

City of Lake Macquarie **Annual Report** 2015-2016



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executive summary

We are engaged in projects that are shaping the future of our City and increasing the wellbeing of our community.

It was a watershed moment for our City when construction commenced on the Lake Macquarie Transport Interchange this year. The Interchange has been a long-term strategic vision of Council to open up Glendale to further business development and pave the way for creation of thousands of new jobs.

This major infrastructure project for our City and the Hunter region has been more than a decade in the planning and we have forged partnerships across all levels of government, securing \$38 million to make it happen.

Driving jobs creation is a high priority for Council and the mission of Dantia, our arms-length economic development company. Dantia opened its Smart Hub, DaSH, in Charlestown this year, providing our City's first quality co-working space and networking hub for local entrepreneurs and small businesses.

This new hub is a head start in our bid to become a Smart City, a bid further boosted during the year with 300 ideas from our community for ways we can use digital technologies to make our City better, more connected and more sustainable. These ideas have informed development of our first digital economy strategy, Lake Mac Smart City, Smart Council, which was adopted in March.

The key components in this strategy are innovation and investment, digital literacy and inclusion, online participation, connected communities, and great places. All of which are attributes of the newly refurbished Speers Point Library, which provides a great new home for our City's rich Community History collection, as well as public access computers and new reading spaces.

During recent years, we have worked to make all of Council's buildings more sustainable and cost-efficient. The installation of an additional 35 kilowatts of solar panels on our buildings this year brings our solar power generating capacity to 481 kilowatts, making us officially qualify as a small-scale power station.

We are proud to have taken a leadership role in helping our community to plan for sea level rise and flood risk. The award-winning Marks Point and Belmont South Local Area Adaptation Plan is the outcome of close collaboration with local residents and is the first in a suite of adaptation plans for low-lying areas of the City.

These are just a few achievements from a year in which we delivered strong performance across all areas of our operations and an unprecedented level of engagement with our community.

Our track record of high performance in effectively and efficiently meeting the needs of our community has led to our recognition, through the NSW Government's local government reform process, as a council that is fit to operate as an individual organisation.

This Annual Report offers a broad overview of Lake Macquarie City Council's performance for the period 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016, against the goals of the Operational Plan 2015-2016 and the key strategic activities of the Community Plan 2013-2023.

The report also includes the End of Term Report, which reports on our achievements during the elected Council's term office, from 2012 to 2016.

The final section of this Annual Report includes reports that meet our obligations under the Local Government Act 1993 (NSW) and the requirements of the NSW Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework.

Lake Macquarie City Council's State of the Environment Report 2015-2016 and Financial Statements 2015-2016 are published under separate covers and are available at lakemac.com.au.



message from the Mayor

I am proud to report on the many achievements that are building a bright future for Lake Macquarie City and our community.

This annual report documents the final reporting period for the Council elected in 2012, and so this is my final message as Mayor of Lake Macquarie.

When I started my term as Mayor, Council was awarded the prestigious AR Bluett Memorial Award for excellence in all-round performance in NSW Local Government.

This was a great achievement and confirmation that we had in place a very solid foundation for the City, based on financial sustainability, quality services, sound policies and a clear vision for the future.

Over the past four years, we have made it our challenge to build on these strengths and I am proud to report that we have continued to forge our identity as a progressive Council that both leads and listens to its community.

Our award-winning collaboration with the community of Marks Point and Belmont South in developing the City's first-ever local adaptation plan has provided a set of agreed adaptation strategies and actions that will allow people to continue to live in and enjoy these areas. This positive approach provides a blueprint for our collaboration with other communities in low-lying suburbs around the lake.

Construction is now in progress for the Lake Macquarie Transport Interchange, following extensive

consultation and planning. This first stage of the project will improve access in and around the Glendale and is an essential step in transforming this suburban centre into an employment 'super hub' for the Lower Hunter.

Over the years, our community has had significant involvement in developing and implementing our waste strategy, which is proving effective with an average annual waste reduction of four per cent. The roll out of green waste bins into Lake Macquarie suburbs and, importantly, the way our residents have participated in making this service a continued success, has contributed significantly to this outcome.

Other strategic gains we have made during the term include the establishment of Dantia, Lake Macquarie's first economic development company, and the creation of the DaSH smart hub co-working space at Charlestown this year.

Bringing the world to Lake Macquarie via the International Children's Games in 2014 was an excellent moment in our City's history. I hope that we can continue to reach out the world and celebrate our young people in the years to come.

We also end the term with a new library and improved streetscape at Cardiff, a revitalised swim centre at West Wallsend, a \$13 million

regional football facility at Speers Point, and a growing network of shared pathways and on-road cycleways.

These are gains we have made while continuing to do all the everyday things each year, such as resealing or resurfacing more than 90 kilometres of roads, conducting safety and performance checks of equipment in our 111 playgrounds, and enhancing and restoring our natural areas.

It is these things, along with Council's ability to operate efficiently, that have enabled Lake Macquarie City Council to continue to stand alone and remain as a Council in its own right.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the Lake Macquarie community for the support and participation it has shown me over the past four years as Mayor and prior to that, as a Councillor.

I have also been incredibly fortunate to work with Brian Bell, an outstanding General Manager who is completely worthy of the Public Service Medal he was awarded earlier this year.

Thank you for the memories – it has been a great honour and pleasure to serve this great City and its people.

Councillor Jodie Harrison
Mayor



message from the **General Manager**

We ended this year and the four-year term of the elected Council with our strongest performance in more than ten years.

A key test of our performance will always be the extent to which our community is satisfied with the Council services they receive, and how well we are delivering their vision for Lake Macquarie City. Through our integrated approach to reporting we move closer to that vision with every performance indicator we meet.

I am proud to report that this year we achieved a 96 per cent success rate, which means our community is benefiting from the achievement of 167 performance indicators across all six of the focus areas in our Community Strategic Plan.

Confirmation that we are making a positive difference to people's lives in Lake Macquarie can also be found in the results of our biannual customer satisfaction survey. The latest survey, conducted in early 2016, revealed that 93 per cent of respondents were at least somewhat satisfied with the services they receive from Council.

These are excellent results for our City, which reflect our commitment to continuous improvement and quality service delivery. Even better, we achieved them while delivering a budget surplus and remaining on track with our Long Term Financial Plan.

Organisational efficiency has been a strong focus across all areas of our operations over the past four years, and we continue to perform

well in relation to NSW Comparative Data. This analysis shows that our employee costs remain the lowest per capita of any council in our grouping – a clear indication that we are providing value-for-money services.

The gradual strengthening of our Council during the term has positioned us well with regard to the NSW Government's 'Fit for the Future' local government reform program. In December 2015, Council was recognised through this process as an organisation that is able to operate efficiently as a stand-alone organisation.

We have now entered a formal improvement plan under 'Fit for the Future', and the organisation is making solid progress in implementing these actions which supplement our ongoing program of productivity improvements.

This Annual Report details many improvements we have made during the year that have resulted in environmentally sustainable approaches and significant cost savings to Council and our ratepayers.

As we move into the new term of our elected Council, we will endeavour to maintain a culture of high performance and orient ourselves towards the future by embracing the opportunities new technology can offer our City and its people, engaging deeply with our community, and strengthening our partnerships with government and industry.

I would like to thank Mayor Jodie Harrison for her outstanding contribution to Council and the City. Mayor Harrison has led the Council since 2012, but has served as a Councillor since 2008. Although departing her role as Mayor, I have no doubt she will maintain her passionate commitment to Lake Macquarie City and its people.

Brian Bell
General Manager



snapshot of **our City**

City area:

757km²

Lake circumference:

174km

Population:

204,166

Targets between

2016-2036:

24,450 people

13,700 new dwellings

11,741 new jobs

Climate:

Mean minimum
temperature 11.5°

Mean maximum
temperature 24.1°

Rainfall:

Total annual rainfall

1150mm

Labour force:

101,452

Unemployment rate:

5.8%

Businesses:

13,623

OUR CITY

City overview

Location and transport

Lake Macquarie is ideally positioned on the east coast of Australia. It is conveniently located on the M1 motorway, 90 minutes north of Sydney, 10 minutes from Newcastle and 40 minutes from the Hunter Valley and Central Coast.

The City is just two hours by car from Sydney's international airport, 25 minutes from Newcastle Airport, and 10 minutes from the Port of Newcastle. CityRail services are available regularly on the Central Coast and Newcastle line to Lake Macquarie, and excellent road networks provide access to the Central West, Northern Tablelands, the Mid-North Coast and the North Coast regions of NSW.

History

Lake Macquarie was first inhabited by the Awabakal tribe, Awabakal meaning 'people of the calm surface', more than 8000 years ago. The City is named after Governor Lachlan Macquarie. European settlement dates from 1826 when the first land grants were issued. Land was used mainly for timber production and farming. The northern part of the City was developed from the 1870s, primarily for the establishment of coal mining, and development in the southern part of the City in the early 1900s was aided by the construction of the railway line to Sydney.

The most significant development occurred in the years after the two World Wars.

Environment

Lake Macquarie has a picturesque landscape of more than 757km² of spectacular beaches, mountains and lake foreshore. The Watagan Mountains to the west have forests, numerous outlooks, picnic and camping spots and magnificent waterfalls.

The centrepiece of the City, Lake Macquarie, is one of the largest coastal saltwater lakes in Australia; about twice the area and volume of Sydney Harbour. With more than 38,000ha of natural ecosystem diversity, the City is home to a variety of wildlife including more than 112 threatened species such as squirrel gliders, green and golden bell frogs, powerful owls, green sea turtles and the black-eyed Susan plant (*tetratheca juncea*).

Population

Lake Macquarie's population is estimated to be 204,166, making it the largest city in the Lower Hunter. The population is distributed around the lake, in more than 90 communities.

