

2008/09 Annual Report



The City of Newcastle

Production
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The City of Newcastle
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Cover photo: Construction field workers, Chris Bloom and Kyle Snowdon
discussing the footpaving work with King Street, Shortland resident, Tony Sutton.

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Our city

City profile



Newcastle is a city with something for everyone

As Australia's second oldest and arguably largest regional city, Newcastle has a fascinating past, a brilliant present and an exciting future.

Captain Cook marked the rocky islet of Nobbys Head on a map as he sailed north on May 10, 1770.

Today Nobbys continues to be an iconic marker for the city with Newcastle harbour on one side and the beach on the other.

Stand at the end of the Nobbys breakwall and you will see Newcastle's stunning coastline trail off to the north and south. Newcastle is surrounded by coastal beauty and pristine beaches with some of the best surf breaks in NSW.

Newcastle is a city in transition as it continues the move from its industrial past to a modern city. The city is the economic hub of the region, home to peak regional institutions including the University of Newcastle, John Hunter Hospital and CSIRO Energy Research Centre.

Our city is rapidly gaining a national reputation as a leader in addressing environmental sustainability.

We are also recognised for our vibrant cultural community. The Newcastle Region Art Gallery boasts one of Australia's most substantial art collections and there are numerous other galleries showcasing works by local artists.

Spacious parks and colourful playgrounds are located throughout the city, providing sporting facilities and recreational spaces for people of all ages. With more than 345 parks and sporting fields, the city is a great place for families, sport lovers and outdoor enthusiasts.

The greatest asset of all is the people of Newcastle. Home to a population of about 140,000, Novocastrians are renown for their resilience in the tough times and their joy in the great lifestyle our city provides.

Newcastle is truly a great place, with a great lifestyle and a great future.

Vision and mission

Our Vision

Great Place, Great Lifestyle, ***Great Future***

Our Mission

Providing services to the ratepayers, residents and visitors to Newcastle that:

- Enhance quality of life
- Ensure a sustainable future
- Make best use of our assets
- Are community and customer focused

Our Core Values

- Strong leadership
- Community focus
- Community connected
- Continuous improvement
- Develop our people
- Adapt to change
- Decisions based on fact
- Behave responsibly and ethically
- Sustainability

Key Focus Areas

Objectives

Economic
& Asset
Development

A strong focus on economic development and tourism and managing our assets effectively

Community
& Cultural
Development

Ensure Newcastle has a high quality of life through effective place management

Environmental
Enhancement

Ensure Newcastle has an environmentally sustainable future

Governance &
Organisational
Development

A well performing, customer focused, open and transparent organisation that engages the community and encourages participation in Council matters

Adopted by Newcastle City Council June 2009

Message

from the Lord Mayor



Councillor John S Tate



On 13 September 2008 ten new faces joined the elected council heralding a fresh commitment to local democracy and community engagement in the city.

This enthusiasm has seen council and the administration working effectively and productively together to tackle local issues and secure real and lasting achievements for our city.

The General Manager's establishment of the Pride of Place Taskforce in October 2008 gave impetus to a range of city presentation initiatives. The Taskforce continues to meet regularly to address issues that impact on the overall amenity of the city including graffiti, vandalism, community safety, cleanliness and appearance.

The state of Hunter Street and the city centre continues to be a community concern. A City Centre

Taskforce was established to develop a strategy to address the development of the Newcastle CBD and to look for possible federal funding opportunities for city revitalisation. Restoring the CBD and Hunter Street is a priority of this council.

Community engagement was taken to a new level when council officially launched Newcastle Voice to coordinate consultation activities and manage a community reference panel of Newcastle residents willing to provide feedback to council. Council also established ward meetings to provide residents with a chance to address their councillors on local issues.

Council has been talking about the challenges of managing and maintaining our \$1.5billion worth of assets for some time. We continue to prioritise the management and maintenance of the city's infrastructure following recommendations from the 2007 Review Today report including addressing the infrastructure backlog through increased

spending and asset rationalisation. Council increased its infrastructure spending by \$10 million in the 2008/09 financial year with a focus on city drainage and buildings. The Sustainability Review is also reviewing all council assets with a view to maximising their effectiveness and efficiency.

This annual report will outline many other initiatives and achievements of this council during 2008/09. There are many challenges before us, but I am confident we can continue to face them and build a positive future for our city.

Cr John S Tate
Lord Mayor

from the *General Manager*

Message



General Manager Lindy Hyam

This annual report marks the beginning of a period of review and transformation for Newcastle City Council that is crucial for the future development and ongoing sustainability of council.

At the beginning of this period the political and operating environments were marked by the election of a new council, a city in need of renewal, a \$12m deficit, varied customer service, slowness to respond to strategic opportunities and a need for cultural change within the organisation.

The organisation responded to these challenges by instituting financial management strategies to peg back the budget deficit and commencing Council's most comprehensive review of its services and current operations.

A major restructure of the organisation, the adoption of the Australian Business Excellence Framework and a reinvigorated customer service focus across the whole organisation provided a stronger foundation to help council

deliver better service outcomes for our community.

Significant progress was made through collaboration with other partners, for such issues as city presentation spearheaded by the Pride of Place Taskforce, affordable housing, and coastal revitalisation with the surf clubs and the Land and Property Management Authority.

Council successfully sought opportunities to maximise government grant funding to deliver on key community projects including a substantial Federal Government grant for the relocation of the Newcastle Regional Museum to Honeysuckle.

We maintained our focus on closing the gap between infrastructure spending and that required to address our city's ageing infrastructure. A number of projects such as a \$2m upgrade of Newcastle Road, stage one of the Beach Improvement Program and Flood Risk Management Planning were significantly progressed.

Council worked strategically on coastal and cultural revitalisation for the city, participated in the Newcastle City Centre Taskforce on major catalyst projects, established the Coastal Revitalisation Strategy and progressed the Flood Management Plan.

All our efforts are driven by a commitment to a sustainable future for council, our city and community.

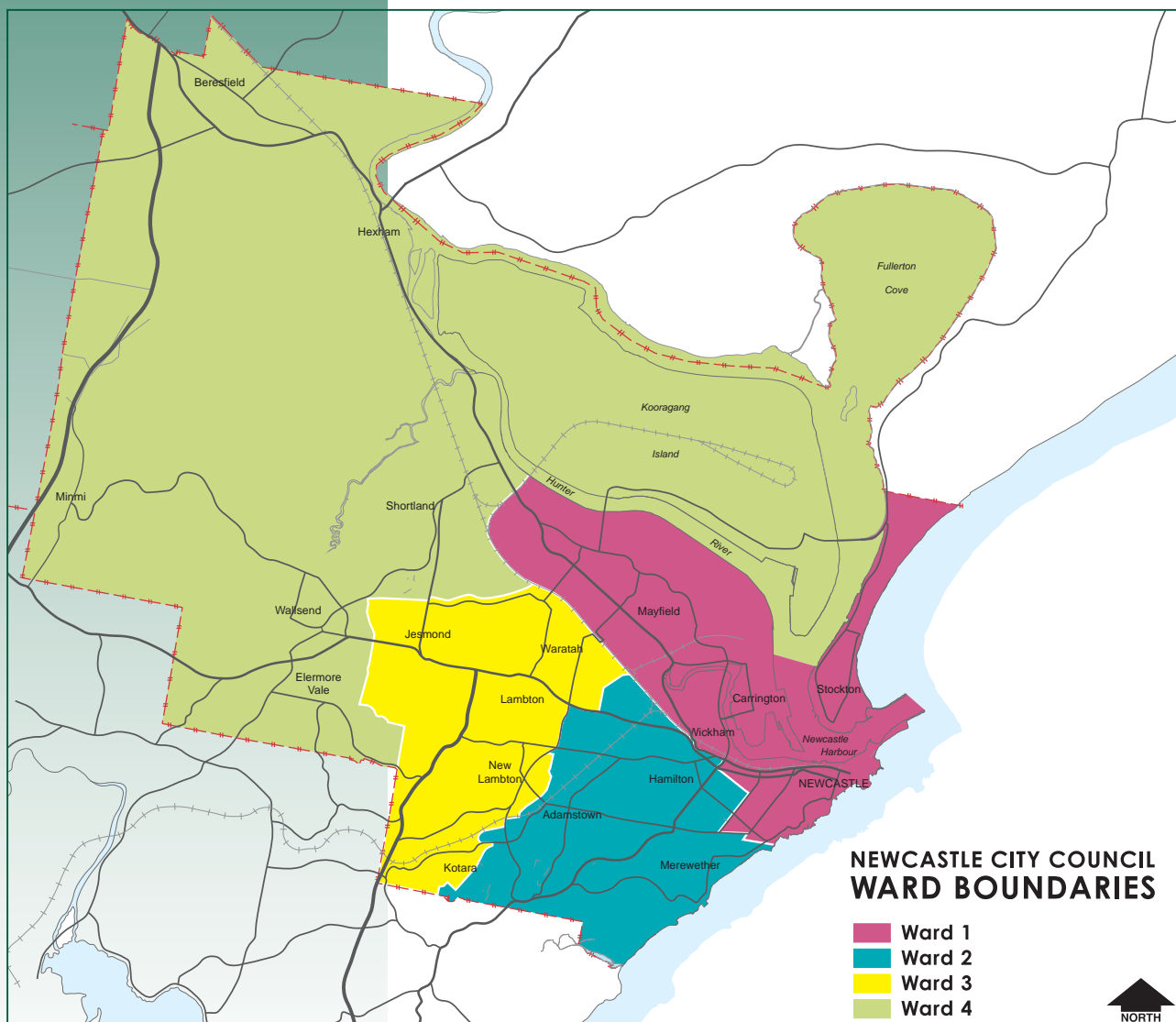
I look forward to working with the community and council to meet the challenges and realise the opportunities ahead

Lindy Hyam
General Manager

Our councillors

Councillors are elected to represent the views of residents and ratepayers. They play an important role in overseeing the functions and services of Council, setting the operational budget and developing policy for the long term benefit of the city.

Newcastle's local government area is divided into four wards, with three councillors elected to represent each ward. The Lord Mayor is elected by a ballot across the city. Council follows its Payment of Expenses and Provision for Facilities for the Lord Mayor and Councillors to ensure accountability and transparency in this process. The policy is a public document available on Council's website.





Lord Mayor Cr John Tate
Phone 4974 2233
Email kmcpherson@ncc.nsw.gov.au

The local government elections were held on 13 September 2008. Ten new faces joined returning Councillors, Lord Mayor John Tate, Aaron Buman and Michael Osborne to represent the city over the next four years.

Ward one



Cr Aaron Buman - Independent
Mobile 0411 248 934
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Cr Sharon Claydon - ALP
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Cr Michael Osborne - Greens
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Ward two



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Cr Brad Luke - Liberal
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Cr Scott Sharpe - Independent
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Ward three



Cr Dr Graham Boyd - Independent
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Cr Mike King - Independent
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Cr Nuatali Nelmes - ALP
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Ward four



Cr Bob Cook - Independent
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Cr Shayne Connell - Independent
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Cr Mike Jackson - ALP
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150 years

This year saw Newcastle City Council celebrate its sesquicentenary - that's 150 years of local democracy.



An ordinary meeting of Council held on 15 September 2009 as part of the Council's Sesquicentenary (150th anniversary) celebrations in the original meeting room of 1884 at Watt Street.

In 1859 Newcastle Municipal Council was one of the first local councils created in the colony. With no roads, drains, piped water or sewerage, street lights, gas or electricity the task facing the first elected aldermen was a daunting one.

As part of the 150 year celebrations Council organised several activities to recognise this significant achievement in our history.

Activities included holding an extraordinary meeting and reception where we paid tribute to the descendents of the first aldermen and many councillors and staff that had followed in their footsteps.

This was followed by a meeting held in the first Council chambers in Watt Street on the 125th anniversary of that building.

A commemorative booklet setting out some of the history, personalities and achievements of the Council over the 150 years was launched in September 2009.

In November 2009 musicians and a choir from the University of Newcastle performed at City Hall a specially commissioned work to commemorate the anniversary.

Since its creation in 1859, Council has provided a diverse and growing range of services and facilities while working with the community to deal with natural disasters, economic and environmental challenges.

Novocastrians now enjoy a lifestyle and opportunities the equal of any in Australia.

