TCorp unrealised returns

Excludes Section 355 Committee cash held

Corporate and Community

Report No. CC20/2025

Corporate and Community Services

**Graph 1** Actual interest earned compared to revised budget and actual interest last year**Table 6** Internal and external restrictions over cash and investments held

Month End Totals \$'000	Mar 2025*	Feb 2025	Jan 2025	Dec 2024	Nov 2024	Oct 2024
External Restrictions	59,434	61,357	59,170	63,057	57,635	53,278
Internal Restrictions	3,450	3,800	3,629	5,099	10,305	12,130
Total Restrictions	62,884	65,157	62,799	68,156	67,940	65,408
<i>Prepaid grant expenditure to be reimbursed</i>		-	(2,163)	(2,163)	(4,010)	(1,353)
Unrestricted	303	826	737	298	317	509
Total Cash & Investments	63,187	65,983	61,373	66,291	64,247	64,564

*Note that March quarterly figures are reviewed while the Quarterly Budget Review Statements are prepared and reconciled and therefore not final and may change.

CONSULTATION

- Director Corporate and Community Services
- Chief Financial Officer
- Finance staff

Corporate and Community

Report No. CC20/2025

Corporate and Community Services



STRATEGIC LINKS

a. Delivery Program

Investment returns are an integral part of funding for future services and community expectations within the Delivery Program and Operational Plan. This report is a part of Council's governance framework – providing feedback on the progress against the investment policy and budget. This is in line with the community's desired outcome of: "*Civic Leadership and Effective Governance*" and more specifically links to strategic direction:

5.3.2: Our Council's processes are efficient and transparent;

5.3.3: Our Council is financially sustainable.

IMPLICATIONS

a. Policy and Procedural Implications

Investments are held in accordance with Council's Investment Policy.

b. Financial Implications

Investment returns are included in Council's Delivery Program and Operational Plan. Amendments are affected through the Quarterly Budget Review process. Investment portfolio performance is detailed within the report with comparisons to prior year and budget.

A portion of the portfolio and its associated investment income is restricted as it relates to funds from developer contributions, payments in advance for grant projects, Domestic Waste Management, and stormwater management income to be applied to specific purposes and not available for general operational projects.

c. Legislative Implications

This report meets Council's statutory obligations under the Act and Regulation.

d. Risk Implications

Investment risks are detailed within this report.

e. Other Implications

There are no environmental, community, consultative or other implications to this report.

CONCLUSION

The report details investments held at month end and meets Councils reporting obligations.

ENCLOSURES

There are no enclosures for this report.

Corporate and Community

Report No. CC21/2025

Corporate and Community Services



SUBJECT: *RESOLUTIONS TRACKING REPORT*

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: *Chief Finance Officer*

SUMMARY

The enclosure contains pending actions from previous meetings as well as completed actions for period 11 March 2025 to 9 April 2025.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives the report and notes the information in the Resolutions Tracking Report.

ENCLOSURES

- 1 ➡ Outstanding Actions
- 2 ➡ Finalised Actions

Works and Infrastructure

Report No. WI4/2025

Works and Infrastructure



SUBJECT: *MINUTES OF FLOODPLAIN RISK COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON THURSDAY 27 FEBRUARY 2025*

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: *Asset Planning Manager*

RECOMMENDATION

That the Minutes of the Floodplain Risk Management Committee held 27 February 2025 be adopted as a resolution of the Ordinary Council.

MINUTES OF FLOODPLAIN RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE CESSNOCK CITY COUNCIL HELD IN ANTE ROOM ON THURSDAY, 27 FEBRUARY 2025, COMMENCING AT 2.00PM

PRESENT: Councillor Lea
Councillor Harrington
Emily Cesca (Hunter Water Corporation)
Lisa Ignatavicius - Planning Coordinator (SES)
Mandy Bramble - Planning and Research Officer (SES)
Jean Brochut – Community Representative

ABSENT: Peter Keegan - Deputy Zone Commander (SES)
Jennifer Ehmsen - Unit Commander (SES)
Travis Hall – Local Commander (SES)
Charmain Bennett – Safety & Risk Coordinator

IN ATTENDANCE: Director Works & Infrastructure
Asset Planning Manager
Stormwater and Flood Mitigation Coordinator
Stormwater and Flood Mitigation Officer
Council Services Team Leader
Senior Legal and Governance Officer
Principal Strategic Planner
Strategic Planning Manager

APOLOGIES

APOLOGIES: **RECOMMENDED** that the apologies tendered on behalf of Mayor Watton, Vladimir Stojnic (DCCEEW) and Councillor Dixon for unavoidable absence, be accepted.



CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

MINUTES:

MOTION

Moved:

Councillor Lea

Seconded:

Mr Brochut

RECOMMENDED that the Minutes of the Floodplain Risk Management Committee held on 13 July 2023, as circulated, be taken as read and confirmed as a correct record.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

NIL.

LISTED MATTERS

LISTED MATTERS - COMMITTEE NO. FLOCLM1/2025

SUBJECT:

SOUTH CESSNOCK BUND WALL FLOOD MITIGATION SCHEME PROJECT

MOTION

Moved:

Councillor Lea

Seconded:

Mr Brochut

RECOMMENDATION

That the report be noted.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

LISTED MATTERS - COMMITTEE NO. FLOCLM2/2025

SUBJECT:

BLACK CREEK RESTORATION PROJECT

MOTION

Moved:

Councillor Lea

Seconded:

Mr Brochut

RECOMMENDATION

That the report be noted.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Works and Infrastructure

Report No. WI4/2025

Works and Infrastructure



LISTED MATTERS - COMMITTEE NO. FLOCLM3/2025

SUBJECT: **GRETA AND BLACK CREEK STAGE TWO (NULKABA TO BRANXTON) FLOODPLAIN RISK MANAGEMENT STUDY AND PLAN (FRMSP) PROJECTS UPDATE**

MOTION **Moved:** Councillor Lea **Seconded:** Mr Brochut

RECOMMENDATION

That the report be noted.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

LISTED MATTERS - COMMITTEE NO. FLOCLM4/2025

SUBJECT: **DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENT BLIGH STREET, DAVIS STREET AND PORTLAND STREET, MILLFIELD**

MOTION **Moved:** Councillor Lea **Seconded:** Mr Brochut

RECOMMENDATION

That the report be noted.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

LISTED MATTERS - COMMITTEE NO. FLOCLM5/2025

SUBJECT: **MOUNT VIEW DETENTION BASIN IMPROVEMENT**

MOTION **Moved:** Councillor Lea **Seconded:** Mr Brochut

RECOMMENDATION

That the report be noted.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Works and Infrastructure

Report No. WI4/2025

Works and Infrastructure



LISTED MATTERS - COMMITTEE NO. FLOCLM6/2025

SUBJECT: CESSNOCK LGA FLOOD STUDY - STATUS REPORT

MOTION **Moved:** Councillor Lea **Seconded:** Mr Brochut

RECOMMENDATION

That the report be noted.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

LISTED MATTERS - COMMITTEE NO. FLOCLM7/2025

SUBJECT: CESSNOCK COMMERCIAL PRECINCT FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT STUDY

MOTION **Moved:** Councillor Lea **Seconded:** Mr Brochut

RECOMMENDATION

This report provides an update of the above project.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

LISTED MATTERS - COMMITTEE NO. FLOCLM8/2025

SUBJECT: SAWYERS GULLY FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT STUDY

MOTION **Moved:** Councillor Lea **Seconded:** Mr Brochut

RECOMMENDATION

That the report be noted.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Works and Infrastructure

Report No. WI4/2025

Works and Infrastructure



LISTED MATTERS - COMMITTEE NO. FLOCLM9/2025

SUBJECT: REVIEW FLOOD PLANNING FRAMEWORK

MOTION ***Moved:*** Councillor Lea ***Seconded:*** Mr Brochut

RECOMMENDATION

That the report be noted.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

The next meeting of the Committee is to be held on 11 September 2025.