The City's population is expected to increase by 24,450 between 2016 and 2036, creating demand for 11,741 new jobs and 13,700 new dwellings.

Economy

It is estimated that there are 81,882 employed people who reside in the Lake Macquarie area, with approximately 51,584 of those people working in the local government area. This represents 21.5 per cent of the jobs within the Lower Hunter.

Lake Macquarie's population increased 8.3 per cent in the 10 years to 2016. The local workforce increased by 7.3 per cent during the same period. The number of jobs created in the City increased by 9.9 per cent between 2008 and 2013.

The health care and social assistance sector is the largest employer at 13.8 per cent of jobs, followed by retail trade and manufacturing at 11.8 and 10.2 per cent respectively. The largest growth in employment opportunities occurred in the health care and social assistance sector with more than 1700 jobs created between 2006 and 2011. Many jobs were created in accommodation and food services, as well as in the education and training sectors, with 579 and 403 jobs created respectively.

Lake Macquarie contributes a Gross Regional Product of \$8.982 billion to the economy, and our manufacturing sector is the largest contributor at almost 24 per cent. This represents 20.5 per cent of the final goods and services produced in the Hunter Region.

In the 2015-2016 financial year, development worth \$686 million was approved in Lake Macquarie, a dramatic increase of close to \$310 million, or 82 per cent from 2014-2015.













our wards

Lake Macquarie City Council is divided into three wards: North, East and West.

All Lake Macquarie ratepayers and residents over the age of 18 are eligible to enrol and vote in the local government elections. Residents who are enrolled can vote to elect a Mayor and four Councillors to represent their respective ward.



our councillors

Mayor					
	Cr Jodie Harrison				
North Ward					
	Cr Brian Adamthwaite	Cr Robert Denton	Cr Barry Johnston	Cr Barney Langford	
East Ward					
	Cr Kay Fraser	Cr Jason Pauling	Cr Laurie Coghlan	Cr Chad Griffith	
West Ward					
	Cr Wendy Harrison	Cr Daniel Wallace	Cr Ken Paxinos	Cr Rosmairi Dawson	

our structure and senior staff



our mission

Council provides a diverse range of services and facilities to residents.

Our mission statement 'Quality Lifestyle' represents and embodies our overarching goal in providing these services, and is simple but instantly accessible. In order to achieve the vision and mission for the City, Council employees strive for the following goals and abide by our values.

our commitment

Lake Macquarie City Council acknowledges that Aboriginal people in this area, the Awabakal, were the first people of this land and are the proud survivors of more than two hundred years of continuing dispossession.

Council respects the rights of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to pursue their own values and culture.

OUR PURPOSE



our vision

- Establish a place where the environment will be protected and enhanced, and where people and native flora and fauna will co-exist in harmony.
- Have a prosperous economy with a supportive attitude to balanced economic growth, managed in a way to enhance quality of life and satisfy the employment and environmental aims of the community.
- Encourage a community spirit, which promotes a fulfilling lifestyle, enhances health and social wellbeing, encourages family life and lifestyle choices, allows opportunities to participate in sport and recreation, promotes equal access to all services and facilities, as well as enables all citizens to contribute to the City's economic and social development.
- Encourage and enable all people to participate fully in the economic and social life of the community as well as enjoy equal life chances and equal opportunity for access to the resources of the community.
- Recognise, encourage and develop the City's diverse cultural life and talents, and protect and promote its heritage.

our goals

- Deliver all of our services in a demonstrably competitive manner.
- Achieve world's best practice through the implementation of the quality workstyle philosophy.
- Generate sustainable growth through economic development.
- Facilitate community consultation and participation in the decision-making process.
- Provide and maintain effective physical infrastructure.
- Protect and enhance the environment through waste management and balanced development.
- Plan and provide social infrastructure to meet community needs.
- Maximise employment in the City through economic growth.
- Safeguard the quality of lifestyle in Lake Macquarie.
- Carry out entrepreneurial activities (where appropriate).

our values

Leadership

Considering how today's decisions will impact on tomorrow and setting an example through our actions.

Excellence

Our reputation comes from efficiently delivering quality services and outcomes. We support each other to achieve our best.

Innovation

Creating an environment in which fresh ideas and new ways of doing things are encouraged and supported.

Professionalism

Taking ownership of our decisions, whether popular or not. Our integrity is evident in our transparent and accountable processes.

Relationships

Building collaborative partnerships through mutual understanding and respect, honest and inclusive communication, and integrity of action.

Community

Bringing people together to support each other, inspire change and achieve our common goals.

Balance

Recognising the changing needs of our community and being committed to providing opportunities to create a balanced lifestyle and sustainable environment for all.

end of term report

Under the NSW Government's Integrated Planning and Reporting Legislation for Local Government, Council is required to produce a report every four years on its progress in implementing the City of Lake Macquarie Community Strategic Plan.

The aim of the End of Term Report 2012-2016 is to provide an update to the Lake Macquarie community on progress towards achieving the social, environmental, economic and civic leadership objectives of the Community Strategic Plan during the elected Council's term in office.

Our End of Term Report outlines progress Council has made through its 2013-2017 Delivery Program and annual operational plans between 2012 and 2016, against the vision and strategies presented in the Community Strategic Plan.

The Community Strategic Plan 2013-2023 groups community priorities in six focus areas. The End of Term Report highlights Council's achievements in each of these focus areas as well as awards won over the past four years.



2012

NSW Council of the Year

We were awarded the prestigious A R Bluet Award for Excellence in all-round performance.



Love the Lake

We launched our award-winning tourism campaign Live the Life, Love the Lake.

Cycling Strategy

We adopted a 10-year Cycling Strategy as part of our integrated approach to transport and community wellbeing.

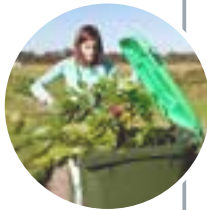
Securing our Future

Council's extensive Securing our Future community engagement program resulted in approval of a seven-year rate variation for the City. This has allowed us to achieve financial sustainability while continuing to deliver quality services and assets.

2013

Green waste success

Our City's kerbside green waste service rolled out in April 2013 and has significantly reduced waste to landfill.



International Children's Games

Hosted in 2014, bringing together young athletes from 30 countries to participate.

Lifestyle 2030 Strategy

We developed Lifestyle 2030 to provide the long-term direction for land use and development of the City, based on the principles of sustainability. A new Local Environment Plan was adopted in 2014 to complement the strategy.

2014

Dantia

The City's first independently governed economic development company was established.



Libraries of the future

The new Cardiff Library opened as part of our work to transform the City's library services for the digital era.

New home of football

We partnered with Northern NSW Football to create the \$13 million Lake Macquarie Regional Football Facility in Speers Point.

2015

First local adaptation plan

One of the first local plans in Australia to address local climate change impacts was developed through a four-year collaboration with Marks Point and Belmont South residents and other key stakeholders.



Construction begins

The Lake Macquarie Transport Interchange is well under way. Stage 1 of this major regional infrastructure project commenced construction in July 2015.

Swim centres re-imagined

The refurbished West Wallsend Swim Centre opened and concept designs for Charlestown and Swansea Leisure Centres were developed with community input.



93 per cent satisfaction

Council achieved a 93 per cent community satisfaction rating in our 2016 biennial survey.

2016

Financially secure and fit to stand alone

Council was deemed 'Fit for the Future' by the NSW Government and delivered an operating surplus for 2015-2016.



Lake Mac Smart City

Council adopted its digital economy strategy, informed by 300 ideas from our community.

caring for the environment

Sustainable living



Expanding waste services to maximise resource recovery

We achieved an average reduction of 3.2 per cent a year in waste to landfill.

Introduction of the three-bin service in April 2013 saw resource recovery increase from 22 per cent to 35 per cent each year. Green waste diverted from landfill increased from 1500 tonnes in 2007-2008, to 25,000 tonnes in 2015-2016.

The Community Recycling Centre opened at Awaba Waste Management Facility in 2014, diverting problem waste from landfill every year.

Commercial recycling services increased from 108 services in 2007-2008 to 1234 services in June 2016.

Better Buildings Strategy

The Strategy aims to incorporate sustainable building design principles in all of Council's community buildings. More than 20 sites were retrofitted during the term, resulting in significant savings in energy and water use.

Greenhouse gas emissions

Across the City, per capita greenhouse gas emissions have reduced by 10.64 per cent, which was less than the 19.5 per cent target for the period. Total emissions for the period decreased by 5.81 per cent.

Greener playing fields

Soil and irrigation works to reduce and improve water use were completed at 25 sports fields and have increased the quality of playing surfaces throughout the City.

Building energy resilience

Council has worked with residents and businesses to reduce energy consumption and increase efficiency through its Your Dollars Your Choices campaign, promotion of programs such as Save Watts, environmental upgrade agreements for commercial building owners, and working with local businesses through the Sustainability Advantage program. Priority actions implemented at Council as part of the Plan include improved lighting efficiency, solar installations, an increase in electric vehicle fleet and electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

Renewable energy

Council now has 481 kilowatts (kW) of solar energy capacity installed, providing estimated annual savings of \$150,000 and 700 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions.

We installed 382kW of solar at various sites including the Swansea Centre, Council's Administration Building and Works Depot, Belmont Library and West Wallsend Swim Centre during the reporting period.

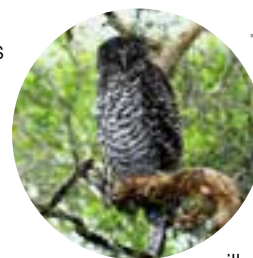
Ecosystem enhancement

Coastal zone management

In 2015, the draft Lake Macquarie Coastal Zone Management Plan

was submitted for certification, and 10 priority actions have been implemented.