Important events in the history of local government in Newcastle

- 1859 Gazettal of proclamation of Newcastle Municipal Council
- 1867 Changes to Municipal Act broadened franchise and allowed cumulative voting – more property more votes (up to four allowed).
Name changed to Newcastle Borough Council
- 1884 Council chambers built and occupied in Watt Street (now United Service Club)
- 1892 Hunter District Water Board created to take over water & sewerage supply
- 1897 Amendments to Municipal Act allowing borrowing up to five years revenue
- 1906 Extension of Local Government Act repealed the 1867 legislation.
Changes made local government incorporation compulsory because at the turn of century only 1% of NSW covered by local government
- 1906 Women were granted right to vote if a property owner but could not stand for office until 1918
- 1919 Royal Commission on Greater Newcastle
Local Government Act established
- 1927 Universal suffrage (all residents allowed to vote) and elections held every three years
- 1929 City Hall and Civic Theatre opened
- 1938 Eleven former councils first met as Greater Newcastle Council resulting in the largest elected Council in NSW with twenty-one aldermen representing seven wards
Blackbutt Reserve purchased through combined efforts of eight neighbouring councils and placed in trusteeship of Newcastle Council
- 1945 Town planning provisions inserted in 1919 Act giving councils power to prepare town planning schemes, and control all new development and land use
- 1947 Voting first made compulsory
Greater Newcastle became the City of Newcastle (Newcastle City Council)
- 1948 Royal assent for use of the title of Lord Mayor
- 1953 Mary Pepperall first woman elected to Council
- 1957 Responsibility for electricity supply transferred to Shortland County Council
- 1958 Boundary changes doubled the Newcastle local government area
- 1959 War Memorial Cultural Centre opened
- 1961 Armorial bearings (seal and coat of arms) granted to the Council of the City of Newcastle replacing old coat of arms
- 1966 Civic Fountain commissioned
- 1968-76 Voting not compulsory and turn-outs less than 40%
- 1974 Joy Cummings elected first female Lord Mayor in Australia
- 1984 Council dismissed by State Government
- 1986 New Council elected
- 1988 Foreshore Park, Queens Wharf complex and Regional Museum opened
- 1989 Earthquake hits Newcastle – one of Australia's worst natural disasters
- 1991 Electors vote for re-introduction of wards from 1995 election comprising four wards with three councillors in each plus a Lord Mayor
- 1993 Local Government Act amendment to 1919 Act
Council first adopted A Commitment to Indigenous Australians
- 1998 Interpretive Convict Lumber Yard holding hundreds of convict era and earlier aboriginal artefacts opened in Scott Street
- 2007 Major storm event with loss of life and property, bulk carrier Pasha Bulker grounded on Nobbys Beach
- 2009 Revitalisation of Hunter Street commenced, Hunter Street Mall re-opening to traffic, new regional Museum opening in Honeysuckle precinct**



150 YEARS

Local Democracy
in Newcastle



Our organisation



Our management team

Newcastle City Council's Executive Leadership team includes the General Manager and four directors.

Together, they manage close to 1,000 staff across a range of areas, from parks and gardens to strategic planning, from fixing roads to staging art exhibitions.



City Administration Centre

Council's General Manager, **Lindy Hyam** was appointed in September 2008.

In 2009 the General Manager oversaw a major restructure of the organisation as part of the comprehensive review of Council's services and its operations.

From 1 July four new directors were appointed and joined the General Manager on the Executive Leadership Team:

Martin Coates
Director City Engagement

Steve Edmonds
Director City Assets

Judy Jaeger
Director Future City

Frank Cordingley
Director Liveable City

The Strategic Management Team prior to 1 July 2009 included:

Graham Clarke
Group Manager Community Development

Janice Walsh
Group Manager City Services

Michael McMahon
Group Manager Corporate Services

Brent Knowles
Group Manager Strategic Planning and Development

Belinda Clements
Executive Manager Human Resources

Note: Senior staff remuneration is detailed in the additional statutory report.

Human Resource activities



Council trainee lifeguard, Josh Earp working at Bar Beach

Council's Human Resources Management Unit is focussed on maximising the contribution of its people by providing guidance, support and tools for employee management.

Trainees and apprentices

Seven new apprentices were recruited in parks and reserves, painting, building, plumbing and fleet management services within the financial year. Trainees were also recruited in civic construction and aquatics areas in 2009.

Council's trainee and apprentice program helps the organisation meet the challenge of an ageing workforce and the demands of our infrastructure maintenance requirements. The recruitment of a mix of trainee apprentices (both indentured and school based) and undergraduate positions also develops resource capacity in skills shortage areas.

Learning and development

Council delivered 136 professional development courses and 153 OH&S courses across the organisation during 2008/09. Five employees enrolled in tertiary studies under Council's Employee Education Scheme and 31 work experience placements were undertaken.

It is a council priority to develop the capacity of all employees through an integrated and coordinated approach and foster a culture of leadership, continuous improvement and customer focused service.

Both the *Learning Alliance* Management Development Program and the Integrated Performance Development System (IPDS) were implemented in the organisation. The IPDS is a systematic and transparent way to review individual employee's efforts against management expectations and reinforce the messages of a proactive safety culture.

Equal Employment Opportunity



Some of our painting and decorating tradespeople

Newcastle City Council values and understands equity and diversity in the workplace. We expect all employees to treat each other and members of the community with dignity and respect.

Newcastle City Council is dedicated to providing a working environment which is fair, safe, challenging and rewarding.

Council is committed to the principles of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), encouraging ethical behaviour and increasing awareness amongst employees.

Key achievements during 2008/09 include:

- Cultural Awareness training sessions provided for employees
- Disability Awareness training sessions provided for employees
- Equity, Diversity and Respect training sessions provided for new employees, managers, supervisors, coordinators and team leaders
- Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) training provided for employees.
- Development of a new EEO policy to replace the Eliminating Workplace Harassment and Complaints Resolution Procedure

- The endorsement of the Aboriginal Employment Strategy 2009 – 2011.
- A review of the current EEO Management Plan to develop the 2009 - 2011 year plan
- Development of a working partnership with the Aboriginal Employment Strategy for the School Based Trainees Program
- Awarded New Business Partnership 2009 from the Aboriginal Employment Strategy.

Occupational health & safety



Newcastle City Council and its senior management are committed to the concept of zero harm to all employees, contractors, volunteers, visitors and the public from our operations and this is demonstrated by the successful meeting of its recent WorkCover Self Insurance Audit.

Council developed a Occupational Health and Safety Management System which enables Council to meet its legislative requirements, standards and codes of practice.

A comprehensive training database and training needs analysis for the organisation was completed in 2008. This has resulted in the development of a training calendar for 2009 ensuring all employees receive training at appropriate intervals and at key times during Council's operational cycle.

All staff will be trained in the Occupational Health and Safety Management System by April 2010, in line with WorkCover's expectations.

Monthly reporting of OH&S management system performance at Service Unit Group and Strategic Management Team level was introduced in 2008.

An analysis and review of performance indicators, records, organisational needs and OH&S management systems procedures and processes identified a number of key initiatives to improve safety and safety systems at Newcastle City Council.

The OH&S Management Plan for 2009 identifies initiatives, actions, defines responsibility and resources to manage risk across all of Newcastle City Council's activities and workplaces.

Our partnerships



Newcastle Airport had more than 1,100,000 passengers in 2008

It is essential for Newcastle City Council to work with community groups, commercial organisations and government agencies to provide services to the community.

Throughout the year there are events, projects and other activities that are a joint effort between these different groups.

Newcastle Airport Limited (NAL) was created in June 1993 to stimulate economic development for aviation/airport industries and to provide civilian airport infrastructure for the region.

Formed on 25 May 1993 by Newcastle and Port Stephens councils, the company is limited by guarantee and reinvests all/ any operating surplus back into the airport. The airport has undergone significant improvements in recent years and is today serviced by all the major domestic airlines to destinations along the east-coast.

The airport is a significant contributor to the domestic and international growth of business and tourism in the Hunter. Since the introduction of jet services into Newcastle Airport, the number of passengers has grown from 214,000 in 2003 to more than 1,100,000 in the 2008 calendar year.

NSW Local Government Mutual Liability Scheme started in 1993 as a joint venture with 96 members forming a 'self insurance mutual' covering public liability and professional indemnity insurance.

Membership has expanded to include councils, the Local Government Association, the Shires Association, a rural Water Board and a Noxious Weed Eradication Board.

Over 15 years, Statewide has delivered many benefits including stable premiums, cost containment and spread of risk.

Hunter Councils brings together 12 local councils to promote cooperation and collaboration to benefit our communities.

This has achieved:

- strong communication between councils
- Sharing professional expertise
- Intercouncil collaboration.



Newcastle branch libraries offer a diverse range of services

With the ever increasing pressure on local government to do more with less, Hunter Councils is constantly striving to reduce the cost of 'doing business' for local government through offering economies of scale and efficiencies.

Hunter Integrated Resources (HIR) is a company which was established by Lake Macquarie, Cessnock, Maitland and Newcastle City Councils to manage the Hunter Region Waste Project.

The project was abandoned recently by mutual agreement due to a range of factors, technology changes, price and viability. The company remains intact should a regional project be deemed appropriate in the future.

Newcastle Region Library has developed a number of partnerships offering diverse services including:

- Newcastle Permanent Building Society to provide the Ten Minutes a Day program, Wacky Wombat program, and early literacy programs for parents and babies and children under five
- The Newcastle Herald who supported the library's exhibition program which included a celebration of 125 years of Newcastle Herald, Women of the Hunter and Wildlife Photographer of the Year
- 1233 ABC Newcastle to provide a number of events including Art Sounds, a free monthly music program held at the Library, TAFE, Octapod, The Loft and the Conservatorium of Music
- The Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance to co-host the nation's most comprehensive and prestigious competition for press photographers, the Nikon-Walkley Photographic Awards

- The NSW Department of Education to co-host the exhibition of Design TECH at the Lovett Gallery. The exhibition included works of HSC Design and Technology students
- The Canadian High Commission to present the exhibition *Rebuilding Afghanistan*
- The Australia Council for the Arts to promote the Books Alive program which included author visits.

Our partnerships cont.



Newcastle's Civic Theatre celebrates its 80th birthday on 12 December 2009

The **Civic Precinct's** annual live performance season **INSPIRATIONS** involves working with federal and state arts funding bodies to help assist tour funding and create opportunities for live performances to be presented locally.

National performing arts joint ventures included *Company B Belvoir's Keating!*, *Sydney Dance Company's Underland* and Bangarra Dance Theatre's *True Stories*. Arts NSW and the Playing Australia Fund brought major Australian companies to Newcastle including: Bell Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, Sydney Theatre Company's *Wharf Revue* and *Ying Tong*, Hit Production's David Williamson's *The Club*, Patch Theatre Company's Helpmann Award winning *Mr. McGee and the Biting Flea* and further productions. International joint presentations were made with Andrew McKinnon and his *Miriam Margoyles - Dickens Women* plus Sydney Symphony's Nigel Kennedy.

Newcastle Region Art Gallery is one of 11 Australian galleries with a partnership arrangement with the National Gallery of Australia, giving Newcastle access to prestigious travelling exhibitions.

The gallery partnered with a number of other organisations to provide exhibitions and events including:

- A bi-monthly concert series at the University of Newcastle presented with the Conservatorium of Music
- A partnership with the Guraki Committee to develop ways to involve the Indigenous community in gallery events
- Lectures in Australian Art in partnership with Hunter Institute of Technical and Further Education (TAFE) and the School of Fine Art at the University of Newcastle
- Collaboration with Rainbow Visions to present an art lecture in the Rainbow Festival program
- Collaboration with the Dept of Education & Training to host art making workshops for gifted and talented teenagers.

The Loft Youth Venue partnered with community and government agencies to provide activities for young people including:

- Hunter New England Health – public art mural for the Kaleidoscope Mental Health Services
- Hunter Women's Centre – Zine and promotional material for the Reclaim the Night domestic violence awareness campaign
- Samaritans – early intervention art workshop series in conjunction with Francis Greenway High School
- Hunter Institute of TAFE – mentoring support for TAFE music students for Newcastle Music Week activities and employment pathway and skill development program for secondary students
- Hunter Headspace – development of Hunter headspace activities and ongoing programs
- The local Aboriginal community and local schools in the PAST PRESENT FUTURE Aboriginal youth arts program.

Our organisation

Council committees



Council committees play a crucial role in enhancing our city

Business precincts in Newcastle have a committee to advise on, promote and encourage the physical enhancement and business development of their local areas.

They include City Centre, Darby Street, Hamilton, Mayfield, Wallsend and New Lambton.

Newcastle has committees to oversee the care, control and management of designated sportgrounds and associated facilities.

They include Adamstown Park, Beresfield/Tarro Park, Elernmore Vale Reserve, Federal Park, Heaton-Birmingham Gardens Park, Hexham Park, Kotara Park, Myamblah Crescent Oval, New Lambton Oval, Stevenson Park, Stockton Park, Tuxford Park, Waratah Park and Wickham Park.

Community facilities form an integral part of the Newcastle community. Council has S355 committees responsible for the

management of council facilities under delegated authority and in accordance with Council policies, procedures and statutory obligations.

S355 committees include: Alice Ferguson Community Centre, Carrington Community Centre, Elernmore Vale Community Centre, Hamilton South Community Centre, Henderson Park Hall, Jesmond Neighbourhood Centre, Minmi Progress Association, Maryland Multipurpose Centre, New Lambton Community Centre, Newcastle Elderly Citizens Centre, Rankin Park Progress Association, Tarro Community Hall and Warabrook Community Centre.

The BBC Housing Management and Development Committee is another S355 committee established to aid the revitalisation of Newcastle through demonstration housing projects.

Our committees include strategic, statutory, operational and expert advisory committees and sub-committees that provide assistance and advice on a variety of issues across council.

Award winning teams

Newcastle City Council has again excelled as an organisation receiving awards for beautiful beaches, youth programs, conventions and tourism, and with significant recognition for its ClimateCam Test Laboratory announced as the National Award winner for the best Local Government program in Australia.



ClimateCam the best in the business

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd announced Newcastle City Council's ClimateCam International Test Laboratory initiative the best local government program in Australia at the National Awards for Local Government in Canberra in June 2009.

The awards drew strong contenders from across the country but Newcastle's innovation in this field is unsurpassed at a local government level.