The Meeting Was Declared Closed at 3:13pm

ENCLOSURES

There are no enclosures for this report

Works and Infrastructure

Report No. WI5/2025

Works and Infrastructure



SUBJECT: *NOMINATION OF SECTION 355 COMMITTEES*

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: *Environment and Waste Services Manager*

SUMMARY

To assist Council with effective decision-making and operations, Council delegates the care, control and management of Council's community and recreation facilities, other Council owned and controlled land, to Section 355 Committees.

It is noted that a number of Section 355 Committees responsible for management of sporting and some community facilities were nominated by Council in October 2024. This report relates specifically to the Sustainable Communities - Tidy Towns Committees which also sit under the Section 355 governance arrangement. These groups are largely responsible for enhancing and promoting biodiversity in Councils open space areas and roadside verges in the villages in which they operate.

During the last Council term, eleven (11) Sustainable Communities - Tidy Towns Committees were nominated by Council. A review of the status of each of these groups has been undertaken and it has become apparent that some of these committees have been disbanded as a result of lack of community interest.

As a result, there are now eight (8) remaining Sustainable Communities – Tidy Towns groups that are seeking renomination. These being Cessnock Tidy Towns, Greta Tidy Towns, Kearsley Tidy Towns, Millfield Tidy Towns, North Rothbury Tidy Towns, Paxton Tidy Towns, North Rothbury Bushcare and Weston Heritage & Tidy Towns. A summary of the projects these groups are currently undertaking is included in Table 1.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council delegates the care, control and management of Council's community and recreation facilities, other Council owned and controlled land, to relevant Section 355 Committees.
2. That Council authorise the management of the Section 355 Committees to be in accordance with any practices and procedures adopted by the General Manager.
3. That Council authorise the General Manager to execute documents confirming the delegated functions with each of the appointed community representatives for each of the respective Section 355 Committees in accordance with any practices and procedures.
4. That Council establishes the following Section 355 Committees:
 - a) Cessnock Tidy Towns
 - b) Greta Tidy Towns
 - c) Kearsley Tidy Towns
 - d) Millfield Tidy Towns
 - e) North Rothbury Tidy Towns
 - f) North Rothbury Bushcare

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- g) Paxton Tidy Towns
- h) Weston Tidy Towns.

BACKGROUND

The *Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)* (Act) describes the legislative framework in respect to how Council can exercise its functions in relation to a wide variety of community-based services and facilities and by way of resolution, Council may delegate the exercise of functions.

REPORT/PROPOSAL

Council's committee framework provides a mechanism for community input into decision-making and assists the elected Council in exercising its functions. This framework includes various committees that report to the elected Council.

These committees are established to exercise Council's functions in respect of management of sporting or community facilities and are delegated these functions under section 355 of the Act. They operate in accordance with the practices and procedures adopted by the General Manager.

It is noted that a number of Section 355 Committees responsible for management of sporting and some community facilities were nominated by Council in October 2024. This report relates specifically to the Sustainable Communities - Tidy Towns Committees which also sit under the Section 355 governance arrangement. These groups are largely responsible for enhancing and promoting biodiversity in Councils open space areas and roadside verges in the villages in which they operate.

During the last Council term, eleven (11) Sustainable Communities - Tidy Towns Committees were nominated by Council. A review of the status of each of these groups has been undertaken and it has become apparent that some of these committees have been disbanded as a result of lack of community interest.

As a result, there are now eight (8) remaining Sustainable Communities – Tidy Towns groups that are seeking renomination. These being Cessnock Tidy Towns, Greta Tidy Towns, Kearsley Tidy Towns, Millfield Tidy Towns, North Rothbury Tidy Towns, Paxton Tidy Towns, North Rothbury Bushcare and Weston Heritage & Tidy Towns. A summary of the projects these groups are currently undertaking is included in Table 1.

OPTIONS

1. Support the recommendation that Council establishes the 8 specified Section 355 Committees.

This is the recommended option.

2. Not support the recommendation, for the following reasons:

(To be provided by Council).

Works and Infrastructure

Report No. WI5/2025

Works and Infrastructure



This option is not recommended. The Sustainable Communities - Tidy Towns Committees and other community environmental organisations throughout the Local Government Area work tirelessly to improve and maintain our local community areas saving council thousands of dollars.