A total of 78 on-ground aquatic ecosystem improvement projects were completed, including installation of stormwater treatment devices, stream bank rehabilitation, stabilisation of foreshore areas and restoration of wetlands.



Terrestrial ecosystems

Council completed 22 terrestrial ecosystem improvement projects including illegal dumping deterrence works, biodiversity improvement projects and dune restoration works.

Urban growth is placing significant pressure on the habitat of large forest owls. Council released guidelines to protect the Powerful Owl, Masked Owl, Sooty Owl and Barking Owl.

We also adopted the Lake Macquarie Squirrel Glider Planning and Management Guidelines 2015, which will inform conservation, strategic land use planning and land management across the City.

Illegal dumping

A Regional Illegal Dumping squad, hosted by Council, was established in 2014 and is a partnership of 10 councils and the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA). Illegal dumping enforcement activities have resulted in 44 sites being cleaned up by the offender, 399 infringement notices and 192 hours in additional enforcement activity.

Environmental security

Adaptation planning

Council collaborated with residents of Marks Point and Belmont South to create the City's first local adaptation plan. It has been recognised as a best practice model for working with the community to prepare and plan for climate change impacts, particularly sea level rise.

Work also commenced on a second adaptation plan, for Pelican and Blacksmiths.

Air quality

Council is addressing air quality issues through various initiatives including the Lake Macquarie Air Quality Reference Group, exceedance mapping for common and problem pollutants, and wood smoke reduction programs.

Contaminated land

Council has incorporated land contamination assessments in rezoning applications and revised Development Control Plan provisions, implemented a management plan for contaminated land in Council's care and control, assessed and managed exposed Pasmenco black slag at priority sites, removed 300 tonnes of asbestos waste from public areas and participated in the EPA Lead Expert Working Group and Lead Community Reference Group.

Natural disaster preparedness

We completed the City-wide flood warning system, allowing for improved monitoring of flood events.

Flood planning was completed for the priority catchment of Dora Creek to reduce the liability and impact of flooding for owners and occupiers of flood-prone land.

Sustainability engagement

Sustainable neighbourhoods



Sustainable Neighbourhood Groups are now established across half of our City and the number of resident subscribers has increased by 56 per cent, with 4916 people subscribed in 2015-2016.

Key campaigns

Council facilitated sustainability practice and behaviour change at a local level through delivery of four campaigns: Backyard and Beyond (ecosystems); Your Dollars, Your Choices (energy, waste, water, transport); Be Ready, Be Safe (natural hazard and disaster preparedness); and Sort it Right (waste services).

Environmental Sustainability Action Plan

The Environmental Sustainability Action Plan 2014-2023, a framework for sustainability planning, decision making and action, aligns with Council's overall strategic direction and ensures a whole-of-Council approach and continued commitment of resources to action for sustainability.

25,000
tonnes of green waste diverted from landfill

382
kilowatts of solar installed on Council buildings

5.81%
total reduction in greenhouse emissions

100
ecosystem improvement projects delivered

300
tonnes of asbestos removed from public areas

56% increase in Sustainable Neighbourhoods engagement

caring for our **community**

Social and community planning

Crime prevention

To address high priority crimes we developed and adopted the Crime Prevention Strategy 2015-2018.

We ran Operation Bounceback in 2013 and 2014 and worked with NSW Police on Operation Tabella to combat vehicle and numberplate theft. We also targeted 150 graffiti hotspots throughout the City each year through our partnership with Juvenile Justice and Corrective Services.

We worked with stakeholders to reduce anti-social behaviour around the Charlestown area, which included a trial lighting program at Charlestown Oval, as well as space activation activities at the southern end of Charlestown Square Shopping Centre.

Community action plans

We worked to meet the social needs of our community through development and delivery of strategies and action plans with our community.

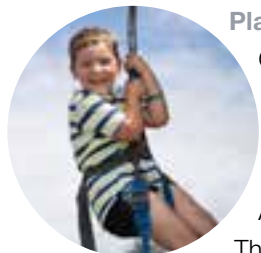
The Lake Macquarie Disability Action Plan 2013-2017 identifies priority actions for Council that will remove barriers faced by people with disability.

Our Ageing Population Strategy 2014-2017 identifies priority actions for Council that will assist in meeting the needs of our ageing population.

Council also adopted the Lake Macquarie Youth Strategy 2014-2019, which provides the basis for the delivery of initiatives that address the needs of young people.

The Lake Macquarie Children and Family Strategy 2015-2020 identifies actions for supporting education and service providers, and for supporting children's development and families.

The City of Lake Macquarie Multicultural Plan 2016-2020 supports Council's ongoing commitment to further collaborate and strengthen relationships with community, service providers, organisations and stakeholder agencies for the benefit of our multicultural community.



Planning for future need

Community Facilities Studies for the Charlestown, Glendale and Toronto Developer Contributions Catchment Areas were developed.

These studies were prepared to identify the need for community infrastructure for the City's future population and inform how developer contributions should be allocated for these areas.



Community events and programs

Council continues to celebrate our City's diversity by hosting and participating in celebrations for NAIDOC Week, International Day of People with Disability, Harmony Day, International Women's Day, Children's Week, Youth Week, Senior's Week and Refugee Week.

In 2013, Council's You're Kidding Me Expo was held for the first time. The program has since been developed and helps to connect about 400 participants with children and family services that may be able to assist them.

The Over 55s program includes activities such as yoga, mobility scooter safety, Tai Chi, hearing screenings, digital photography, technology training, and social media. Throughout the term, 333 sessions were held with a total of 7045 participants.

Family Day Care

Since 2012, Council's Family Day Care Service has maintained a rating of Exceeding National Quality Standards as assessed by the Department of Education and Communities.



A team of 111 qualified early childhood educators provide small group education and care in a home environment during school and business hours as well as overnight, weekend and vacation care periods.

The service provides more than 9000 hours of care each week to 800 children, which is equivalent to the capacity of five 40-place child care centres.

Ranger and public health issues

Increased ranger services



We increased service levels and reduced response times for our City rangers, allowing additional patrols across the City after working hours and on weekends.

Council also delivered companion animal and awareness programs, such as education sessions and microchipping days.

Public health monitoring and advice

We provided community awareness and monitoring advice to the community regarding water quality, weed spraying, mosquito monitoring and food safety.

Community facilities



Refurbishment of the previously derelict Lambton Colliery has provided a home for the Redhead Mens' Shed and the service it provides.

Council provided a ramp, accessible toilet and car parking at Holmesville

Community Hall, along with replacement of the floor; replaced the amenities at Redhead Beach; completed external works to Ulinga Park Community Hall Cardiff South; and provided a ramp, accessible toilet and car parking at Jack Stewart Netball Courts, Charlestown.

In 2014, Council launched the *Facility Manager* website for its volunteers who manage community and recreation facilities under delegated authority from Council. The website provides instructions, policies, guidelines and other resources, which assist volunteers to perform their role.

150

graffiti hotspots targeted

7045

participated in our Over 55s program

9000

hours of quality family day care each week

2086

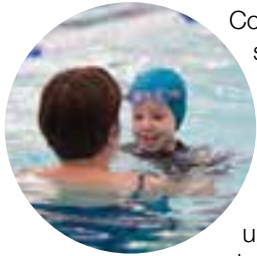
pets returned to their owners by our rangers

3

facilities studies completed to plan for future need

sport, recreation and culture

Lake Mac Swim Centres



Council completed significant renewal works across our swim centres, including improved change rooms, plant room upgrades and new splash pads, as well as

a total renovation of West Wallsend Indoor Swim Centre.

In consultation with the community, we prepared concept designs for upgrades to Charlestown and Swansea swim centres that will transform these high-priority facilities into contemporary, multi-functional leisure centres.

Satisfaction levels measured through our biennial surveys remained consistently high and patrons surveyed during the 2015-2016 season gave our swim centres a satisfaction rating of 98 per cent.

Recreation and community land planning

Hunter Sports Centre

We developed draft concept designs and associated feasibility reports for redevelopment of the Hunter Sports Centre at Glendale. Grant submissions for the redevelopment were made to the Hunter Infrastructure and Investment Fund and the National Stronger Regions Fund during the term.

Lakeside aquatic facilities

We completed jetty upgrades and installations at Swansea, Warners Bay, Rathmines, Valentine and Sunshine. Two boat ramps were reconstructed at Swansea, and we installed a new dinghy storage rack at Sunshine, designated swimming area signs at Croudace Bay and upgraded parking at Swansea. An all-abilities foreshore pathway was also completed for a viewing platform at Blacksmiths Beach.



Managing recreational assets

We consulted the community throughout the term to ensure parks, playgrounds and sports infrastructure service standards

continue to meet target community satisfaction levels.

Annual due diligence and condition assessments were completed for more than 3000 parks and reserves assets including picnic tables, jetties, seating, fencing, retaining walls, barbecues and shelters.

Major projects for the community

Improved sportsgrounds

We upgraded amenities, car parks, floodlighting and playing surfaces across our City. Upgrades were completed at Finnan Oval, Gregory Park, Liles Oval, Douglass Street Oval, Bernie Goodwin Oval, New Tredinnick Field, Allen Davis Field, Ulinga Oval, Auston Oval and John Street Fields.

Speers Point Park Master Plan

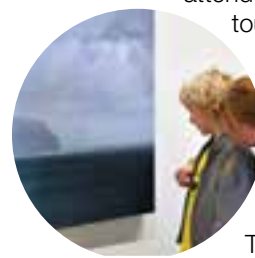
The \$13 million Lake Macquarie Regional Football Facility opened in November 2014. The site, developed by Northern NSW Football, enhances the recreational opportunities available in line with the Speers Point Park Masterplan, providing a major football event centre for the Hunter and attracting teams from around the region.



Lake Macquarie City Art Gallery

The period has seen strong growth and consolidation in art gallery services, with visitor numbers increasing by 30 per cent to 39,000 visitors a year.