The national winners were selected by an independent judging panel from 21 category winners. All up, 233 entries were submitted by councils and shires across Australia.

National award for Bureau

The Newcastle Visitor and Convention Bureau was named leading Regional Convention Bureau/Tourist Organisation of the Year at the 2009 Meeting and Events Industry National Awards in Adelaide.

The Newcastle Visitor and Convention Bureau is a service unit of Newcastle City Council and has been marketing Newcastle and the surrounding areas as a conference destination for the past 16 years.

Over that time it has supported hundreds of conference planners and secured Newcastle as the host destination for large and small conferences at locations in and around the city.

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd announced Council's ClimateCam International Test Laboratory initiative as best local government program in Australia.

Cultural Award win

The Loft Arts and Cultural Centre's work with the local Aboriginal community through its Past Present Future 5 Aboriginal youth arts program won its second award in two years. Past Present Future 5 was awarded the NSW Local Government Shires Association Cultural Award in the Aboriginal Cultural Development category.

The award follows the Loft's 2008 award for its music program in the Cultural Industries category. The Loft also received a commendation in Youth Engagement for the Loft Youth Venue Music Program in the National Awards for Local Government; and staff member, Dale Garbutt, received the Indent, Music NSW, Isaac Award for Excellence in Delivering All-age events.

Innovative Youth Week program

The 2008 Youth Week celebrations, managed by Newcastle's Youth Council, were named the Most Innovative Youth Week Program at the 2008 Local Government Awards. The program of events included the Hunter Youth Mental Health Conference, outdoor live music and markets, Rockers Revenge Breakdance and MC competition and a creative writing nano-fiction competition.

Beautiful beaches

Newcastle beaches were again recognised at the annual Keep Australia Beautiful NSW Clean Beach Challenge. Dixon Park beach was highly commended in the Department of Environment and Climate Change Overall Beach Award for the Hunter region. Merewether beach won the Sydney Water Conservation Award, Stockton beach won the Remondis Waste Solutions Resource Management Award, Nobbys Beach won the Alcoa Litter Prevention Award and the Environmental Protection Award.

Parks and Recreation team wins state award

The Parks and Recreation team won the NSW regional award at the Parks and Leisure Australia Awards in the Programs, Projects, Practices – Water Conservation and Management category. The unit entered the watering harvesting and computerised irrigation systems installed at No. 1 and No. 2 Sportsgrounds.

An Irrigation Management and Monitoring System (IMMS) was installed at the two grounds which can turn on or turn off watering systems from a remote location. Park staff can be anywhere in the city but still manage the on site irrigation systems. Staff can remotely control the watering systems, alter the watering schedules depending on rainfall and produce reports on water usage. There are also two 33,000 litre water tanks on site which are hooked up to the IMMS.



Our opportunities



Sustainability Review



The arrival of a new General Manager, the election of a new Council and the prospect of a \$12m deficit provided the catalysts for a fundamental review of the long term sustainability of Newcastle City Council.

The General Manager with Council support commissioned a broad ranging and comprehensive review of the organisation to be undertaken by Internal Audit Bureau Services with the following objectives:

1. Being sustainable in the long term
2. Regaining community confidence in Council
3. Building a cohesive, forward looking and winning culture and being a responsible employer.

The review was also to focus on:

1. Appropriateness of the current service mix
2. Effectiveness and efficiency in achieving agreed outcomes in the most productive manner.

The review started in January 2009 and will be completed in three stages. All 68 council services will be examined. Following extensive consultation with the community and staff, Stage 1 recommendations were adopted by Council in conjunction with the 2009/10 Management Plan on 25 June 2009 with identified savings of

\$2.3m. A complete list of the recommendations adopted by Council for Stage 1 is available on Council's website.

The adoption of the Stage 1 report and recommendations will result in major improvements across the organisation. Some of these changes include:

- The creation of four new directorates (City Assets, Liveable City; Future City and City Engagement) with a greater focus on support services, commercial services, management of place and governance arrangements
- Refinement and rationalisation of all manager positions
- Fundamental realignment of service functions to eliminate inefficiencies and duplication
- Centralisation of cleaning; legal, finance; and learning and development functions
- Initiatives to build a customer focused culture.

Stage 2 and 3 recommendations will be completed by December 2009.

Business Excellence Framework



Business Excellence Framework facilitators from across the organisation

A major undertaking in early 2009 was to adopt the Australian Business Excellence Framework (BEF) principles across the organisation.

The Business Excellence Framework is a well known and accepted organisational methodology used by both public and private sector organisations to achieve sustained success.

A guided self assessment of the organisation against the Business Excellence Framework was undertaken during January 2009. The score obtained by council in the assessment was 297/1000, supporting the need for a thorough improvement focus across the organisation.

This compares with other organisations generally:

Good Practice 400/1000

Aust Best Practice 600/1000

World's Best Practice 800/1000

The assessment indicated there are pockets of excellence in council but this is not consistent across the organisation. While council has some sound basic processes in place, it needs to improve in a number of key areas. The General Manager and the new Executive Leadership Team have this as a major focus.

Council embarked on introducing Business Excellence principles and methodologies across the whole organisation.

Business Excellence awareness sessions have been delivered to 100 staff to date. It is planned that over 300 staff will have attended Business Excellence training by the end of 2009.

The seven categories of the Business Excellence Framework contributing to sustained success include:

Leadership

Strategy & Planning

Information & Knowledge

People

Customer & Market Focus

Process Management, Improvement and Innovation

Success & Sustainability

2008

Year in review

The background of the page is a complex, abstract geometric pattern. It consists of numerous overlapping, curved, and angular shapes in a light pink color, set against a white background. The shapes create a sense of depth and movement, resembling a stylized, modern architectural design or a series of interlocking tiles. The overall effect is clean, minimalist, and visually appealing.

Our achievements



Newcastle's coastline is a major attraction for locals and visitors to the city

There were significant achievements in the 2008/09 financial year, from on the ground works constructing roads and footpaths through to partnership projects focussing on city revitalisation. An internal focus on sustainability and continuous improvement underpinned activities, with a commitment to community engagement and business excellence.

This page highlights some of the key activities within the period.

New General Manager and Council

Lindy Hyam commenced her appointment as the new General Manager of Newcastle City Council on 1 September 2008. Following local government elections on 13 September 2008, ten new faces joined returning councillors Lord Mayor John Tate, Aaron Buman and Michael Osborne to represent the community over the next four years.

New home for L!vesites

The popular L!vesites team started off the financial year in a new home. Council and funding partners, Hunter Development Corporation and ArtsNSW, signed an agreement for the internationally renowned outdoor events and place activation program to find a home and production base within the council's Civic Precinct. Key successful L!vesites events included Winter Heat, Dancing in the Streets and Rockers and RevHeads.

Living with floods campaign

All Newcastle ratepayers received a Living with Floods in Newcastle brochure with their rates notices in 2008 as part of a flood awareness campaign. The brochure was developed by council in partnership with Hunter Water and outlined the roles and responsibilities of each agency, frequently asked questions and emergency contact details.

Newcastle Beaches Coastal Reserve

Newcastle City Council signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Lands and Hunter Surf Lifesaving to develop the Newcastle Beaches Coastal Reserve Management Framework in December 2008. The Framework will improve co-ordination of services, facilities and amenities at our beaches.



Fort Scratchley is a significant part of Newcastle's history

Kotara Nesbitt Park Styx Creek works

Council started significant works to stabilise Styx Creek and reduce sediment going into Newcastle Harbour in November 2008. The works are a major part of the 'Sustainable City Kotara' Project funded by council and a substantive grant from the NSW Environmental Trust.

Art treasure gifted to Newcastle

Millions of dollars worth of artworks were donated to the Newcastle Region Art Gallery by Ann Lewis AM in September 2008. The 44 artworks augment the gallery's already substantial collection.

Fort Scratchley

After four years of being closed to the public and \$10m worth of restoration works, the grounds of Fort Scratchley were reopened to the public on 17 July 2008.

Inner City Safety Audit

Council released an Inner City Safety Audit in October 2008 to address the safety of the Newcastle community. An action plan to address the recommendations in the audit was developed. Council worked with representatives from other government agencies, businesses and the community through the Pride of Place Taskforce chaired by the General Manager to further improve safety in the community.

Follow your nose to detect graffiti

Newcastle City Council adopted state of the art technology to combat the rising graffiti problem in the community in 2009. Newcastle was the first to take advantage of E-nose graffiti detectors that can detect a four second burst of paint within 40 metres of the devices sensor. The detectors were placed all over the city as a part of the Pride of Place Taskforce and the city's commitment to improve cleanliness and remove graffiti.

Pioneering water safety

On 9 June 1966 two Newcastle City Council lifeguards, Kevin Mongan (Nobbys Beach) and John Young (Newcastle Beach), visited Kotara South Public School to teach water safety lessons. In May 2009 these retired lifeguards joined current council lifeguards at Kotara South Public School to view the current water safety education program they pioneered 43 years ago.

Today the presentation is known as The Newcastle Permanent Community Water Safety Education Program and is still delivered by council's professional lifeguards.

Visits are now conducted at over 50 primary schools in the Newcastle area reaching more than 12,500 children and teachers. It includes water safety at the beach, swimming centres, backyard pools, rivers and around the home.

Our achievements cont.



Many people were there to watch the unveiling of the artwork 'Grounded'. A piece of the rudder from the infamous bulk carrier was incorporated into the artwork.

City the centre of the plan

Plans to revitalise the inner city took a step forward with the first Annual Report of the *Newcastle City Centre Plan* released on Friday 10 October 2008. The City Centre Plan was developed in partnership with the NSW Government Cities Taskforce, Newcastle City Council and the community.

The plan aims to revitalise the city centre by encouraging employment and housing opportunities and designing a more dynamic, liveable city.

Pasha Bulker artwork unveiled

Newcastle Lord Mayor John Tate and Minister for the Hunter Jodi McKay MP unveiled a sculpture to mark the grounding of the Pasha Bulker in fierce storms at Nobbys beach on 8 June 2007.

The commemorative sculpture, titled *Grounded*, made by renowned Sydney based sculptor John Petrie was unveiled on Friday 5 June 2009. An original section of 22mm plate steel from the rudder of the Pasha Bulker was incorporated into the work.

Museums conference

Delegates from around Australia and across the world arrived in Newcastle for the Museums Australia 2009 conference for three days in May.

The international keynote speakers included Kim Gowland and Jane Wilcox from Manchester Art Gallery (UK) and Ali Khangela Hlongwane – Curator of Museum Africa in Johannesburg. The conference

also featured speakers from the Powerhouse Museum, the National Museum of Australia and National Portrait Gallery.

Putting lifesaving equipment to the test

Lifeguards from Nobbys Beach were called into action on Wednesday 13 May to assist NSW Police with an incident in Stockton Bight.

Recently upgraded equipment allowed lifeguards to respond quickly and efficiently to the incident. The new digital two-way network has coverage from Burwood Beach in the south to the Sygna wreck at Stockton in the north.

Lifeguards are now able to use their two-ways to talk from beach to beach and directly with emergency services and the rescue chopper. Council's Electrical Services team worked closely with the lifeguard team to develop a system that was innovative and used the best technology available.



Council lifeguards are now equipped to respond quickly to any incident

Fluro Friday a bright idea

Council threw its support behind the inaugural Fluro Friday on 24 October 2008, with staff donning everything fluro to raise awareness about workplace safety.

Fluro Friday followed a successful in house safety program called newSAFE 4 Mates which led to safety improvements as well as reductions in lost time injuries.

Council saved more than \$75,000 in its first year of the program with a 25% reduction in the injury rate.

Two years on – storm wrap up

The second anniversary of the storms that grounded the Pasha Bulker on 8 June 2007 saw the restoration work almost completed.

As a result of the storms, more than 4,000 work orders were issued for repairs including 28 bridges, 141 buildings, 827 drainage repairs and 1983 road repairs. Trees across the city

did not escape the damage with more than 2,000 at Blackbutt Reserve alone requiring removal and replacement.

Major city centre development

An agreement was signed between Newcastle City Council and The GPT Group for the sale of council owned land near Hunter Street Mall.

The proposed major retail, entertainment and commercial development in the heart of Newcastle's city centre aims to reinvigorate the city and provide a much needed link between the city's coastal attractions and the Honeysuckle precinct.



Financial snapshot



Financial Performance



Council's external Audit Report is Unqualified. The end of year financial performance showed council is in a sound financial position reaffirming the Standard and Poor's AA+ rating granted during the financial year. Cash Flow Statements disclose a net increase in cash holdings of \$11.35m and a Public Infrastructure Maintenance gap decrease of \$3m compared with the prior year results. Council is liquid and has a low debt service ratio. Our results for the financial year demonstrates strong compliance with the Local Government Financial Health Check assessment criteria.

The operating result for the year showed a \$2,682,000 surplus compared to \$1,376,000 deficit for the previous year.

The surplus can be attributed to an increase in rates and annual charges of \$4,809,000, user charges and fees of \$1,881,000, grants and contributions provided for capital purposes of \$18,080,000 and other revenues of \$2,586,000.

Grants and contributions provided for capital purposes increased 205%, mainly due to council acquiring Fort Scratchley during 2008/09 at a value of \$9,870,000 (contributed by the Commonwealth of Australia). The relocation of the Newcastle Regional Museum from Newcastle West to the Honeysuckle site received recreation and culture grants to the value of \$3,067,000.