CONSULTATION

Council consulted with all Tidy Towns Committees through this process. Discussions have also taken place with Council's Governance, Safety & Risk and Finance teams.

STRATEGIC LINKS

a. Delivery Program

Committee participation and consultation is consistent with Council's Delivery Program objectives, with an emphasis on Outcome 5:

Civic leadership and effective governance Committee encouraging participation and consultation in the wider community.

Tidy Town and Landcare groups consistent with Outcome 3.1.7c:

"Protect and enhance the natural environment and environmental health - Continue to facilitate community engagement and education initiatives relating to conservation of the natural environment."

b. Other Plans

Nil

IMPLICATIONS

a. Policy and Procedural Implications

All committees noted in this report will perform in accordance with their Charters, their Instruments of Delegations and/or any practices and procedures adopted by the General Manager.

b. Financial Implications

Existing budgets to assist these groups are provided.

c. Legislative Implications

Nil

d. Risk Implications

Nil

Works and Infrastructure

Report No. WI5/2025

Works and Infrastructure



e. Other Implications

Involving the Community in Council's decision making and policy making is a key element in Council's Community Strategic Plan.

CONCLUSION

It is recommended that Council adopt the section 355 Committees listed in this report.

ENCLOSURES

There are no enclosures for this report.

Works and Infrastructure

Report No. WI6/2025

Works and Infrastructure



SUBJECT: *MINUTES OF GRANTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD WEDNESDAY 19 MARCH 2025*

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: *Environment and Waste Services Manager*

RECOMMENDATION

That the Minutes of the Grant Advisory Committee Meeting held 19 March 2025 be adopted as a resolution of the Ordinary Council.

MINUTES OF GRANTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE CESSNOCK CITY COUNCIL HELD IN ANTE ROOM ON WEDNESDAY, 19 MARCH 2025, COMMENCING AT 12.09PM

PRESENT: The Mayor, Councillor Watton
Councillor Pascoe
Councillor Harrington (Alternate)
Paul McLachlan - Director Works and Infrastructure

ABSENT: NIL

IN ATTENDANCE: Daniela Gambotto - Sustainability Officer
Kate Hicks - Recreation Officer
Alena Pople – Recreation Planner
Jessica Elliott – Community Development Officer
Megan Barnes – Principal Community Planner
Councillor Hill
Alisha Moore - Senior Business Support Officer – Council Services
(Minute Taker)

APOLOGIES

Councillor Dixon
Peter Chrystal – Acting General Manager (Director Planning & Environment)
Robert Maginnity – Director Corporate and Community Services
Natalie Drage – Community and Cultural Development Manager
Kate McNally – Open Space and Community Facilities Manager
Tricia Donnelly – Environment and Sustainability Coordinator

Works and Infrastructure

Report No. WI6/2025

Works and Infrastructure



CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

MINUTES:

MOTION

Moved: Director Works and Infrastructure
Seconded: Councillor Pascoe

RECOMMENDED that the Minutes of the Grants Advisory Committee held on 13 November 2024, as circulated, be taken as read and confirmed as a correct record.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

COMMITTEE DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST NO. GACCDI1/2025

SUBJECT: DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

NIL

Works and Infrastructure

Report No. WI6/2025

Works and Infrastructure



LISTED MATTERS

LISTED MATTERS - COMMITTEE NO. GACCLM1/2025

**SUBJECT: SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES - TIDY TOWNS ENVIRONMENT
GRANTS 2024-25, ROUND 2**

MOTION **Moved:** Councillor Pascoe **Seconded:** Mayor Watton

RECOMMENDATION

The Grants Advisory Committee recommends:

1. That Council provides funds through the Sustainable Communities - Tidy Towns Environment Grant Program to:
 - Greta Tidy Towns in the amount of \$2,147
 - Wollombi Valley Landcare Group Ltd in the amount of \$2,147, pending confirmation of eligibility and appropriate permissions.
2. That the General Manager writes to all applicants advising them of the outcome of their application and thanking them for their contribution to the community and environment in the Cessnock Local Government Area.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Works and Infrastructure