The education and art workshops programs have developed, with a 25 per cent increase in school visitation and 35 per cent increase in art class attendees. Organised



tours for general community groups, especially seniors and disability groups, have doubled in the last two years.

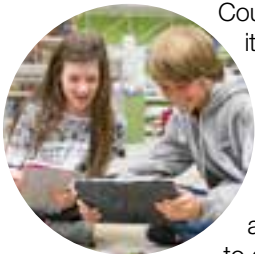
The gallery presented 64 exhibitions during the term including 47 curated in-house or in consultation with independent curators, with 21 containing artwork from the gallery's collection. On average, 60 per cent of the

exhibitions had Hunter-based content and 60 per cent had Aboriginal content.

We exceeded our acquisitions target, acquiring 88 artworks between 2012-2016 – together representing more than \$220,000 of new collection assets.

A new LED digital lighting system installed in 2015 makes our gallery one of the most environmentally sustainable galleries in the country.

Lake Mac Libraries



Council has advanced its plans to transform the City's library service into one that embraces technology and contemporary approaches to community involvement. This new

model has resulted in a 92 per cent increase in participation during the period. In 2012-2013 Lake Mac Libraries presented 1045 programs to 14,295 people. In 2015-2016, this increased to more than 2000 events with approximately 27,500 attendees.

Lake Mac Libraries introduced access to 3D printing and has expanded our e-books collection to include eMagazines, eAudio and eMusic. This has increased loans from our electronic collections to 120,000 loans in 2016.

The Lake Macquarie History Online project was launched in 2013 and has attracted 15,000 visits a month on average during 2015-2016.

A larger and more modern Cardiff library opened in March 2014. The new facility features free wi-fi, a technology play area with 3D printer, a free phone-charging station as well as enhanced browsing and access to collections.

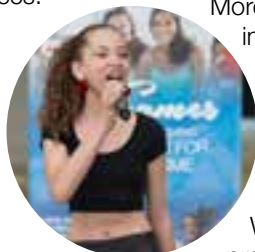
Beach patrol services

Council professional lifeguards helped save lives and deal with injuries as part of our ongoing industry-leading beach lifeguard service at Redhead, Blacksmiths, Caves and Catherine Hill Bay beaches. Approximately 500,000 people visited our patrolled beaches each season, with an average of 89 rescues and 4050 preventative actions performed each year.

An average of 7920 students at 65 local primary schools participated in Council's annual winter water safety program called A Matter of Seconds.

Community, cultural and sporting events

International Children's Games



More than 1500 national and international athletes and delegates representing 30 countries came to our City to participate in the Games from 6 to 11 December 2014.

We were particularly proud to bring the Games to our City, as it was a first for Australia and the Southern Hemisphere. A full report on the Games and its legacy is available at icg-lakemacquarie2014.com.

98% customer satisfaction rating for our swim centres

3000 parks and reserves assets assessed for safety and fitness for purpose

\$13M invested in the new Lake Macquarie Regional Football Facility

30% increase in art gallery visitation

92% increase in library program participation

15,000 visits a month to Lake Mac History Online

89 rescues performed each year* by our professional lifeguards

*On average over the term

CIVIC leadership

Customer service

Timely customer service

Our Customer Service Centre received more than 600,000 phone calls during the term and answered 80.6 per cent of these calls within just 30 seconds. Service Centre staff also assisted more than 70,000 customers at the counter and worked to reduce wait times, with an average wait time of 2 minutes and 45 seconds achieved over the four-year period.

Online services

Since 2012, we have increased the number of online 'touch points' and ratepayers can now pay their rates electronically.

The mobile website MyLakeMac, launched in 2013, provides residents with information on bin collection dates, approved developments in their area, events and news stories.

We have also been proactive in expanding our social media presence and have growing followings on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest and Linked in.

In 2015, we redeveloped our website **lakemac.com.au** to make it more visually appealing, relevant, mobile friendly, accessible and easy to navigate.



Community engagement

Major events and civic functions

Council successfully hosted a wide range of events including the Living Smart Festival, Carols by Candlelight and The Lake Macquarie Festival on Australia Day.

The Lake Macquarie Australia Day Awards and Sports Awards ran annually and have recognised hundreds of outstanding individuals, organisations and initiatives within our City during the term.

Since 2012, the City of Lake Macquarie has welcomed many new members of our community, with 1097 residents naturalised in Council-run citizenship ceremonies.

Media and mass communication

Over the past four years, Council has provided information to the community using a range of media streams including traditional media outlets, social media, marketing, consultation and industry-specific media.

We launched our *Your City* magazine in Summer 2013, which provides a friendly format for information on Council's activities to more than 90,000 households.

More recently, Council's own online media centre was launched in June 2016. Video and audio content, along with enhanced imagery, has also become a key feature to complement our messaging.

Community participation

We introduced a Community Engagement Framework that guides Council staff in ensuring engagement is undertaken for all Council projects, plans and strategies.

In 2012, we expanded our Have Your Say portal **haveyoursaylakemac.com.au**. The site now has more than 2050 registered participants.

More recently, Council has used online collaborative maps, 'pop-up' booths, surveys, traditional media, social media and workshops to gather feedback and share ideas with the community.

Councillors were invited to attend and participate in community information and engagement activities, including a series of 'Councillors on the Couch' sessions, which provided an opportunity to promote their role within the community.

Community satisfaction surveys

More than 1000 randomly selected Lake Macquarie residents were asked to rate the importance of Council services and indicate how satisfied they were with them, as part of Council's community surveys in April 2014 and April 2016.

Survey feedback from residents revealed that 85 per cent of residents were at least somewhat satisfied with Council's performance in April 2014, while satisfaction levels improved to 93 per cent in April 2016.



Planning for financial sustainability

At the beginning of the term, the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal approved a seven-year rate variation for the City, based on the results of Council's extensive Securing our Future community engagement program.

Revenue raised has enabled Council to achieve financial sustainability while continuing to deliver the right level of services and maintaining the quality of City infrastructure including our roads, libraries and swim centres.

Council managed its finances throughout the term to deliver an operating surplus in 2015-2016 while significantly reducing its infrastructure backlog.

During the term, we also secured more than \$76 million in grant funding, sponsorship and alternative funding opportunities for priority projects for our community.

Leadership strength and financial stability, along with rigorous planning and reporting, led to Council being deemed 'fit for the future' by the NSW Government in December 2015.

Long-term planning

Workforce development and safety

We introduced a workforce capability framework to ensure employees have a sound understanding of their performance requirements and to inform corporate learning strategies.

Our trainee and apprentice program, Education to Employment, shows our commitment, as one of the

largest workplaces in the region, to nurturing local employment and skill development.

An independent external audit of Council's Workplace Health and Safety Management System found 100 per cent compliance, a result that auditors remarked was unprecedented.

Productivity improvements

Introduction of field-based technology in several Council services has achieved significant time savings in data entry and travel between worksites.



A new tender management tool has reduced average tender processing by 25 days.

In 2014-2015, we spent \$245,000 on works at the Awaba Waste Disposal Facility to extend the life of the facility. Material excavated from the works was used as site cover material, resulting in savings of around \$800,000.

Plant and fleet

Transition of our passenger vehicle fleet from 6-cylinder to a dedicated 4-cylinder fleet in mid-2016 has achieved Council's 10-year, 30 per cent emission reduction, two years ahead of the 2018 target. Council purchased two dedicated electric vehicles during the term, and in April 2016, placed reservations for five electric vehicles due for an Australian release in 2018 that will supplement the number of zero emission vehicles in the fleet.

93%

satisfaction rating from residents surveyed in 2015-2016

90,000

households received our bi-annual Your City magazine

2050

registered to our online Have Your Say website

25,500

followers on Council's social media accounts

1097

citizens naturalised

80%

of calls answered within 30 seconds

25

days faster for tender processing

urban and economic development

Sustainable and socially responsible economic growth

Dantia

In 2013-2014, the newly established Lake Macquarie Economic Development Board set a strategic direction for the City's economy and established Dantia, the City's first independently governed economic development company.

Dantia met its first year strategic targets, and is on track to continue to do so.

The Dantia Smart Hub (DaSH) at Charlestown, a modern workspace and professional network for businesses and entrepreneurs to connect and grow their initiatives, opened in April 2016 and is operating successfully.



Town entry signage

The town entry sign program has been implemented, marking Lake Macquarie City's major entries. Major town entry signs for the City's nine major centres and five minor city entry signs were installed during the term. One major town entry sign remains to be installed at Glendale, following the completion of the Lake Macquarie Transport Interchange project.



Streetscape master plans

During the term, streetscape masterplans were prepared, exhibited and adopted by Council to revitalise the City's nine major town centres.

Maximising the economic benefit from tourism

Council's tourism strategy for the City is guided by its overarching Destination Management Plan.

Lake Macquarie City now receives 1.09 million visitors each year and tourism brings more than \$190 million annually into the Lake Macquarie economy.

Lake Macquarie Tourism has an annual multichannel marketing presence through online activity, television, print, local campaigns and public relations. Annual tourism marketing plans have produced strong results, increasing online activity by 20 per cent.

The Lake Macquarie Visitor Information Centre relocated to the ground floor of the Swansea Centre, attracting positive feedback from users, and a new Lake Macquarie Tourism Partnership Program, launched in July 2015, attracted 105 members in its first year.

Tools for sustainable, attractive development

During the term, Council adopted a new City-wide land use strategy, Lifestyle 2030. The strategy

provides the long-term direction for the overall development of the City and describes Council's high-level policies for managing private and public development in Lake Macquarie.

The Edgeworth Renewal Corridor Strategy was adopted by Council, and new Area Plans have been adopted for North Wallarah, Charlestown, Belmont, Morisset, Warners Bay, the Glendale Emerging Regional Centre and the former Pasmenco Lead Smelter site.