Income was \$212m, up 11% from \$191m in 2008. Operating and capital grant income increased by \$2.3m as well as rates, annual charges, tipping and Airport

income offset by decreases in RTA and interest income. Income included \$2.5m recouped from the Federation investment which was impaired for the year ended 30 June 2008.

Expenditure was \$209m, up 9% from \$192m in 2008. The increase was mainly due to increases in employee benefits and on costs. Further variations can be attributed to NSW Government waste levy, contractor costs, and market adjustments for investments as well as the partial write-down of Lehman related investments. Note these non-cash market movements are at a point in time and required to be adjusted under Accounting Standards.

Direct salaries and wages growth was 4.1% over the prior year and disclosed a net movement of 0.35% over 2007/08 expenditure following an adjustment for the award increase of 3.75%. This slight variation is attributed to the job evaluation and salary review process.



Recent improvements to Dixon Park playground are put to good use

Depreciation of \$34m continues to be a burden on all Local Government councils.

Total cash and investments were valued at \$156m, an increase of over \$18m from 2008.

The total infrastructure, property, plant and equipment, including investment property and assets for sale, remains at \$1.5billion.

Despite downward financial market movements the balance sheet has increased net asset value by \$9.5m. Total borrowings were \$39m, up from \$34m in 2008 which council continues to repay within agreed deadlines. Council's Debt Service Ratio for year ending June 2009 was 2.18% well within the Local Government Financial Health Check Guideline of <10% for developed councils.

Budget to Actual variances are detailed in Note 16 Material budget variations in Council's Annual Financial Statements 2008/09.

All budgetary variations have been reviewed by council through the Quarterly Management Plan and budget review process and favourable and unfavourable variations adjusted accordingly.

Special Schedule 7 *Condition of Public Works* details a public works maintenance lag of \$12m, a decrease of \$3m compared with \$15m in 2008, in line with the Newcastle Report by Review Today (see Additional Statutory Report).

Summary of Financial Reports Year ended 30 June 2009	Current year	Previous year
	\$'000	\$'000
Income Statement		
Total income for continuing operations	212,095	191,016
Total expenses from continuing operations	209,413	192,392
Operating result from continuing operations	2,682	(1,376)
Net operating result for the year	2,682	(1,376)
Net operating result before grants and contributions provided for capital purposes	(24,231)	(10,209)
Balance Sheet		
Total current assets	94,990	96,167
Total current liabilities	56,123	50,400
Total non current assets	1,571,001	1,549,913
Total non current liabilities	44,416	39,694
Total Equity	1,565,452	1,555,986
Other financial information		
Unrestricted current ratio (%)	281%	346%
Debt service ratio (%)	2.18%	2.11%
Rate coverage ratio (%)	45.11%	47.57%
Rates and annual charges outstanding (%)	5.46%	4.91%
Buildings and infrastructure renewals ratio (%)	7.40%	8.47%

Note: Contributions and Donations, Commercial and Business activities and Rates and Charges written off provided in Additional Statutory Report





Our awards

Australia Day Awards



Professor Trevor Waring AM

Every year council calls for nominations from individuals and organisations in a variety of fields such as arts, sport, the environment, community service and more.

There are three awards ceremonies held each year including the Australia Day Awards, the Community Awards and the Sports Awards.

Australia Day Awards

Held in conjunction with our national day, these awards acknowledge community spirit. The City of Newcastle Australia Day Awards recognise the outstanding achievements and contribution of individuals and groups within the community of Newcastle.

There are three award categories:

Australia Day Citizen of the Year

Professor Trevor Waring AM

This award is presented to the individual considered to have made the most outstanding contribution to the City of Newcastle during the award year.

Professor Waring is a clinical psychologist with almost 40 years experience working in mental health. He is a Conjoint Professor of Psychology at the University of Newcastle where he is also the Chancellor. He was President of the NSW Psychologist Registration Board and Chair of the National Council of Psychologist Registration Boards for 14 years, retiring in November 2006.

Trevor's clinical experience includes 17 years as a clinical psychologist in a major outpatient psychiatric service, 12 years as Director of the Hunter Institute of Mental Health and Deputy Director of the Hunter Centre for Mental Health Studies, in addition to part-time private practice for 30 years.



University of Newcastle Chamber Choir; winners of Event of the Year

Australia Day Young Citizen of the Year

Mary-Anne de Luca

Mary-Anne worked at both diocesan and local parish levels providing leadership and support for World Youth Day 2008 and assisting the Diocesan Youth Advisory Council to organise a corroboree at Foreshore Park.

She is a great youth leader and ambassador and an excellent role model for young people. She was nominated by Bishop Michael Malone who says she is a person of purpose, service and passion.

Australia Day Community Event of the Year

University of Newcastle Chamber Choir

The Choir won Channel 7's Battle of the Choirs in August 2008 and used the prize money to benefit the community by setting up choral activities for young people, seniors, disadvantages and the sick.

The Choir has toured nationally and internationally. They nurture new talent and perform a range of styles from rock and jazz to classical.

Community Awards



The 2008 Community Awards presentation was held at Newcastle Region Art Gallery

These Awards recognise outstanding effort and achievement towards advancing values like a fair go, democracy, integrity, diversity, participation, endeavour and service.

They acknowledge the leadership provided by ordinary people doing extraordinary things, or ordinary things extraordinarily well.

Freeman of the City

The honour of Freeman of the City is awarded to individuals who have provided the highest level of service. It may be awarded for eminent achievement and merit in the highest order for service to Newcastle, Australia or humanity.

The award dates back to ancient times, when an exceptional person was recognised and given privileges that extended beyond the law.

The title of **Freeman of the City** was not awarded in 2008.

City of Newcastle Medal

The Medal is awarded to individuals, organisations or groups for distinguished service of a high degree to Newcastle and its citizens. No more than five awards are presented each year.

Recipients for 2008 were:

The late George Bilbie in recognition of outstanding contributions to equity of access to legal services and support of charitable organisations and individuals in need.

The late Gordon Kerridge in recognition of outstanding contributions to the role of medical professions in the community and to advocacy for motor vehicle safety.

Brian Suters in recognition of outstanding contributions to the cultural life and heritage of the city.



The 2008 Community Award winners with the General Manager and Lord Mayor

Trees in Newcastle in recognition of outstanding contributions to the engagement of the community in nature conservation.

City of Newcastle Service Award

These are awarded to individuals, organisations or groups for service to a specific group, locality or field of activity. No more than 15 awards are presented each year.

Recipients for 2008 were:

KooraGang Landcare

Volunteers in recognition of outstanding contributions to environmental rehabilitation and preservation.

Lola Mary O'Doherty in recognition of outstanding contributions to the Stockton Centre.

Sue Prior in recognition of outstanding contributions to ensuring opportunity for children's participation in the creative arts.

Jennifer Robinson in recognition of outstanding contributions to environmental education.

Cec Shevels in recognition of outstanding contributions to the development of a socially inclusive community.

Warabrook Bushcare Group in recognition of outstanding contributions to habitat restoration.

Honour Roll

Freeman of the City of Newcastle

Frank Purdue (dec), former Lord Mayor.

Charlie Jones (dec), former Lord Mayor, Federal Minister for Transport and Minister for Aviation.

Joy Cummings (dec), former Lord Mayor.

Arthur Wade, former Lord Mayor, State Member for Newcastle.

Vic Bell (dec), former Deputy Lord Mayor.

Anne Von Bertouch (dec), arts patron - (27/4/97), first non-politician.

Joyce Bond (dec), heritage and community activist (30/9/97).

Doug Lithgow, community and environmental activist (29/8/02).

Dr William Bowmore (dec), Patron of the Arts (18/10/05).

The Very Reverend Graeme Lawrence, Anglican Dean of Newcastle.

Sports Awards



Warren Smith after receiving his Outstanding Service to Sport Award with wife Beris



Joel Griffiths

These awards acknowledge the outstanding performances of many of our sporting men and women, boys and girls.

They also highlight the volunteers and committees of our sports community.

Council's Sports Advisory Panel host the award presentation.

The Newcastle Jets former player Joel Griffiths was named 2008 Sportsperson of the Year at the annual Newcastle Sports Awards Dinner and presentation.

Sporting organisations, officials, volunteers and players joined Newcastle Jets representatives at the podium to receive awards for their contribution to sporting life in Newcastle.

Surfing organiser **Warren Smith** received an Outstanding Service to Sport Award for his contribution to sport in Newcastle.

Hunter Olympians Ben Austin, Mathew Helm and Natalie Ward and Hunter Paralympians Christie Dawes and Katherine Proudfoot gave insights into their Olympic Games experiences at the function.

Lord Mayors Award Sportsperson of the Year Joel Griffiths – Football

Joel had a successful stint with Newcastle United in the National Soccer League then went to Europe where he signed with Leeds. He returned to Newcastle Jets in 2006/07.

In 2007/08, Newcastle's championship winning season, he was The Jets leading goal scorer and collected the Johnny Warren medal as the league's best and fairest.



Outstanding Sporting Team (Senior), Newcastle North Stars Ice Hockey (finalist), Newcastle Jets (winner), and Newcastle University Women's Rugby (finalist)

Sporting Organisation
Newcastle Basketball

Sporting Event
*Hunter Ice Skating Stadium
Division II Men's Ice Hockey
Championships*

Sports Official
Gary Van Egmond - Football

Volunteer Support
Robert Williams – Cycling

Outstanding Sporting Team
Junior
*Newcastle Little League Team -
Baseball*
Senior
Newcastle Jets – Football

**Outstanding Sporting
Achievement**

Male Under 18,
Ben Kantarovski – Football

Female Under 18,
Philippa Anderson – Surfing

**Masters, Jane Mountford –
Triathlon**

Male, Joel Griffiths – Football

**Female, Angie Bainbridge –
Swimming**

Athlete with a Disability,
*Kurt Fearnley - Wheelchair
Track & Road*



Our performance



Management Plan 2008/09



Looking south along our beautiful coastline

Each year council produces a management plan to outline activities and projects for delivery over the next twelve months. It includes a detailed budget with operating expenses and fees and charges register.

The 2008/09 Management Plan was based on council's five strategic priorities: *ecologically sustainable development leadership, city wide revitalisation, healthy lifestyle, compassionate community and effective and efficient governance.*

The plan set out strategies and activities to realise these priorities and established key performance indicators for each.

At the end of the June quarter, 62% of key performance indicators had met their target and 38% were below target. Many items not achieved were significantly progressed.

This annual report presents a snapshot of achievements identified in the Management Plan as core priorities for 2008/09. It also reports key performance indicator results for the financial year.

Progress summary

The 2008/09 financial year was a transitional one for Newcastle City Council with the election of a new council, a new leadership team and a change in focus for the organisation to a more customer oriented culture.

Changes were made to the organisational structure to support this service culture and to more adequately achieve community needs while ensuring the ongoing sustainability of council operations.

Due to increased focus on financial sustainability the financial results in the June Quarterly Review showed an estimated surplus of \$4,554,000.

Priority projects, while not initially identified in the 2008/09 Management Plan, were initiated in response to community and business concerns from across the Local Government Area.



Projects included:

- Review of the organisational structure
- Sustainability Review and adoption of outcomes
- Increased grant funding with impacts to MAPPs and major projects works programs
- Islington Action Group Project
- Reopening of the Hunter Street Mall
- Redevelopment of Hunter Street
- WorkCover OH&S Audit
- Corporate review of position descriptions and Integrated Performance Development System
- Pride of Place Taskforce and enhanced graffiti management.

Total grant funding received for the 2008/09 financial year was \$24,528,960 as at 12 June 2009.

This included funding for the Newcastle Museum (\$8.5m) and the Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program (\$1.9m).

Approximately \$1.5m in funding was received for further June 2007 storm repairs to regional and state roads.

Ecologically sustainable development



Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) is one of five strategic priorities which provide a focus for Council activities.

ESD is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising our future generation's ability to meet their own needs.

ESD priorities are to:

Rehabilitate and improve the coast, bushland reserves, estuaries, wetlands, creeks and stormwater quality

Reduce greenhouse gases

Support community based projects to improve the environment

Reduce the environmental 'footprint' (impact) of the city

Improve waste management and recycling.

Energy saving facilities

The ECO*STAR® program saw 53 sporting parks, seven pools, six beaches, four childcare centres, eight libraries, 16 community facilities and six surf clubs being ECO*STAR® rated and fitted with:

- 758 energy efficient light fittings
- 467 AAA shower heads
- 629 AAA taps
- 377 6L/3L dual flush toilets
- 16 instantaneous gas hot water systems
- 63 solar heat pump hot water systems
- 108 smart controls for hot water systems
- 30 smart controls for air-conditioning controls
- 4 water capture and re-use systems
- 39 site waste recycling services.

With the assistance of a Low Emission Technologies Abatement grant from the Australian Federal Government ECO*STAR® has been developed into a program that has been licensed and transferred to 36 Councils from New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Victoria.



Landcare and Bushcare programs are part of our environmental focus

\$20m national clean energy centre for Newcastle

Newcastle City Council was a key player in bringing the Clean Energy Innovation Centre to Newcastle which was announced in February 2009.

Council was part of a regional project team who compiled the submission to the Federal Government for the facility. The Federal Government will provide \$20m over four years for the operation of the Clean Energy Innovation Centre to deliver specialist advice and services.