Report No. WI6/2025

Works and Infrastructure



LISTED MATTERS - COMMITTEE NO. GACCLM2/2025

SUBJECT: 2024-25 SPORTING FACILITIES - COMMUNITY, SPORTING AND ENVIRONMENT GRANT - ROUND 2

MOTION Moved: Councillor Pascoe **Seconded:** Director Works and Infrastructure

RECOMMENDATION

That the Community Engagement, Awards and Grants Committee recommends:

1. That Council provides funds through the Sporting Facilities – Community, Sporting and Environment Grant Scheme – Round 2 to:
 - Cessnock Minor Rugby League in the amount of \$2,528
 - Cessnock Pickleball Association in the amount of \$370
 - Branxton Croquet Club in the amount of \$2,192
 - Mulbring Cricket Club in the amount of \$1,101
 - Wollombi Valley Pony Club in the amount of \$3915
2. That the General Manager writes to all applicants advising them of the outcome of their application and thanking them for their ongoing support and commitment to the enhancement of Council's community facilities.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

The Meeting Was Declared Closed at 12.26pm

ENCLOSURES

There are no enclosures for this report

Notices Of Motion

Report No. BN9/2025

General Manager's Unit



NOTICES OF MOTION No. BN9/2025

SUBJECT: *POLITICAL SIGNAGE*

COUNCILLOR: *Jay Suvaal*

MOTION

1. That Council notes it's concern with the way political signage is managed in the Cessnock LGA.
2. That Council requests the General Manager urgently review the procedure or policy with the intention of implementing a revised policy before the 2025 Federal Election.
3. That Council requests the new procedure or policy:
 - a. Provide clarity to political candidates around the requirements for election signage display in our LGA.
 - b. Bring the way political signage is managed in our LGA into line with other LGAs across the Hunter region.
 - c. Implement a more reasonable fine structure for incorrectly placed signage.
 - d. Ensures Council continues to monitor and ensure the removal of illegal signage across the LGA.

It is my intention to move the above motion at the next Ordinary Meeting of Council on 16 April 2025.

RATIONALE

Following the 2022 Federal Election during which dozens of political posters for the National's candidate were placed on council property, in the road reserve, street signs, roundabouts and other unsafe positions Council requested the General Manager implement a way to manage illegal election signage across our LGA.

This action was then determined by Council staff who treat illegal signage as an unauthorised development which attracts fines of approximately \$3000 for individuals and \$6000 for organisations.

I understand Council has issued these fines during the 2023 NSW State Election and the 2024 Council Election. I believe these fines are excessive and potentially create a prohibitive barrier for people considering participating in the electoral process.

I feel a more appropriate system potentially including removal of illegal signage by Council, the issuing of a warning for the first infringement, and then fines of around \$100 or \$300 would be more appropriate to still act as a deterrent against the placement of illegal signage while not issuing unreasonable fines.

Notices Of Motion

Report No. BN9/2025

General Manager's Unit



I note that election signage for the federal election has already been placed on properties in other LGAs across the Hunter region where in our Council area candidates have been requested to remove the signage or face the significant fines imposed by Council.

SOURCE OF FUNDING:

N/A

DELIVERY PROGRAM:

N/A

Sgd: Jay Suvaal

Date: 26 March 2025

DIRECTOR'S COMMENTARY

Councillors will have received an All Councillor Memo on 'election signage' that outlines the approach taken and clarifies the advice on exempt signage, together with notice given to candidates where non-compliance is determined. That memo also clarifies that Local Government does not have power to set penalty notice levels. Where candidates comply with the requirements there are no enforcement actions. Officer experience is that major political parties are aware of the requirements and are counselling new candidates and their support staff.

On the specific issue with the NOM, it is respectfully suggested that:

- it is not appropriate from a probity perspective to be addressing a Policy change during the conduct of the current Federal Election.
- the matter is operational in nature and the specific manner in which enforcement is conducted is not a matter for Council/Councillors. Council is legally precluded from effectively or indirectly fettering the discretion available to its enforcement officers.
- the legislation is clear and the elected Council's intention was unambiguous. Sufficient advisory and warning advice is provided to political parties and political candidates.

The General Manager will be provided with an update following the 2025 Federal Election on the election sign matter.

ENCLOSURES

There are no enclosures for this report