Conserving heritage values



Council adopted a Heritage Strategy to assist in identifying heritage values and implementing measures to support their conservation.

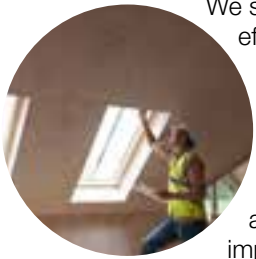
In addition, several new heritage items were identified for inclusion in Council's Local Environmental Plan (LEP).

Both the Local Heritage Fund and Community Heritage Grants programs were successfully delivered, providing funds to assist with the preservation of locally owned, but nationally significant, collections of materials that are publicly accessible.

Streamlining development approvals

Council continued excellent performance in reducing times for development applications (DAs), with 2713 applications received online. Overall, Council's median approval

time for all DAs is approximately 20 days, which is well under the NSW median for this Council term.



We sought greater efficiencies in our DA processes during the term, while maintaining high customer service levels by: appointing staff to improve customer service and marketing

opportunities; streamlining pre-lodgement meetings; purchasing technology to increase completion rates in the field; and broadening e-lodgement services.

Responsible development in the City

Managing development impacts

We appointed a dedicated Erosion Control Officer and performed around 5000 inspections of development sites across the City to proactively monitor, promote and enforce effective erosion and sediment controls.

Planning for future housing

Council has been actively monitoring and reviewing its progress in the supply of housing across the City over the past four years. A more reliable system that covers infill as well as green-field housing has been developed, with updates now happening on a twice-yearly basis.

A new geographic information system has made land use planning and monitoring activities more efficient.

Council has processed LEP amendments to assist in meeting future land use needs. The more significant of these are the former Speers Point Quarry, Munibung Hill, the Former Pasmaico Lead Smelter and Incitec sites at Boolaroo.

To broaden the range of housing types that could be constructed in the City, Council modified its planning provision to permit prefabricated dwellings on land where a dwelling house would ordinarily be permitted.

Infrastructure for the future

Council produces contribution catchment plans to identify how money levied from developer contributions can be spent to best meet the needs of the community, for example through provision of parks, sporting grounds and other recreational facilities.



Reviews of Charlestown and

Glendale were completed during the term, with the Charlestown Contribution Catchment Plan adopted in September 2015, and the Glendale Plan adopted in May 2016.

The Draft Toronto Contribution Catchment Plan will be exhibited during 2016-2017, while development projections are complete for the Belmont contribution catchment.

100%
of Dantia's first-year strategic targets met

1.09M
people now visit our City each year

20
day average for DA approvals

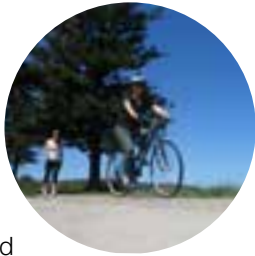
9
streetscape masterplans completed

transport, roads and drainage

Improving our transport network

Active transport

We made it easier to access our City on foot, with construction of 3.94km of new footpaths during the term, completed 2.8km of off-road shared pathways, and increased the City's on-road cycleways to 15.4km.



Maintaining our network

Asset management plans for our City's transportation and roads infrastructure were reviewed and updated during the term.

Through this strategic approach to asset management, appropriate levels of renewal funding have been provided, supplemented by the Special Rate Variation. This has resulted in the average condition of the road network exceeding the target pavement condition index of 6.5 out of 10. It has also led to a progressive reduction in the infrastructure backlog.

City footpaths, cycleways, traffic facilities and street furniture were inspected for safety as part of Council's due diligence procedures, and maintenance was performed as scheduled, taking into account requests received in response to damage sustained as a result of the April 2015 storm event.

Risk management plans for local roads infrastructure have been reviewed yearly and assets at critical risk identified. Annual work programs were developed to address the critical risks and maintain the roads network to a safe and functional level.

The scheduled programs for kerb and gutter installation, road reconstruction, and gravel roads sealing were achieved each year throughout the term.

Access to public transport

Community access to public transport services improved during this term with bus shelters either installed or upgraded in 27 locations to increase accessibility and improve the travel experience for public transport users. The shelters are designed with people of all abilities in mind and comply with Disability Act requirements.

City drainage

Since 2012, Council has completed 21 high-priority stormwater upgrade projects to address flooding, erosion and drainage issues throughout the City.

Closed circuit television (CCTV) pipe inspections were completed and the data used to confirm the condition of the pipe and pit network and identify critical infrastructure risks. Based on data from these inspections, 13 asset replacement



projects were undertaken to replace and upgrade failing drainage. We also completed a review of stormwater quality control device maintenance that highlighted opportunities for improved vegetation maintenance practices.

90km

or more of our roads were resealed or reconstructed each year

27

improved bus shelters

3.94km

of new footpaths delivered

2.8km

of off-road shared pathways created

15.4km

of on-road cycleways now available

21

stormwater upgrades delivered

business

activities

CiviLake

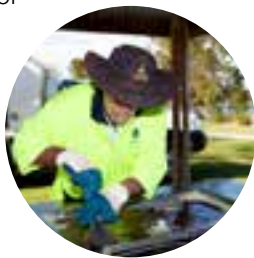
Infrastructure works for the community

CiviLake is responsible for the construction and maintenance of our City's infrastructure, and is Council's principal provider of civil construction and maintenance, horticultural and building trade services.

Employing around 300 staff with a diverse range of skills and experience, CiviLake provides quality work in a sustainable and safe manner.

At the end of term, CiviLake's responsibilities included:

- maintaining more than 1,250 km local, regional and state roads, including reconstruction, rehabilitation and a resurfacing program for approximately 700,000 m² of these roads;
- maintaining city infrastructure, including footpaths, shared pathways, signage, bridges, public wharfs and drainage systems;



- mowing 700 parks and reserves and 132 sporting fields;
- maintaining 374 gardens and plantings and all trees on public land;
- maintaining, enhancing and constructing playground facilities; and
- carrying out the Road Maintenance Council Contract for the maintenance and enhancement of the State Road Network within our City on behalf of Roads and Maritime Services.

A major new roundabout at Wyee Road and Rutleys Road was completed during the term, along with intersection upgrades at Fairfax Road and The Esplanade, Warners Bay, and Dunkley Parade and Tennent Road, Mount Hutton.

Commercial return on external works

CiviLake delivered more than \$20 million of works for external clients during the period. This equates to 11 per cent of CiviLake's turnover, which exceeds the target of not less than five per cent.



Bulk materials recycling

CiviLake recycled more than 45,000 tonnes of construction waste through capping and filling of land at the Sustainable Resource Centre in Teralba and other valuable re-use. This waste would otherwise have gone to landfill at our Waste Facility.

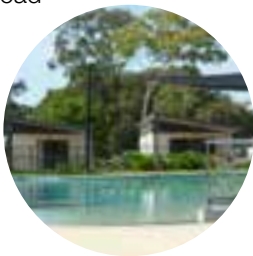
Property management

Quality holiday parks

Capital improvements made to our holiday parks over the term were delivered in accordance with the five-year business plan for each park.

Some of the improvements Council achieved include:

- a new amenities building and better reception area, along with upgraded camping sites and foreshore improvement works at Belmont Pines Holiday Park;
- two new cabins and a recreation room at Blacksmiths Beachside Holiday Park;
- a resort-style swimming pool, two new cabins, road reconstruction, security fencing and refurbished amenities buildings at Swansea Gardens Holiday Park; and
- two new safari tents and road reconstruction at Wangi Wangi Holiday Park.



Council's strategic sales and marketing plan for our holiday parks was updated in conjunction with the launch of a new website and increased digital marketing during the term. Results include additional business and higher customer engagement.

In 2016 Council received the LG Professionals Excellence in Asset Management Award for the development and implementation of Asset Management Plans for the Holiday Parks. In addition to this, Swansea Gardens and Belmont Pines received Tripadvisor Excellence awards in 2016.

Leases to community groups

We implemented a Lease Equity Model, which has led to a total of 44 new and renewed leases for Council-owned properties. A further six community leases were entered into during the period.

We continue to manage our commercial and residential properties to maximise the long-term value of Council's property portfolio.

awards

2012-2013

AR Bluett Memorial Awards

NSW Council of the Year

Awarded to Council for excellence in all-round performance throughout 2011-2012. This award represents the greatest accolade a NSW council can achieve, being the state's premier award for local government.



2012 Planning Excellence NSW Awards

Winner – Improving Planning Processes and Practices

Awarded for Council's Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Planning Framework.

Local Government Excellence in the Environment Awards

Winner – Sustainable Procurement

Awarded for implementation of strategic reviews of solar cooling and heating at Council's six largest energy-using sites, and pool upgrades to reduce water, energy and chemical use.

RH Dougherty Awards

Winner – Leading Practice in Communication Management – Reporting to Your Community

Awarded for the Securing our Future community information booklet.

IMAGinE Awards

Winner – Education and Public Engagement

Lake Macquarie City Art Gallery and the gallery's Aboriginal Reference Group won the award for *Stencils Past, Stencils Last*.

Multimedia and Publication Design Awards

Winner – Best Catalogue

Awarded to Lake Macquarie City Art Gallery for best catalogue for *(re)vision*.

2013-2014

Hunter/Central Coast Tourism Awards 2013

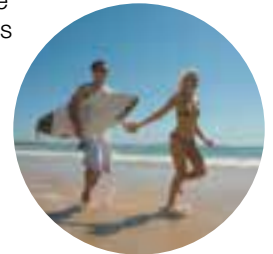
Winner – Destination Marketing

Awarded for Lake Macquarie Tourism's marketing campaign 'Lots to Love, Love the Lake' in recognition of the brand and its targeted launch into social media.