Demand for local plants on the rise

Council's Community Greening Program supported an increasing number of community based environmental projects with plants propagated at the March Street nursery. Plant orders increased by 91% over two years with orders for over 90,000 plants placed in 2008/09. These plants were used in greening activities including Landcare, Bushcare, Dunecare and Adopt a Park as well as the popular plant giveaway to ratepayers.

Ecologically sustainable development cont.



State of the Environment

Newcastle has a diverse and complex environment. With a range of landscapes from the coast and estuary to wetlands, plains and hills, it supports a rich biodiversity.

A long history of human occupation and work has developed and altered much of the land, and over 140,000 people now live in the area.

Under the Local Government Act, part of council's charter is to "properly manage, develop, protect, restore, enhance and conserve the environment of the area for which it is responsible, in a manner that is consistent with and promotes the principles of ecologically sustainable development (ESD)".

Councils are required to prepare an annual State of the Environment (SOE) report each year to outline the range of environmental issues, activities and management strategies conducted over the past 12 months.

The SOE report provides a description of current environmental conditions and pressures created by human activity. It also describes actions taken to address environmental problems, now and into the future.

The report covering 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009 is provided as an attachment and is on council's website at:

www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au

Saving tonnes from landfill

In 2008 Newcastle residents recycled more than 10 times than they did in 2007, disposing of 30 tonnes of household electronic equipment for recycling and reprocessing at the council's Depot. Everything from old computers to broken televisions were recycled on a special e-waste collection day.

The event helped the community and council to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and save water and energy.



hazard reduction activities were carried out on 58 high priority bushland sites

Bush fire hazard reduction

Hazard reduction is a key activity for the management of bushfires. Council's hazard reduction program priority is to identify areas of potential fire risk and coordinate fire management practices.

During 2008/09 control burns were undertaken at two bushland sites in conjunction with the New South Wales Fire Brigade.

Control burns reduce fuel levels during mild weather conditions to reduce the intensity and damage of any subsequent wildfire burning. Council also conducted non fire-based processes of hazard and fuel reduction and clearing of ground fuels.

During 2008/09, major hazard reduction activities were carried out on 58 high priority bushland sites. Regular maintenance was undertaken on 55 bushland sites.

Council is a member of the Newcastle Bush Fire Management Committee. In 2008 council started a comprehensive review of its Bushfire Prone Land Mapping documentation as part of a re-certification process with the updated document submitted to the New South Wales Rural Fire Services Commissioner for certification in April 2009.

Rehabilitating local creeks

Newcastle City Council and the NSW Environment Trust pooled funds to repair a section of Styx Creek near Nesbitt Creek, Kotara in November 2008. The creek rehabilitation was part of Sustainable City Kotara, a 12 month project aimed at households, schools and businesses in the Kotara area. A series of pools and riffles were created within the stream and the creek bed and banks reinforced with rock where required. The project resulted in a reduction in soil loss from this creek, improved water quality and the creation of a more viable habitat within the stream.

Summerhill Waste Management Centre

The construction and installation of a renewable energy facility at the Summerhill Waste Management Centre was completed during 2008/09.

The facility provides the necessary infrastructure to capture and process landfill gas to generate renewable energy and dramatically reduce fugitive emissions of landfill gas entering the atmosphere.

A new waste cell, Cell 7, was excavated, constructed and lined to provide up to 1,300,000 m3 of air space. Cell 7 started receiving waste in January 2009.

City wide revitalisation



Footpaths help improve pedestrian safety and access

Newcastle City Council will rejuvenate the city's assets by keeping them well maintained and clean.

Footpaths and suburban infrastructure will be improved. Our beaches and coastal assets will be a high priority.

City wide revitalisation priorities

Make the city cleaner and tidier

Simplify and update development guidelines to deliver better results

Better manage car parking in the city centre

Extend art gallery and library operations

Improve safety and access for pedestrians and vehicles

Pride of Place Committee

In October 2008 Council convened a Pride of Place Taskforce to address issues including graffiti, vandalism, community safety, cleanliness and appearance. Representatives from business, government agencies, young people and the community are members of the taskforce.

A team leader for graffiti

A Graffiti Team Leader was appointed to manage the implementation of council's Graffiti Management Plan, the day to day operations of the graffiti hotline and coordinate media and community education.

Anti graffiti products

The Hamilton Business District Committee and council staff employed anti-graffiti products to assist in the cleaning and removal of graffiti on public and private assets. A trial of an anti-graffiti coating on the James Street, Hamilton public toilets started in January 2009. The trial will be monitored by the Hunter



Civic Theatre's new all-weather loading dock cover

Business District Committee and council to evaluate the performance of this product.

E-nose at work

An E-nose device was installed in Newcastle which detects aerosol paint in real time. The system can detect a paint spray up to 40 metres away.

Major works to Christie Lane

Major works were completed in Christie Lane and Wheeler Place to upgrade car parking and disability access to City Hall and the Civic Theatre.

The works included adjusting street levels and underground services. It also included an all-weather cover for the loading docks that link the two buildings, a stage extension at the Civic Theatre and infrastructure for a comprehensive waste management scheme (Pulpmaster 3000). The work was a major project in the 2008/09 Management Plan and started in January 2009.

City wide revitalisation cont.



The 2008/09 Stormwater Service Charge program

Council levied a stormwater management service charge of \$25 per residential property, \$12.50 for residential strata lots, \$25/350^m² for business properties capped at a maximum charge of \$1,000. Business strata units were subject to a minimum of \$12.50 per strata lot for additional works and services.

The projected expenditure on stormwater management service charge drainage works and services over the financial year identified in the Management Plan was \$1,874,263. The actual expenditure of these works and services was \$1,532,524.

The reason for the difference was the reallocation of design, project management and construction resources to deliver the Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Projects.

During 2008/09 the program included 47 projects.

Major achievements included new drainage construction in Edwards Street Merewether, Montrose Avenue Adamstown Heights, Parkway Avenue Bar Beach and Union Street The Junction.

Failed drainage was replaced at the intersection of Bull and Corlette Streets Cooks Hill, Chaucer Street Hamilton, Lauers Lane Newcastle West and Aldyth Street New Lambton.

The deteriorated culvert over the creek in Elizabeth Street Carrington was rehabilitated. Major drainage erosion issues were addressed behind Benjamin Drive Wallsend and at Nesbitt Park Kotara. Stormwater drainage cleaning was undertaken in Robertson Street, Hargrave Street and Elizabeth Street Carrington.

Maintenance of water quality and previous rehabilitation sites were undertaken and the water quality at ponds in Blackbutt Reserve was addressed.

Condition of public works summary and tables in the additional statutory report



The recently finished Cleary Street Hamilton carpark

The program addressed erosion and sediment control at Blackbutt Reserve, Jesmond Bushland and George McGregor Reserve and worked with the construction industry to address stormwater at work sites.

Bus stop renewal

Bus stops across the city need to be upgraded to comply with the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport Act 2002.

Improvements were completed at 34 sites throughout the city at a cost of \$200,000. Works included paving construction, tactile ground surface indicators, shelters, seat and sign relocations, ramps and handrails.

Suburban car park renewal

Thirteen suburban car parks were given a \$488,000 facelift which included resurfacing, restoration of kerb and guttering, landscaping, fencing, drainage improvements and line marking. The work also included providing disabled access facilities.

The car parks included were Queen Street Newcastle (behind Newcastle Region Library), Nobbys Beach, Bar Beach, Date Street Adamstown and Adamstown library, James Street and Murray Streets Hamilton, De Vitre Street Lambton, Cromwell Street New Lambton, Dora Street Mayfield, Kemp Street and Tyrell Street Wallsend and Beresfield Rail Station.

Cleary Street Hamilton car park extension

Cleary Street car park in Hamilton was small and had no disabled parking. The car park was expanded onto the adjacent council owned land and spaces increased by 21 bringing the total car spaces to 38 including provisions for disabled access. The work was valued at \$300,000.

Beresfield footpaths

Beresfield shopping precinct was made easier to navigate with the construction of 1,560 metres of footpaths. The paved footpaths reduce the need for pedestrians to walk on the road shoulders avoiding conflict with motor vehicles. Funding of \$225,000 was used for this project.

Healthy lifestyle



The giant obstacle course always proves popular at Newcastle swimming centres

Newcastle City Council will improve the city's parks and playgrounds to meet the changing needs of the community including taking an integrated approach to cycleway and footpath improvement.

Healthy lifestyle priorities

Replace and improve equipment and facilities in playgrounds, parks and ovals.

Create new cycleways such as the Wallsend and Glendale Cycleway.

Base future projects on research about trends in sport and leisure activities.

Enlarge and improve Beresfield Golf Course.

Lambton Park new playground

Lambton Park was upgraded from a local to district level playground, with new equipment installed to allow access for children with a disability. New concrete walking and bicycle paths were built connecting the playground to the swimming pool, sporting areas and formal gardens areas in Lambton Park.

New trees were also planted to provide additional shade for users. These improvements were possible following funding from the Australian Government's Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan.

A summer of fun

Hundreds of young people enjoyed the Summer of Fun in November 2008 when three giant inflatable obstacle courses were set afloat at Beresfield, Stockton and Wallsend Swimming Centres.

The inflatables are approximately 15 metres long and feature a series of bumps, towers, arches and slides for children



to navigate. The obstacle courses were staffed by two pool lifeguards who added to the fun by hosing down participants.

The Mayfield community also celebrated their swimming centres' 42nd birthday in November with a special day of activities.

Beach front improvements

Newcastle beachfronts and swimming centres got a \$380,000 facelift to improve facilities for the public. Some works included new playgrounds, a new beach volleyball court, new seating and shade shelters and garden refurbishment.

These improvements were possible following funding from the Australian Government's Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan.

Bike Week Family Fun Ride

Council urged anyone with a bicycle to grab their helmet, jump on and be part of the Bike Week Family Fun Ride at the Fernleigh Track on Sunday 21 September 2008. Bike Week aims to raise the profile of cycling and encourage the use of bikes for short local trips, such as riding to work and school. The ride started from the Fernleigh Track and finished with a free healthy breakfast. Hundreds of people enjoyed the day out which is part of a state-wide promotion initiated by the Roads and Traffic Authority.

New paths at Braye Park

New concrete walking and cycle paths were built at Braye Park to link the playground to new picnic shelters. Seating and tables were also installed under the shelters with some seating along the paths to provide rest areas. Braye Park is a large district park located in Waratah, with sweeping views towards Newcastle and the Hunter Valley. It contains a children's playground, picnic shelters and walking paths.

Healthy lifestyle cont.



Dixon Park playground is a hit

Helping spread the sun message

Council lifeguards helped launch NSW Cancer Council's Relay for Life with plenty of family friendly activities at Nobbys Beach on 11 October 2008. The day included family activities, water safety education activities as well as CPR and Jetski demonstrations.

Council lifeguards also teamed up with the Westpac Rescue Helicopter crew for rescue demonstrations. Newcastle Permanent supported the event as sponsors and partners of Newcastle City Council's Newcastle Permanent Community Water Safety Education Program.

Dixon Park upgrade

A district level playground was installed at Dixon Park, adjacent to Dixon Park Beach. A shade shelter with seating and drinking fountains were built as well as concrete walking paths to connect the playground to two new picnic shelters. Trees were planted to provide natural shade for users.

The future of skate parks

Council took to the suburbs to consult on the future of skate parks, hosting discussion sessions in Stockton, Wallsend, Maryland and Jesmond in January 2009.

The review of skate parks kick-started in December, with over 50 people bringing ideas and feedback about the city's nine skate parks and opportunities for the future.

Skaters from a young age through to adult skaters as well as interested community members shared their views at the sessions and put forward ideas for consideration.



Stockton Tourist Park has improved facilities for its visitors to enjoy

Refurbishment of Fort Scratchley

Fort Scratchley was opened to the public following an extensive refurbishment project and handover from the Commonwealth Government.

Guided tours have proved to be very popular with an average of more than 200 visitors per week taking either a full site or tunnel tour.

The site is developing a reputation as a venue for events and functions with a difference. It hosted the launch of the BMW 7 Series in April 2009 which was very well received.

Bookings are now flowing in for the multi-purpose centre which is due to open in early 2010 and will be a popular wedding reception venue in the future.

High occupancy rate at Stockton Tourist Park

Stockton Beach Tourist Park achieved excellent occupancy and a record revenue of over \$1.7m for the 2008/09 financial year, defying the economic downturn.

A new barbeque, shelter and picnic tables were installed and both amenities were refurbished. More tourist sites were created with the aim of creating a new cabin precinct in the northern end of the park.

A vibrant civic precinct

The Civic Theatre and Playhouse hosted over 235 performing arts events in 2008/09 attracting over 97,885 patrons.

There were nearly 50 local community based performances which attracted 30,958 patrons.

Newcastle City Hall hosted 800 events during that time, including weddings, conferences, concerts and debutante balls.

Compassionate community



Newcastle City Council will implement its Community Plan to improve equity and social justice in the City.

Increasing the supply of affordable housing will be a priority, as will increasing employment opportunities for indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse groups.

Compassionate community priorities

Provide better access to childcare.

Reduce violence and vandalism by improving transport for late-night visitors around and out of the City Centre.

Collect more useful information for Council and other agencies on the city's social needs and how to address them.

Advocate for better public transport facilities.

Access and Equity Policy

Council is committed to developing opportunities that improve quality of life and provide a socially responsible lifestyle for all. We have an Access Policy to ensure social equity by eliminating barriers for people who have a disability.

Promoting positive attitudes

Council promoted positive attitudes and increased awareness of people with a disability by supporting the Disability Network Hunter to organise International Day for People with a Disability in December 2008.

Over 500 people with a disability attended from over 20 organisations and schools. Participants danced, performed and enjoyed a sing-a-long and a sausage sizzle for lunch.



*Libraries **are** special places for children*

Accessible tour of Fort Scratchley

The Australia Day 2009 celebration included a special accessible tour of Fort Scratchley using the stair lift and underground wheelchair. A beach wheelchair was made available for use at Horse Shoe beach and a submersible wheelchair at Newcastle Baths. Accessible sideshow rides were provided with extra accessible parking and an accessible bus to transport people with a disability around the venue.

Infrastructure improvements

A new access ramp to Elernmore Vale Community Centre was constructed and two new submersible wheelchairs were provided to Newcastle baths. A stair inclinator and wheelchair were provided at Fort Scratchley to allow people with a physical disability to participate in underground tours of the tunnels and fortifications. An access ramp and an accessible picnic shelter were also constructed at Richley Reserve, Kotara. There were

22 accessible picnic settings installed along the coast from Stockton Beach to Merewether Ocean Baths. A new accessible toilet was installed in the Cultural Centre library and a new ramp was constructed for improved access at New Lambton Library.

Supporting our seniors

Fourteen information sessions on preparing for disasters were held for seniors, with 2500 information kits distributed across the local government area. The annual Seniors Week program saw 1800 seniors enjoying over 20 events in and around the city.

Born to read

Nearly 6,000 parents and their babies attended Baby Book Time sessions at council branch libraries. The Ten Minutes A Day Baby Book packs achieved over 21,000 loans. The Newcastle Permanent Wacky Wombat Program and Storytime program was held in branch libraries for the slightly older children, with 2,433 pre school children attending the program.

Libraries special places for children

The library hosted a number of programs especially for children in 2008/09, including a regular school holiday program, Children's Book Week activities, National Simultaneous Story time, Summer Reading Program, Newcastle Permanent Wacky Wombat program and the popular Ten Minutes A Day reading program. The program received \$75,000 in sponsorship from the Newcastle Permanent Building Society Charitable Foundation which was used to extend the program to Ballina, Lismore, Tamworth and Armidale. Over 3,000 children attended the annual Children's Book Week program.

Compassionate community cont.

1,072,696 people visited libraries in Newcastle

1,748,329 loans at Newcastle Region Library

3,030 primary school children attended Children's Book Week programs

97,157 visitors attended exhibitions at the Lovett Gallery and Wallsend Library

15,012 young people actively participated in Loft programs

49 all-ages drug and alcohol free events run in association with the Loft, providing significant audience development opportunities for over 250 bands.

Building a better gallery

Newcastle Region Art Gallery is the custodian of one of Australia's most substantial public art collections outside major capital cities.

The gallery proudly houses many works by significant artists, including Arthur Boyd, William Dobell, Russell Drysdale, Sidney Nolan, Margaret Olley, John Olsen, Patricia Piccinini and Brett Whiteley.

The community has continued to contribute funds to help address the desperate exhibition and storage needs at the Gallery to showcase these works, including hosting the annual Lady Mayoress' Fundraising Dinner.

Facilities to support children

Council provides eight purpose-built childcare centres in addition to the community facilities which are used for vacation care, playgroups, Child and Family Health clinics, family support programs, out of school hours care and recreational activities.

Council also maintains sporting venues and recreational areas for children in structured and unstructured activities. Council operates a Family Day Care Scheme and one Long Day Care Centre offering affordable options for quality childcare in the city. In 2009 there were 1,185 children registered with these services from 902 families.

Taking programs to the suburbs

The annual Westfest school holiday program for 12 to 15 year old high school students was held during the July 2008 school holidays. The program included free recreational activities such as horse riding, go-karting, Kidzamps, art workshops,

indoor rock wall climbing, canoeing, youth games and video making. In 2008, almost 500 young people attended 36 Westfest activities.

Loft Youth Arts and Cultural Centre

The Loft Youth Arts and Cultural Centre aims to encourage young people's ideas and development of their skills as organisers and managers of their own activities and events. It supports youth-driven programs with resources, mentoring and a space for a diverse range of activities and events including a comprehensive music production and performance program, Inzine (a publication for local young writers) and a visual arts program with workshops and exhibitions. Internet access, school holiday programs and a drop-in service is also provided.

Weekly and holiday activities are offered throughout Newcastle in partnership with community organisations, libraries and other sections of council. The Loft is engaged in a number of



The Art Gallery has many activities being enjoyed by our younger population too

partnership programs including an employment pathway and skill development program with secondary students and the TAFE music course.

Newcastle Youth Council

The Newcastle Youth Council provides an opportunity for young people to promote issues and develop leadership skills through planning and staging events during Youth Week each year and participating on council committees such as the Community Safety Panel, Social Strategy Advisory Committee and the Australia Day Committee. Major projects for the Youth Council in 2008 included programming for Youth Week and the peer consultation project "Youth Think" which resulted in a short video examining young people's opinions on key issues of transport, employment, the environment, education and politics.

Youth Week

Over 1000 young people attended 2008 Youth Week events across the Newcastle local government area. Highlights of the program included Youth Homelessness Matters Day, Where's the Ferris Wheel, and Youth Art Exhibition. Newcastle City Council was a Finalist in the Local Government Youth Week Award 2009 for Most Innovative Youth Week Program.

Attracting young people to the gallery

Art Cart, a free program of hands on art activities for young people, drew an average of 100 people to Art Gallery each weekend during 2008/09.

School holiday workshops conducted quarterly in the gallery pavilion area also attracted over 300 students. Targeted workshops for students from schools designated as disadvantaged were also held.

The gallery collaborated with the Department of Education and Training to host art making workshops for gifted and talented teenagers and again hosted *Artexpress*, the exhibition of works by 2008 HSC students.

Effective and efficient governance



Council is to develop a city-wide floodplain risk management plan by 2011

Newcastle City Council will listen to the community and involve them in decision making.

Council will operate efficiently so it can meet community needs in a financially responsible way.

Effective and efficient governance priorities

Make sure Council and community buildings, equipment, IT systems and vehicles are adequate and in good condition

Improve communication with the community

Implement city wide water management and collect better information to manage flood hazards

Reduce asbestos hazards from building work.

Managing floods

On 4 August 2009 Council adopted a Floodplain Risk Management Plan for the Wallsend Commercial Centre following a public exhibition period in May and June. The plan sets out the best way to manage the extraordinary flash flood risks in the highest flood risk area of Newcastle. Council is seeking funds to implement the plan.

Ten rainfall measurement stations and two water level sensors were installed around the Newcastle local government area to assist the Bureau of Meteorology provide improved warning for flash flooding.

Concept city wide planning was completed for the management of riverine, flash and ocean flooding – including the effects of projected long term sea level rise. This planning has found it is not feasible to remove all flooding and risk. It has defined the priority areas and issues for Council's development of a City-wide Floodplain Risk



The new MFD devices have been installed throughout council offices

Management Plan by 2011 which will include extensive community consultation.

More information is available on council's web site, including details on how to obtain flood information for specific properties.

Taking it to the suburbs

Communicating with the community was a priority for the newly elected council with a program of ward based council meetings developed. The first two of four ward based community consultation forums and council meetings were held in February and May in ward four and three. The sessions proved popular with residents having the opportunity to address councillors about issues in their local community.

Saving through technology

A program to replace photocopiers, faxes, printers and scanners with one machine saved \$277,419 printed pages in 12 months. There were 45 multi-functional devices (MFD) devices installed replacing 240 separate machines.

Committee structure review

Following an independent committee review completed in 2007, Council instigated a comprehensive restructure of its committee system with a view to ensuring sustainability and providing community members, experts and stakeholders with an opportunity to have meaningful and direct input into Council's decision making processes.

Taking care with asbestos

The Major Assets Preservation Program (MAPP) committed \$25,000 this year and for future years to update the existing asbestos register.

The funding will help develop a hazardous materials register with a database linked to Council's corporate map. Data collected will be used for inspection and works programs with hazardous materials surveys conducted at Beresfield Childcare Centre and Richley Reserve. Other work in the program includes the recent replacement of roofing material at Astra Street.

Effective and efficient governance cont.



Community consultation forums were held on the Sustainability Review

Newcastle Voice

In December 2008 council embarked on a new approach to community consultation when it launched Newcastle Voice.

Newcastle Voice provides a coordinated consultation service to the organisation and manages a community reference panel of residents who are willing to provide input and feedback to council.

Council consults with the community in a number of ways, including workshops, online engagement, printed surveys, focus groups and community meetings.

Newcastle Voice aims to improve the quality of council's consultation and ensure activities are highly professional and cost effective. Its research will be used to identify important community issues and help council plan services to better meet community needs and expectations.

In the 2008/09 year Newcastle Voice conducted two major surveys, a quick poll, and organised and conducted three ward forums.

A comprehensive, multi-modal consultation program was developed for the draft Management Plan and Sustainability Review. More than 100 people attended three forums to discuss the draft plan and review recommendations.

An online and mail survey and independent phone survey was also conducted with over 1300 individual responses collected.

A significant effort has gone into recruiting members to the community reference panel to ensure the panel represents a broad cross section of the community. A great number of members have been recruited via a telephone survey, media and advertising, community events, direct letter, e-mail invitation and word of mouth.

Feedback from members has been very positive and Newcastle Voice is learning a great deal about community issues. Long term planning and the environment are consistently identified as important topics of interest (81%) followed by parking and transport (79%) and Pride of Place (79%).



Council uses a range of education and enforcement tools to meet its obligations

Companion Animals

Council uses a range of education and enforcement tools to comply with the Companion Animal Act. Council spent \$797,000 on companion animal management and activities in the 2008/09 financial year.

Education activities carried out by the Compliance Services team included the distribution of brochures and pooch pouches and attendance at a number of community events.

Council promotes the benefits of desexing animals and maintains a relationship with the RSPCA and Hunter Animal Watch to facilitate low cost desexing for persons in financial difficulty.

Enforcement activities included the investigation and management of straying cats and dogs, dog attacks, dangerous and restricted dogs, barking dogs and nuisance cats.

Council investigated 246 dog attacks during the 2008/09 financial year. All verified dog attacks were reported to the Department of Local Government.

Council's pound is operated by RSPCA NSW. The net cost of running Council's pound is \$203,077. This expenditure exceeds the income received from the Companion Animals Fund which totals \$114,984.

Unclaimed animals in Newcastle are transferred to the RSPCA. Where possible, homes are found for them. Animals are only euthanased when their health or behaviour makes it unsuitable for them to be placed in homes.

The RSPCA updates the pound data collection return every month and lodges it with the Department of Local Government on an annual basis.

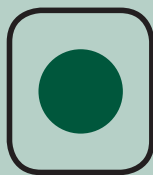


A close-up photograph of a black pen with a yellow tip pointing at a grid of numbers. The number '18000' is circled in the grid. The grid contains various numbers, including 5700, 12000, 8500, 5400, 6500, 10000, 6700, 9100, 18000, 10500, 8400, 8100, 10100, 9400, 12300, 10500, 9800, 7000, 12000, 7160, 13900, 5000, and 7000. The pen is positioned diagonally across the top right of the frame, pointing towards the circled number. The grid is composed of thin black lines forming a series of squares. The numbers are printed in a black, sans-serif font. The background is a light, neutral color. The lighting is soft, creating a slight shadow of the pen on the grid. The focus is sharp on the pen tip and the circled number, with a slight blur on the numbers further away. The overall composition is clean and professional, emphasizing the act of pointing or highlighting a specific value in a data set.



Key performance indicators

Our KPIs



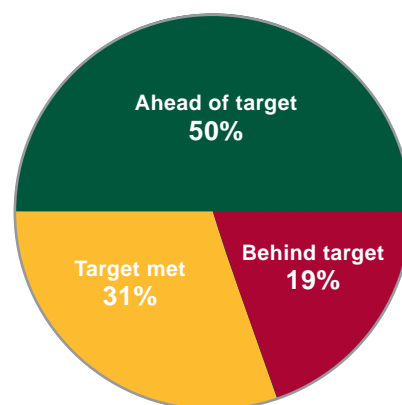
The 2008/09 Management Plan sets out strategies to achieve Council's Strategic Direction and establishes Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for each Service Unit.

Council reviews progress towards achievement of the targets set within the Management Plan on a quarterly basis.

As at 30 June 2009, Council met or was ahead of target with 81% of its KPI's, with 19% behind target. The indicators not met and the reason for non-achievement are identified in this section.

The following pages provide an overview of those KPI's ahead of target, those that have been met or have not been met and need urgent attention as at 30 June 2009.

Note: All Key Performance Indicators are currently under review with the Sustainability Review.