NSW Tourism Awards 2013

Winner – State Tourism

Awarded for the success of 'Lots to Love, Love the Lake' in attracting website hits and increasing visitor numbers to the area.



2013 Lower Hunter Urban Design Awards

Winner – GHD Small Space Development

Council proudly won this award for the Speers Point Cafe and Amenities at Speers Point Park.

Winner – Scooters and Mobility and Australian Independent Living Aids Universal Access Award

Winner – CityGreen Landscape and Public Art Award

Awarded to Lake Macquarie Variety Playground.

2014-2015

Museums Australia Publication Design Awards

Winner – Best Catalogue

Lake Macquarie City Art Gallery was awarded Best Catalogue (under 64 pages) for the exhibition catalogue *Look closely now*.

2013 NSW Public Libraries Marketing Awards

Winner – Programs

Lake Mac Libraries was recognised for the Naruta-Ka-Wa Story Quilt project, an exciting initiative that has strengthened relationships with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

NSW Local Government Excellence Awards 2014

Winner – Excellence in Asset Management

The award recognised Council's leadership and cutting-edge capabilities in the field, in particular its effective use of an Asset Management Steering Group.

NSW Local Government Excellence in the Environment Awards 2014

Overall winner – Local Sustainability Award

For success in embedding sustainability principles across all aspects of Council's operations.

Winner – Organics Recovery Award

For introduction of Council's Green Waste Service to the 74,000 households in the local government area.



Winner – Natural Environment Policies, Planning and Decision Making, Division C

For planning and management guidelines aimed at protecting two plant species and four threatened owl species.

2015 Tripadvisor Certificate of Excellence

Winner – Certificate of Excellence

The recognition for Belmont Pines Holiday Park follows several years of park upgrades and increased occupancy rates at Council's tourist sites. Council also received a Certificate of Excellence for Speers Point Park. The park's facilities were extended with the opening of Lake Macquarie Regional Football Facility and upgrades to the Speers Point Swim Centre.

Multimedia and Publication Design Awards

Winner – Best Poster Project

Lake Macquarie City Art Gallery, in partnership with Western Plains Cultural Centre, won the award for Best Poster for the exhibition *Wild Side: the animal in art*.



OUR YEAR

our progress

This year we have continued to make solid progress towards the vision outlined in our Community Strategic Plan, to enrich the quality of life our City offers its residents and all who visit and do business here.

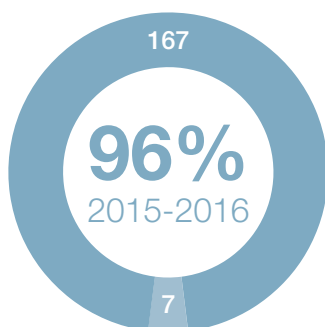
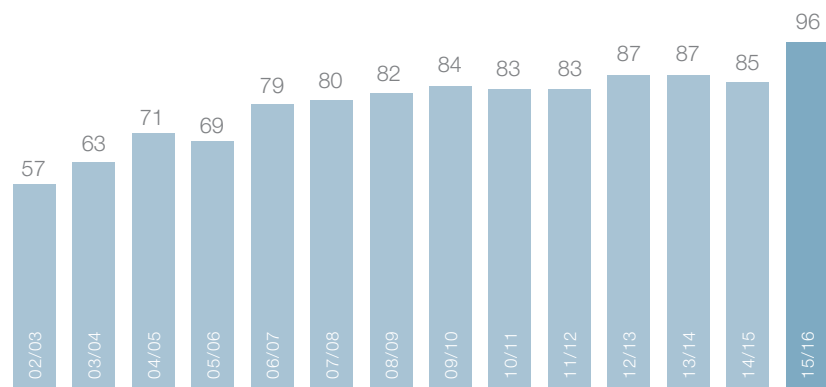
Council met 96 per cent of Operational Plan performance targets for 2015-2016, resulting in many great outcomes for our community.

We achieved 167 of 174 Operational Plan performance targets during 2015-2016, with strong performance in all areas of our operations. A total of 155 of these targets were achieved in our six key focus areas and the additional 12, in our business activities.

Most of the seven targets not met will be achieved in the new financial year.

This achievement further boosts Council's record in performance improvement from a base of 57 per cent in 2002-2003 to 96 per cent in 2015-2016.

Percentage of performance targets met 2002-2003 to 2015-2016



annual snapshot

We achieved excellent results across all six of our key focus areas this year, with 100 per cent of targets met in four of these focus areas.

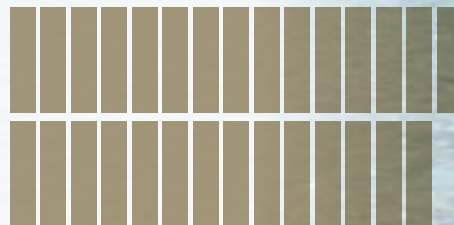
Caring for the environment

100% of total performance targets met

We investigated 348 incidents of illegal dumping and engaged offenders to remove 100.4 cubic metres of waste from 50 dump sites around the City this year.

Our award-winning sports field water efficiency program continued, with irrigation works now complete at Charlestown Oval, Jack McLaughlin Oval, Kahibah Oval, Marks Oval, Tredinnick Oval and Ernie Calland Field.

29
of 29
targets
achieved



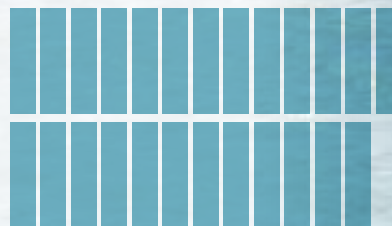
Caring for our community

100% of total performance targets met

Our You're Kidding Me program delivered monthly sessions to connect parents and carers to resources and services that can support their child's learning and development.

We installed more accessible toilets and kitchens at community halls and completed accessibility works at Jack Stewart Netball Courts as part of our Disability Action Plan.

25
of 25
targets
achieved



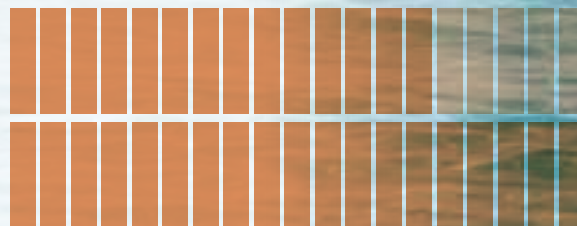
Sport, recreation and culture

87% of total performance targets met

Revitalisation of our swim centres is driving increased attendances, with 77,640 more visits recorded for 2015-2016, compared to the previous year.

We completed a refurbishment of Speers Point Library. The new-look library includes a dedicated Community History section, public access computers and reading areas.

33
of 38
targets
achieved





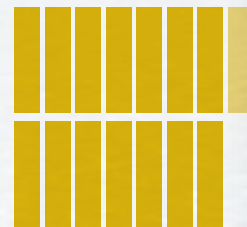
Transport, roads and drainage

93% of total performance targets met

Construction of the Lake Macquarie Transport Interchange is well under way, with roadworks completed at Stockland Drive and a new roundabout installed at Glendale Drive.

We made it easier to access our City using active transport, with construction of 1.3km of new footpaths, 1.4km of shared pathways and 7km of on-road cycleways.

14
of 15
targets
achieved



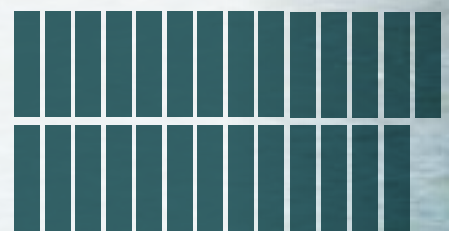
Urban and economic development

100% of total performance targets met

Dantia opened its Smart Hub (DaSH) at Charlestown in April, providing a quality co-working space for local entrepreneurs and businesses to collaborate and network.

Our DA processing has continued to improve, with general applications processed, on average, within 20 days.

27
of 27
targets
achieved



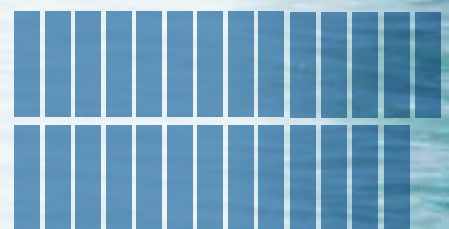
Civic leadership

100% of total performance targets met

Results from our biennial community survey of residents conducted in 2016 show record satisfaction levels of 93 per cent.

We are providing more ways than ever for the community to connect and engage with Council and local decision making. Our expanded have your say website now has 2050 registered participants and we have 25,500 followers on social media.

27
of 27
targets
achieved



financial snapshot

Revenue raised through the rate variation approved by IPART in 2012 has provided the foundations for financial sustainability that Council is building on through strong financial management and continuous improvement, while maintaining essential services and infrastructure.

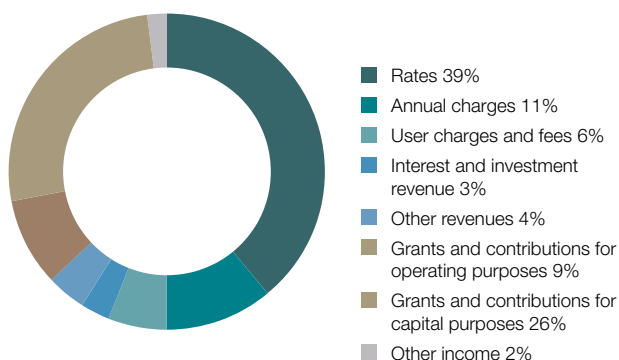
Resurfaced roads and upgraded drainage, new cycleways and shared pathways, renewal projects for our swim centres, and better playgrounds are just some of the many improvements Council has made during the year.

Council has reported an operating surplus before capital revenue of \$15.959 million.

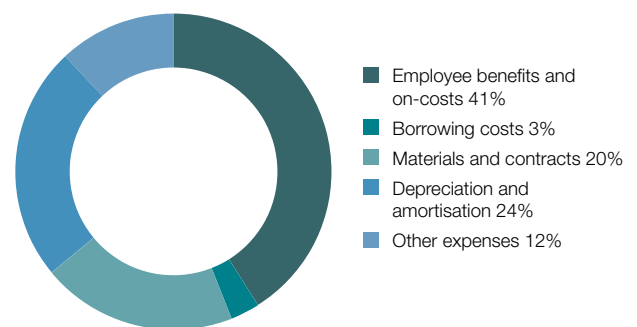
The operating result for 2015-2016, although pleasing, can be attributed to a number of one-off items.

Council's Long Term Financial Plan provides a 10-year blueprint for our continued financial stability. The plan forecasts operating deficits in 2016-2017, and a return to surplus in 2017-2018.

Income from continuing operations 2015-2016



Expenses from continuing operations 2015-2016



value for rates

Council invests rates income in improving our City and enhancing quality of life for Lake Macquarie residents.

For each \$100 Council spent during the year, the following breakdown shows how we invested these funds in service delivery, infrastructure development and maintenance across our key focus areas and business activities.

Council returns any profits generated by its business activities to the community through new or improved services and facilities.

What \$100 of rates bought in 2015-2016

caring for the environment \$19.44

- Waste services \$13.49
- Environmental enhancement and protection \$4.92
- Lake and foreshore management \$0.45
- Catchment management \$0.59

transport, roads and drainage \$26.35

- Roads \$21.90
- Traffic and transport \$3.12
- Drainage \$1.34

caring for our community \$19.22

- Management - built and natural environment assets \$11.31
- Emergency services \$2.92
- Human services and community development \$3.29
- Public health \$1.70

urban and economic development \$6.67

- Land use \$5.96
- Economic and employment development \$0.71

sport, recreation and culture \$17.87

- Sport and recreation \$10.14
- Swimming centres \$2.35
- Libraries \$4.47
- Cultural services \$0.91

civic leadership \$5.24

- City administration (corporate services) \$4.10
- Democratic government \$1.14

business activities \$5.21

- Property management \$3.47
- Civilake \$1.74

community engagement

Council is committed to engagement and involving the community in planning and decision making for our City. Engagement strengthens the links between Council and the community, and ensures we are aware of and responsive to community concerns, and improves the efficiency and effectiveness of our service delivery.

In 2015-2016, we asked our community to:

- ensure we have identified the appropriate priorities for the year ahead during exhibition of our Draft Operational Plan 2016-2017;
- provide their input into the development of local adaptation plans for Marks Point and Belmont South and for Pelican and Blacksmiths to explore ways to manage current and future flood and coastal risks;
- complete a survey on the future of Belmont Foreshore after damage from April 2015 storms caused the existing bathing enclosure to have to be removed;
- assist with the development of a Community Safety Plan that will better prepare Dora Creek for severe weather and natural disasters;
- join us on our Smart City journey, with ideas to develop our first Digital Economy Strategy;
- identify opportunities for new housing, jobs and improved open space in Windale;
- help shape the future of our region's premier sporting venue, Hunter Sports Centre;
- help design exciting new skate parks at Charlestown and Windale;
- develop a youth skate space as part of the Cameron Park Recreation Area Master Plan;
- suggest ideas for Bernie Goodwin Memorial Park, which will provide the community of Morisset and surrounding areas with a modern, safe and functional recreation area;
- provide input and feedback on the Multicultural Plan 2016-2020, a first for Lake Macquarie;
- improve our town centre streetscape in Glendale;



We spoke to school students, skateboarders, scooter riders and residents about new skate parks.

- suggest ideas to refresh and update community halls and multi-purpose centres across the City;
- provide feedback on a draft Plan of Management for Trinity Point Reserve to help ensure residents and visitors continue to enjoy valued open space and access to the lake foreshore;
- have their say on how Council manages future flood risks around the Jewells Wetland catchment and the Winding Creek and Lower Cockle Creek catchment;
- plan for an exciting new recreation precinct at Thomas H Halton Park, Croudace Bay, and we will be working with the community to prepare a draft Master Plan for the popular park;
- review a proposal that allowed owners of properties that meet certain criteria to burn dry, dead vegetation on their land; and
- give input to ensure that Council plans appropriately for future car parking needs at all our town centres.

Key projects

Skate Lake Mac

Council is committed to designing and constructing skate parks that meet the needs of Lake Macquarie's growing skate boarding and scooter riding community. During March, April and May 2016, Council was out in the community speaking to schools, young people, skate boarders, scooter riders and residents to find out what features they would like included in our future skate parks.

By involving the community in the design process, we aim to encourage skate park users to take pride in these facilities and enjoy them for many years to come.

Skaters were encouraged to help design new skate parks at Charlestown and Windale, by sharing their ideas, filling out a short survey or sending in drawings, photos or videos.

Information about Council's skate parks and future design opportunities was made available at www.haveyoursaylakemac.com.au/skate-lake-mac.



Also this year, skaters were given a taste of what they can expect to see at Cameron Park, with Council exhibiting concept designs, featuring a beginner area, street zone and intermediate zone with a kidney-shaped bowl. Feedback is being used to finalise designs for this new skate park, which will be constructed as a part of the Cameron Park Recreation Area.

Digital Economy Strategy

How does a city become a 'Smart City'? That is a burning question at all levels of government as cities and towns around Australia work out how to capitalise on the rollout of the National Broadband Network and harness emerging digital technologies to benefit their communities.

In July 2015, we asked our community how we can use technology to make the City even better and more connected. More than 300 ideas were submitted at community stalls, over social media and at a specific TomorrowMakers event.

TomorrowMakers was a unique opportunity for young people to get together and investigate how the use of technology can make Lake Macquarie an even better place. Guests spent the evening hearing from inspiring industry experts, interacting with technologies like 3D printing and virtual reality, and generating ideas with their fellow forward-thinking peers

Through our engagement activities, we received significant input from residents and businesses throughout the year. This has informed development of our Smart City, Smart Council Digital Economy Strategy, which positions our City to become a more connected, progressive and sustainable regional centre.



Skaters helped design new parks in Charlestown, Windale and Cameron Park.

Engagement by numbers

1000

randomly-selected Lake Macquarie residents completed an independent phone survey to measure community satisfaction with Council services, and 93 per cent said they were at least somewhat satisfied

18

targeted Council advisory committees, such as the Aquatic Services Committee, Waste Advisory Committee and Ageing and Disability Panel, helped us make more informed decisions

889

people responded to our 'food scrap shift to green bins' community survey in late 2015

2006

people are registered to Council's Have Your Say Lake Mac online engagement hub

255

improvement ideas were suggested to upgrade Council's community facilities

477

people responded to our Belmont Swimming Area survey

25

people experienced virtual reality to demonstrate how sea level rise may affect the Pelican foreshore in the future

800

comments and submissions were received identifying parking and other transportation issues and ideas, in addition to 600 surveys about parking in our town centres

local government in review

Our strong performance and an integrated approach to planning has positioned our Council well for the major reforms of the local government sector in NSW. In December 2015, the NSW Government released its determination that Lake Macquarie City Council was 'fit for the future' and would remain a stand-alone Council.

All levels of government are working towards a more sustainable future for local councils and have a shared strategic vision, titled Destination 2036. Council is committed to this whole-of-government approach, which aims to build stronger and more effective councils through appropriate processes and structural changes.

The reforms aim to increase the effectiveness and strategic capacity of local government across NSW, including through the development of new legislation. More information is available at fitforthefuture.nsw.gov.au.

Council participated actively in the reform process throughout the year, making submissions and representations to the NSW Government's Fit for the Future initiative, the Upper House Inquiry into Local Government and amendments to the Local Government Act.

Fit for the Future

2012

The NSW Government appointed the Independent Local Government Review Panel to investigate opportunities to strengthen the effectiveness of local government across NSW.

2013

The Panel released its final report in, which made 65 recommendations for local government reform. Council actively participated in the consultation process to represent and advocate for our City, and to ensure our community had a voice in this local government reform process. One of Council's key comments on the report was that a proposed amalgamation with Newcastle City Council was not necessary and would be detrimental to the Lake Macquarie community.

2014

In September 2014, the NSW Government delivered its blueprint for the future of Local Government, titled Fit for the Future. Councils were given until 30 June 2015 to submit a proposal to IPART on how they would become 'fit for the future', either by merging with the merger

partner identified for them in the Panel's report or by standing alone. These proposals were required to address seven financial sustainability criteria, as well as demonstrating how councils had sufficient scale and capacity.

2015

In June, Council endorsed a submission to IPART, on behalf of the Lake Macquarie community, responding to the proposed reforms and identifying improvements to enhance Council's performance. This submission reflected the views of 87 per cent of Lake Macquarie City residents, who preferred to stand alone and not merge with Newcastle City Council. A copy of Council's submission is available at lakemac.com.au.

In July, Council submitted a response to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Fit for the Future, undertaken by the NSW Legislative Council.

In August, IPART released its assessment of whether councils were 'fit' or 'not fit'. Lake Macquarie City Council was found to be fit on the financial sustainability criteria, but not to have sufficient scale and capacity when compared against the Panel's preference for a merger with Newcastle City Council.

As a consequence, IPART recommended that Lake Macquarie and Newcastle councils be merged. In December, the NSW Government released its response to IPART's report, and found that Lake Macquarie City Council was, in its opinion, 'fit for the future' and able to remain a stand-alone council. The decision came after a lengthy government decision-making process, which included numerous NSW Government assessments of Council's ability to operate efficiently. The determination requires Council to implement the improvements described in our submission to IPART.

2016

Council has made progress in implementing the improvements described in our submission to IPART. These achievements are detailed in the productivity improvements section of this Annual Report.