Performance indicators

Legend



Ahead of
target



In progress
on target



In progress
behind target
or revised



Required
urgent
attention

ESD Leadership

Service Element	Target	end June result	Comment
<i>Business Support</i>			
85% of activities in environmental program met their target (note - performance indicators for each activity can be found in the program) works. Projects have been rescheduled for commencement in the first quarter of 2009/2010.	> = 85%	61%	15% of environmental projects have not commenced due to a number of vacant internal coordination positions. Delays have been primarily in creek rehabilitation and maintenance works, and coastal vegetation works. Projects have been rescheduled for commencement in the first quarter of 2009/2010
<i>Waste Services</i>			
Maintain compaction density of 0.75t per cubic metre in the waste landfill	> = 0.75t/m3 density	0.75	Target met
Maintain an average less than 155 missed services per month for domestic waste services	< = 155 missed services	184.58	Target not met by year end. Process review to be undertaken of missed garbage services to determine causes and effects to services
Divert 18% of waste from land fill	> = 18% diverted	13.53%	The widening of waste streams that attract waste levy charges has resulted in a percentage increase in mixed waste tonnage when compared to diverted waste i.e. customer choice when sorting waste before disposal



Our KPIs

Legend



Ahead of target



In progress on target



In progress behind target or revised



Required urgent attention

City wide revitalisation

Service Element	Target	end June result	Comment
Art Gallery			
Attract 10,000 participants in Art Gallery public programs	> = 10,000 participants	17,825	Ahead of Target
Attract 75,000 visitors to the Art Gallery	> = 75,000 visitors	70,481	Result 94% of target. Contributing factors could be related to : - economic downturn - car parking constraints. - less space within the Gallery due to temporary storage requirements reducing potential size of exhibitions.
City Works - Construction			
Complete 100% of programmed construction works by end of financial year	100%	99%	Achieved 99% of program, persistent wet weather in the last quarter prevented full achievement
City Works - Road Maintenance			
Complete 85% of programmed road maintenance works by end of financial year	85%	97%	Ahead of Target
Single invitation maintenance contract completed within tender rates for both routine work and specific work orders	100%	100%	Target met
Community Partnerships			
Attract and respond to 200 conference leads	> = 200 conference leads	339	Ahead of Target
Maintain Visitor Information Centre walk-in numbers above 38,000	Walk-ins > = 38,000	37,916	99% met with only 84 walk ins below the annual target. The global financial crisis and swine flu have contributed to lower than expected results
Facilities Management			
Net return per parking space to be greater than or equal to the average of the last two years for parking station operations	Net return > = \$891	\$846	Downturn in casuals and early birds at all stations in particular Mall Parking Station due to lack of business activity in Hunter Street Mall to attract patrons. The situation at Mall parking station is unlikely to improve until Hunter Street Mall can attract patrons. It is anticipated that opening the mall to traffic will have a positive impact on net returns



Performance indicators

Service Element	Target	end June result	Comment
<i>Library and Cultural Development</i>			
Promotional activities to reach at least 20,000 young people (The Loft)	> = 20,000 young people	21134	Ahead of Target
Meet or exceed the operational forecast to 2008/09 (The Loft)	Operating result < (\$632,612) including recharges	\$603,153	Ahead of Target
Maintain a 50% increase in usage of new Wallsend District Library in comparison to old Wallsend library	> = 425,000 loans	568,641	Ahead of Target
The Loft to deliver at least 15 programs in partnership with other organisations	> = 15 programs delivered	74	Ahead of Target
Complete 90% of reference enquiries within 24hrs	> = 90%	97%	Ahead of Target
Provide young people with the opportunity to participate in an average of 12 separate activities per month	>= average 12 per month	22.583	Ahead of Target
Facilitate 12,000 online database sessions	> = 12,000 sessions	18,296	Ahead of Target
Participate in at least 50 promotional activities (The Loft)	> = 50 promotional activities	78	Young People Attendances = 25,161
Preserve 1,750 items from local studies collection	> = 1,750 items preserved	3,172	Ahead of Target
Attendance to exhibitions and programs at the Library of 60,000	Attendance > = 60,000	111,230	Ahead of Target
Provide 1,000 new items to the cultural collection	> = 1,000 new items provided to the cultural collection	1,213	Ahead of Target
Number of attendances at the Loft to reach at least 15,000	Attendance > = 15,000	15,344	Ahead of Target
Lend 1.75m items from the library collection	> = 1.75m items	1.75m	Target met
Deliver an average of 115 housebound loans each month	>= average 115 loans per month	111.083	Above average results were achieved for first, second and fourth quarters. The YTD average is still below target due to Dec Qtr. Overall achievement of KPI.
Provide 110,000 internet user sessions	> = 110,000 internet user sessions	106,441	97% of target met. The target was increased from the previous year.



Our KPIs

Legend



Ahead of target



In progress on target



In progress behind target or revised



Required urgent attention

City wide revitalisation cont.

Service Element	Target	end June result	Comment
<i>Museum</i>			
Deliver three programs at the Museum focusing on the participation of families	> = 3 programs delivered	3	Target met
Inform and communicate with Friends of the Museum and volunteers by organising at least four meetings throughout the year	> = 4 meetings held	4	Target met



Healthy lifestyle

Service Element	Target	end June result	Comment
<i>Civic Precinct</i>			
Provide a growing number of local live performances	> than 20 ticketed events across precinct	35	Ahead of Target
<i>Facilities Management</i>			
Report quarterly on visitor numbers to inland pools		327,526	Beresfield - 41878 , Lambton - 161432, Stockton - 35609, Mayfield - 42643, Wallsend - 45964
Average net cost per visitor at pools less than \$5.08	< = \$5.08	\$5.49	Income down at Lambton and Beresfield pools. Beresfield - (\$332,727), Lambton - (\$568,849), Stockton - (\$290,116), Mayfield - (\$305,575), Wallsend - (\$299,331) = Total (\$1,796,598). Attendances = 327,526
<i>Parks & Recreation</i>			
Maintain number of volunteer hours in community programs higher than 25,000	> = 25,000 hours	30,289	Ahead of Target



Compassionate community

Service Element	Target	end June result	Comment
<i>Compassionate Community</i>			
Conduct 6 training initiatives for community event organisers	> = 6 training initiatives	6	12 May Food Hygiene workshop, 15 June Event Management Licensing Basics, 16 June Occupational Health and Safety ticket for traffic Management, 22 June Event Planning and Onsite Management, 23 June Roads & Traffic Authority Traffic Management Yellow card
<i>Human Services</i>			
Provide support and information to an average of 95 external services/government departments/individuals per month	> = average 95 per month	143	Ahead of Target
Provide affordable, quality accredited home based childcare by establishing and maintaining suitable childcare placements with an average of 250 EFT	> = average 250 EFT per month	271	Ahead of Target
Maintain average enrolment at Beresfield Community Children's Education Centre at 59 children per day	Average 59	59	Target met
Maintain accreditation standards for Beresfield Community Children's Education Centre by performing an annual evaluation and review of centre policies	> = 37	21	21 Policies completed by 30 June, remainder completed by end of August 2009



Effective and efficient governance

Service Element	Target	end June result	Comment
<i>Accounting Services</i>			
Ensure percentage of annual charges outstanding more than 90 days is not greater than 2.5%	< 2.5% of charges outstanding	1.4	Ahead of Target
Investment returns in excess of +0.35% than UBS Australian Bank bill index	> 0.35%	0.53	Ahead of Target



Our KPIs

Legend



Ahead of target



In progress on target



In progress behind target or revised



Required urgent attention

Effective and efficient governance cont.

Service Element	Target	end June result	Comment
Process s603 certificates within 1.5 days	< = 1.5 days	0.928	Ahead of Target
Completion of Management Compliance, Taxation and Statutory reports within designated timeframes	100%	100	Target met
Business Support			
Respond to 90% of customers mediation facilitation and Public Voice requests within 5 days	> = 90%	100%	Ahead of Target
Communications			
Action 95% of media requests within one hour	> = 95%	99%	Ahead of Target
Development and Building			
Median net processing time for all Development Applications and s96 applications within 26 days	< = 26 days	24.833	Ahead of Target
98% of final inspections carried out within requested timeframe	> = 98%	98%	Target met. 98% of final inspections carried out within requested timeframe
Median net processing time for Complying Development Applications within seven days	< = 7 days	8.4583 days	3 applications were received during this period. All submissions required additional information to be lodged to allow assessment of the applications. KPI achieved for first three quarters
Median net processing time for all Construction Certificate applications within 26 days	< = 26 days	26.83 days	227 Construction Certificates issued. The processing time for Construction Certificates is slightly higher than the KPI because of the extended processing times of some of the combined Development and Construction Certificate applications determined during the Quarter. KPI's achieved for first, second and last quarters
Governance			
Allow no more than two corrections for all minutes for each Council/Committee meeting in one month	< = 2 corrections	0	Ahead of Target
Management to accept 90% of audit recommendations	> = 90%	On target	Sustainability Review underway for all services. Internal Auditor recruitment unsuccessful. External consultant engaged to develop audit plan
Audit committee to accept 98% of audit recommendations	> = 98%	N/A	



Service Element	Target	end June result	Comment
<i>Governance cont.</i>			
Distribute 100% of Council minutes and actions within two working days following a Council/Committee meeting (excluding months where there are no meetings)	100% within 2 days	100%	Target met
Deliver 100% of Council business papers to Councillors one week prior to scheduled meeting	100%	100%	Target met
<i>Governance and Administrative Services</i>			
Acknowledge 95% of public liability claims within one day of receipt	> = 95%	96.75%	Ahead of Target
Stock turnover target 4.5 times per year	> 4.5 per year	6.98	Ahead of Target
Process 90% of requisitions within 24 hours of receipt	> = 90%	95.5%	Ahead of Target
Complete reprographics jobs within one day of receipt	1 day	< 1 day	Ahead of Target
Acknowledge 95% of public liability claims within one day of receipt	> = 95%	96.75%	Ahead of Target
Payment of 85% of creditors within 30 days	> = 85%	80.75%	Marginal decrease from target due to implementation of integrated workflow payment process, associated training and staff familiarity
<i>Strategic Information</i>			
Respond to 91% of logged IT support service calls within response timeframes	> = 91%	91.58%	Ahead of Target
Process and validate new properties within an average of four days	< = 4 days	3.53	Ahead of Target
Register 97% of Development and Animal Applications within one working day	97%	98.2%	Ahead of Target
Process 97% of s149 requests within three days	> = 97%	97%	Target met
Register and distribute 97% of inwards mail within one working day	> = 97%	87.25%	Behind target due to resourcing issues. Being addressed





Help shape our city's future

Let's hear what you have to say about...

...the future of our city's future...

The background of the image features a complex, abstract geometric pattern. It consists of numerous overlapping, curved, and angular shapes in a light orange or tan color, set against a white background. The pattern creates a sense of depth and movement, resembling a stylized, modern architectural design or a woven fabric texture. The shapes vary in size and orientation, creating a dynamic and visually engaging composition.

Community and culture

Our community



Culturally and linguistically diverse communities

Community language collection

A community language service is available through council's branch libraries. Bulk loans are available from the NSW State Library in any requested language and an ongoing home library service is provided to housebound clients from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Encouraging CALD youth

The Loft Youth Venue encouraged young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to participate in regular weekly Hip Hop sessions and use the Venue computers. The response was very positive, with a growing number of people attending the venue. The Youth Venue also participated in, and supported, multicultural youth partnerships across the sector.

Staff training and awareness

Council's Human Resources team developed and implemented several training sessions for key customer service areas on culturally and linguistically diverse communities within the organisation such as the lifeguards, pools and front counter staff. Equity and diversity awareness is now part of the staff induction process.

Funding cultural and community events

Council supported major local events through its sponsorship program to support and promote culturally and linguistically diverse groups within the community, for example the Mattara Festival, Cultural Stomp and Fiesta. Council also provides funding to the African Lions Basketball program to foster positive connections between African and Australian young people. The program incorporates mentoring and leadership training, volunteering and work opportunities.

Partnerships and advocacy

Council participated in, and engaged with, a number of interagency groups, including the Department of Community Services Hunter Central Coast CALD Advisory Group and the Newcastle Multicultural Interagency. Council attended Iftar Dinners during Ramadan hosted by the Newcastle Muslim Association and the Affinity Foundation who partnered with the University of Newcastle.

Can you come out and play?

A facilitated workshop was held to explore the issues and challenges faced by emerging communities with access to local sport and recreation activities. *Can you come out and play?* was hosted by the Sports Advisory Panel working group formed to encourage culturally and linguistically diverse and disadvantaged youth to participate in recreational activities. It was well attended by a wide range of key stakeholders from a number of sporting associations, clubs and African community leaders.



An Art Gallery volunteer guide conducting an exhibition tour

Art Gallery volunteers **Art Gallery guides**

Volunteer guides took over 6,000 people for tours through exhibitions at the Art Gallery during 2008/09.

Participants were introduced to complex ideas and concepts in a friendly and informative way. There were 633 tours which included a range of age groups, from three year olds up to senior citizens groups.

artNRG volunteers

Art Gallery volunteers host a special program for young people every weekend at the gallery. The artNRG program introduces young people aged three to nine to the world of art and art making techniques.

The program is funded by the Newcastle Charitable Foundation with volunteer art students from the University of Newcastle.

Community Greening volunteers

Volunteers who participated in Bushcare, Dunecare, Adopt-a-Park, Community Gardens, the Plant Giveaway and Propagation through the Community Greening Program provided 19,286 hours of voluntary labour valued at over \$480,000.

In the 2008/09 financial year 730 volunteers across 77 sites helped propagate over 66,000 plants, removed 587.5m³ of weeds, spread 947m³ of mulch, collected 133m³ of rubbish and put 39,979 plants in the ground on council property. The volunteers also collected seed for use in propagation, and assisted in the establishment of new community gardens.

Blackbutt Reserve volunteers

Blackbutt's 35 dedicated volunteers contributed over 14,000 hours of their time during 2008/09. Their contribution included operating the Pioneer Café seven days a week selling

souvenirs, tea/coffee and confectionary to reserve visitors. They also helped staff look after animals and maintain wildlife exhibits as well as providing educational talks to visitors.

During school holidays volunteers helped with holiday programs for young people and evening spotlight adventures.

Our community cont.

Acknowledgement of Country

"Newcastle City Council acknowledges that we are meeting on the traditional country of the Awabakal and Worimi peoples.

We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and continuing relationship with the land, and that they are the proud survivors of more than two hundred years of dispossession.

Council reiterates its commitment to address disadvantages and attain justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this community."

[adopted by Newcastle City Council, 28 October 2003]

Aboriginal people in Newcastle have a voice in local government through the **Guraki Aboriginal Advisory Committee**.

Established in June 1999, the committee and has a voluntary membership of local Aboriginal representatives, councillors, and council staff. It provides cultural information and advice to council on matters and issues of concern to local Aboriginal communities.

Each year the Guraki Committee supports a range of events and activities to promote reconciliation and celebrate Aboriginal culture and heritage.

Celebrating NAIDOC Week

The Aboriginal Flag was raised above City Hall by local Aboriginal youth to mark NAIDOC Week celebrations held from 6 to 13 July 2008. The flag raising was followed by a march from Civic Park to the Newcastle Foreshore and a Solidarity Concert sponsored by council's Guraki Committee. NAIDOC week is a celebration of the survival and revival of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

Platt's Estate Pambalong Country

Council's Guraki Committee and Black Chilli Productions partnered with the Newcastle Art Gallery to launch the DVD *Platt's Estate Pambalong Country* at the Gallery on 12 July 2008.

The Pambalong Clan lived around Burragihnbihng (Hexham Swamp) and the estuaries of

Toohrnbnng (Ironbark Creek) and the Coquun (Hunter River).

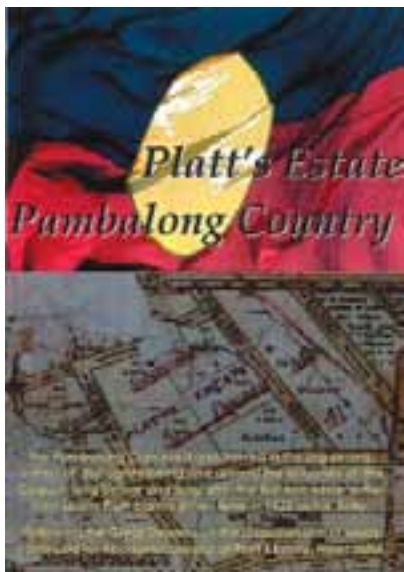
John Laurio Platt was one of the first free white settlers in the Muloobinba (Newcastle) District. Platt's Estate was established as a camp for the unemployed and displaced during and after the Great Depression and war years. *Platt's Estate Pambalong Country* revives stories told by Aboriginal people who lived on Platt's Estate.

Advancing reconciliation and social justice

A special forum was held to advance reconciliation and social justice following the national apology delivered by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd on behalf of the Australian Parliament to the Stolen Generations. Hosted by the Guraki Committee, the forum included guest speakers Professor John Maynard, Bryce Gaudry, Former State Member of NSW Parliament for Newcastle, and Dr Ray Kelly, Honorary Doctorate of Letters, University of Newcastle.



Denise Emmerson photo by Mervyn Bishop on the cover of Newcastle Aboriginal Communities Snapshot Profile



Platt's Estate Pambalong Country DVD produced by Joel Wenitog

What's in a name?

What's in a Name? Dangar Park and the Myall Creek Massacre was the topic of a community information evening hosted by the Guraki committee in collaboration with the Social and Cultural Conflict Research Group at The University of Newcastle. Papers were presented by local historian Cynthia Hunter and Professor Lyndall Ryan from the University of Newcastle.

Snapshot Profile

Council and the Guraki Committee produced a book highlighting census data and the history of local Aboriginal peoples as part of NAIDOC Week 2008.

The book includes information such as NSW's first count of the population in 1788, tribe names and locations, comparative population figures on states and territories from the 2001 and 2006 Census, and details of family and household types, education, income and employment.

Past, present, future

The Loft Youth Arts and Cultural Centre developed a strong partnership arrangement with the local Aboriginal community to undertake the PAST PRESENT FUTURE Aboriginal youth arts program.

Funding for this program was secured from Arts NSW, The Indigenous Cultural Support Program and the Foundation for Young Australians.

Indigenous art

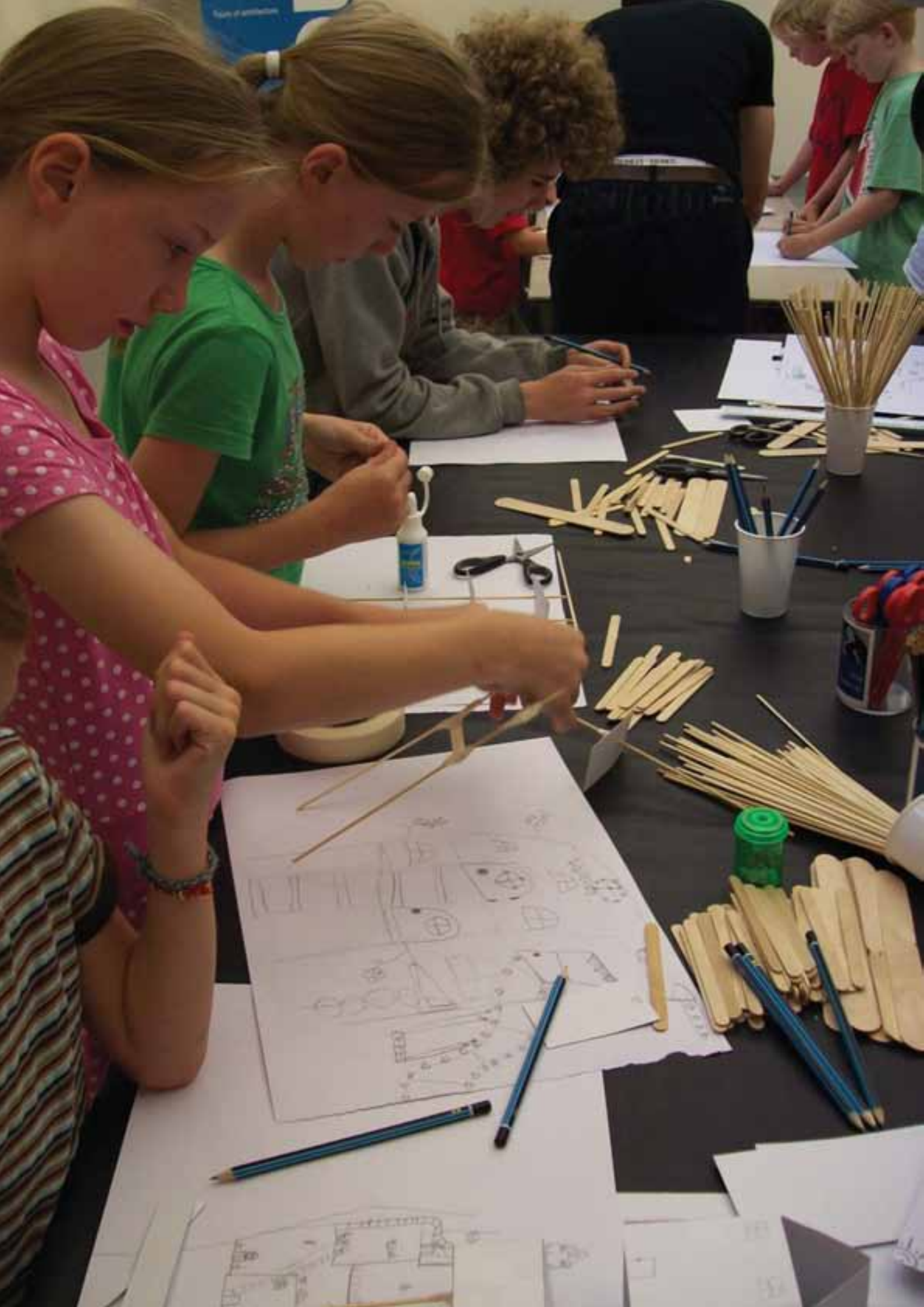
The Newcastle Region Art Gallery focussed on the collection of art by Indigenous Australians in 2008/09, filling what was once an absence in the collection. All of these works are part of the rich legacy belonging to the city of Newcastle.


Culture at the library

Another exhibition, *Treasures from the Library Collection*, on display at the Lovett Gallery included paintings by Aboriginal children's illustrator, Bronwyn Bancroft.

The Guraki Committee aims to:

- Promote reconciliation and advocate social justice outcomes for Aboriginal people in Newcastle
- Encourage council to understand issues important to Aboriginal people in particular preserving, conserving and strengthening culture; language and kinship; heritage; and connection to traditional lands
- Provide strategic advice to council on issues and matters impacting Aboriginal people
- Pursue the development and implementation of policies and protocols to improve services and outcomes for Aboriginal people
- Assist council to anticipate consequences for Aboriginal people that may flow from its policies and decision-making processes
- Offer council constructive analysis of impacts and recommendations in matters referred to the committee
- Enhance consultation and communication between council and Aboriginal people living and working in the Newcastle LGA.





Grants and sponsorship

Community Assistance Program



Students participating in an education program funded by our community grants program

This year, \$494,271 was given to Newcastle's community organisations to bring people together, express cultural values, protect the environment, help those in need and bring visitors to the city.

Council's *Community Assistance Program* supports a diverse range of sporting, cultural and civic organisations to assist them to achieve their goals.

A few of the activities supported by the program included:

Community Services Crisis Intervention Response Service

Lifeline Newcastle-Hunter was able to extend its services to include crisis intervention assessments and face-to-face counselling in cases where a death or trauma has become a police matter. A part-time counsellor was recruited who held workshops for police staff and conducted family assessments. The program has attracted the attention of other police Local Area Commands and the NSW Department of Corrective Services. Contribution: \$10,000.

Food 4 Life

This social service provides food for 4,800 marginalised, unemployed or disadvantaged people holding a Centrelink Benefit Card. Council's support allowed the service to establish three stores – in the city, Wallsend and Beresfield. The service further provides training and employment for over 120 people, enabling it to become the centre for New South Wales' operations. Contribution: \$9,937.

Sport African Lions Basketball

Over 60 children have been involved with the African Lions basketball program to promote cross-cultural friendships and increase awareness of the African community in Newcastle. Its players are on every major Newcastle team in the central junior league and in the local, district and state secondary school competitions across state and Catholic schools. Older players coach younger players and all participants learn about team management. Contribution: \$10,000.



The African Lions Basketball team helped with promoting cross-cultural friendships

Stockton Jellyblubbers Winter Swimming Club

The Australian Winter Swimming Championships were held in Stockton and Lambton pools in September 2008. Competitors from as far as Perth were among the 1200 event participants, who appreciated the event organisation and social activities. A profit from the event was donated to the Prostate Cancer Foundation, achieving its aims of community education and social inclusion. Contribution: \$4,000.

Community Events Ethnic Communities Council Australia Day Fiesta

A multicultural fiesta was held against the backdrop of Australia Day Citizenship Ceremonies. Dance, food and artefacts from diverse nations were showcased for all visitors to Newcastle's Australia Day festivities on the Foreshore. Contribution: \$20,450.

Environment Sandhills and Figtree Community Gardens

Both these community gardens went from strength to strength, promoting community integration, increasing sustainable living and beautifying their neighbourhoods. Outreach events included family days, art workshops and activities to coincide with other community events such as Throsby Spring Spruce. Contribution: \$8,470.

Arts and Culture Tantrum Theatre

This youth theatre company is accommodated with council support, which allowed it to develop two new works in 2008/09. The Junior Ensemble created *Bullies, Wannabes and Dorks* about bullying at school; the Senior Ensemble created *Peepshow*, a subtle installation performance about young people's social concerns. Both productions were assisted by professional actors and production crew and had a total of ten public performances to full houses. Contribution: \$15,600.

Star Struck Schools Showcase

An audience of 14,740 attended four performances of *Starstruck* this year, with active participation from 144 primary and secondary schools in the region. This annual showcase of the performing arts remains a favourite in schools, providing excellent integration with Department of Education and Training arts curriculum requirements. Contribution: \$7,000.

Need to contact Council?

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Summerhill Waste Management Centre:	02 4985 6600
Newcastle Region Library:	02 4974 5300
Newcastle Region Art Gallery:	02 4974 5100
Newcastle Regional Museum:	02 4974 1400
Community Greening Centre:	02 4904 3300
Blackbutt Reserve:	02 4904 3344
Civic Theatre - Ticketek:	02 4929 1977
After Hours Emergency	02 4974 2000/6000



NEWCASTLE VOICE is a chance for you to voice your opinion and be part of a group of volunteer residents who will help shape the future of our city. Newcastle needs representation from **all sections** of our community. To join **Newcastle Voice** and take part in consultations with Council you must be a Newcastle resident or ratepayer and be over 16 years of age.

Registering is easy:

go online to www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au/myvoice
or call 4974 2823 to be mailed a **Free Info Pack**



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