In May, the NSW Government formed a new Central Coast Council, consisting of the entire Gosford and Wyong council areas. The boundary between Wyong Shire Council and Lake Macquarie City Council will therefore remain unchanged as part of the current reforms.

Review of the Local Government Act

In 2012, the NSW Government appointed a four-member Taskforce to review the *Local Government Act 1993* and the *City of Sydney Act 1988*. The Taskforce looked at ways to modernise the legislation, to ensure it would meet the future needs of councils and communities. The recommendations of the Taskforce were exhibited for public comment in early 2014. Council is generally supportive of these recommendations and the NSW Government's response to them, which was released in September 2014.

Since then, the NSW Government has amended the Local Government Act to strengthen accountability of councillors, and is in the process of amending the Act's planning and governance measures. These Phase 1 amendments to the Act are expected to pass the Parliament in the second half of 2016.

Joint organisations

Joint organisations are a key part of the Fit for the Future reform package, providing a forum for local councils and the NSW Government to connect ideas and priorities at the regional level to help our local communities to grow and thrive.

The proposal is that joint organisations be empowered to bring all councils in defined regions together to discuss and agree on strategic regional priorities for their communities. Joint organisations would also create a mechanism for State and Local Government to collaborate on agreed priorities in a more consistent, structured and effective way. Lake Macquarie participated in a Pilot Joint Organisation for the Hunter, to develop the Joint Organisation model and build better working relationships between councils and State agencies.

The Office of Local Government has released a discussion paper on how it plans to roll out Joint Organisations across the State. This model is expected to be embedded in Phase 2 amendments to the Local Government Act, which are anticipated for late 2016.

awards

2015 IAP2 Core Values Awards

Winner - Environment

Council won an International Association for Public Participation's (IAP2) Core Values Award for its collaboration with residents to create the Marks Point and Belmont South Local Adaptation Plan, one of the first sea level rise adaptation plans to be developed in Australia at a local level. The award recognises excellence in public participation throughout the Asia Pacific Region.

2015 NSW Local Government Environmental Excellence Awards

Highly commended – Division C - Climate Change Action

Council was recognised for its collaboration with the community to develop the Marks Point and Belmont South Local Adaptation Plan.

2015 NSW Coastal Management Awards

Winner – Award for Excellence in Coastal management

Council won the 2015 NSW Coastal Management Award for Excellence in Coastal Management in recognition of its work in integrated coastal planning, including development of the Marks Point and Belmont South Local Adaptation Plan and the Lake Macquarie Coastal Zone Management Plan.



Highly Commended – Community Involvement Award – Lake Macquarie Landcare and Marks Point Belmont South Community Working Group

Lake Macquarie Landcare was recognised for its significant ongoing initiatives that have involved extensive engagement with local communities.

The Marks Point and Belmont South local Adaptation Plan Community Working Group were highly commended for their work with Council to develop the local adaptation plan for their area.

2015 NSW Local Government Week Awards

Winner – Most Innovative Event

Council's hosting of the 2014 Lake Macquarie International Children's Games was recognised as the most innovative local government event in NSW.

Winner – Most Innovative Youth Week Program

Lake Macquarie City Council's 2015 Youth Week was recognised as the most innovative Youth Week program in NSW.

2015 NSW Government Green Globe Awards

Highly commended - Natural environment - Ecosystem enhancement

Council was recognised for its work to expand community partnerships and give priority to protecting and restoring the natural environment across the local government area through its Ecosystem Enhancement program.



Council won the Statewide Mutual Risk Management Excellence Award for its Managing Shark Sightings Procedure

2015 Statewide Mutual Risk Management Excellence Awards

Winner

Council won the Statewide Mutual Risk Management Excellence Award for its Managing Shark Sightings Procedure. Council developed and implemented the procedure to address the credible risk posed by a shark attack at Lake Macquarie's four patrolled beaches.

2015 NSW/ACT Regional Achievement and Community Awards

Semi-finalist – Peabody Energy Environment and Landcare Award – Lake Macquarie Landcare

Recognising the significant contribution that Lake Macquarie Landcare has made for the environment and community.

2015 Lower Hunter Urban Design Awards

Winner - Scooters and Mobility and AILA - Universal Access Award

Lake Macquarie Variety Playground was successful in winning the Scooters and Mobility and AILA - Universal Access Award category of the 2015 Lower Hunter Urban Design Awards.

2015 UDIA NSW Meriton Awards for Excellence

Commendation – Concept Design

Group GSA for Lake Macquarie City Council received a commendation in the 2015 UDIA NSW Meriton Awards for Excellence for its concept design for Morisset Library and Community Building.

2015 NSW Resilient Australia Awards

Highly commended

Community volunteers were recognised at the 2015 NSW Resilient Australia Awards for their efforts in assisting residents of Dora Creek to manage the impacts of natural disasters.

The Dora Creek Progress Association and Dora Creek Sustainable Neighbourhood Group worked with Lake Macquarie City Council and the State Emergency Service to develop a Community Safety Plan for their community.

Australian Property Institute 2015 JLL Heritage Awards

Winner – Heritage

Lake Macquarie City Council won the Australian Property Institute's 2015 JLL Heritage Award for the successful refurbishment of the Masonic Hall in Lakeview Street, Speers Point.

Royal Australian Air Force Supportive Employer Awards 2015

Winner

Council received the RAAF Supportive Employer Award 2015 in recognition and thanks for support given to the Australian Defence Force Reserves.

IMaGINE Awards 2015

Winner – Exhibition Projects

Winner – Sustainability Programs

Lake Macquarie City Art Gallery was recognised ahead of 23 other entrants in the Exhibition Projects category, for its *(in)visible: the First Peoples and War* exhibition, and in the Sustainability Programs category, for its new energy efficient lighting system.

2015 National Landcare Awards

Winner – Australian Government Partnerships with Landcare

The partnership between Lake Macquarie City Council and Lake Macquarie Landcare was recognised with receipt of the Australian Government Partnerships with Landcare Award. This award is presented to a local or regional authority for innovation and excellence in creating partnerships with their Landcare authority.

Lake Macquarie Landcare's Blacksmiths Dunecare group was also recognised at the award ceremony and received a Coastcare Award. Blacksmiths Dunecare group has undertaken dune regeneration work on Blacksmiths Beach for more than 25 years.

2016 NSW Local Government Excellence Awards

Excellence in Asset Management – Lake Macquarie Holiday Parks Improvement Program

Council received the Award for its program to improve the quality and range of facilities available at Lake Macquarie City's four Council-managed holiday parks: Belmont Pines Lakeside Holiday Park; Blacksmiths Beachside Holiday Park; Swansea Gardens Lakeside Holiday Park; and Wangi Point Lakeside Holiday Park.

Australian Water Association Awards 2016

Program Innovation Award

Council won the NSW AWA Program Innovation Award for the Lake Macquarie Sports Field Improvement Program, a holistic and integrated suite of works that aims to save water and use compost product to better maintain the quality of our sports fields for the community.

2016 Museum and Galleries National Awards (MAGNAs)

Winner – Temporary or Travelling Exhibition
Winner – Indigenous Project or Keeping Place

The Gallery was awarded a MAGNA in the Temporary or Travelling Exhibition category for its *(in)visible: the First Peoples and War* exhibition and another in the Indigenous Project or Keeping Place category for its *Lore & Order* exhibition.

2016 TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence

Winner – Certificate of Excellence – Belmont Pines Holiday Park

Winner – Certificate of Excellence – Swansea Gardens Holiday Park

Belmont Pines and Swansea Gardens, two of Lake Macquarie City Council's four holiday parks, received a TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence in 2016.

External recognition

for staff in their roles at Council

Royal Humane Society NSW Bronze Awards

Winner – Troy Ham



Lake Macquarie beach lifeguard, Troy Ham, received a Royal Humane Society NSW Bronze Award for acts of bravery shown during a dangerous rescue near Snapper Point in the Lake Munmorah State Conservation Reserve. Mr Ham successfully rescued four teenage boys from an inundated cave after they became trapped by the rising tide and dangerous surf in November 2014.

2016 Australia Day Honours – Public Service Medal

General Manager, Brian Bell

Council's General Manager, Brian Bell received the Public Service Medal for his outstanding public service to local government in NSW.



OUR RESULTS

reporting our achievements

This section of the Annual Report 2015-2016 documents Council's achievements in implementing the principal activities contained in the Revised Delivery Program 2013-2017, and corresponding actions and performance measurements in the Operational Plan 2015-2016.

Focus area reporting

The Lake Macquarie Community Strategic Plan 2013-2023 groups community priorities in six focus areas (right).

High-level priorities and strategies identified in each focus area in the Community Strategic Plan link directly to actions in Council's four-year Delivery Program and annual Operational Plan.

Caring for the environment

Caring for our community

Sport, recreation and culture

Transport, roads and drainage

Urban and economic development

Civic leadership

Our business activities

Council is involved in a range of business activities. It reports annually on the performance of its business units, CiviLake and Property and Business Development.

CiviLake

Property and Business Development

caring for the environment

Council's environmental sustainability programs continue to maximise the wellbeing of our residents while reducing our City's environmental footprint.

We performed strongly across all four priorities for this focus area, actively promoting and facilitating sustainable living, enhancing our ecosystems, minimising environmental risks such as floods and bush fires, and building participation at the community level through our successful engagement programs.

Strategic Direction A City responsive to its environment. A City that makes an equitable contribution to global sustainability. A well designed, adaptable and liveable City.

Objective To provide integrated environmental management, strategic planning outcomes and waste management to enhance and sustain the natural and cultural built environment and contribute to an equitable regional and global ecological footprint.

Snapshot of performance

29
of 29
indicators
achieved



Sustainable living

Delivery Program priority 1.1

Better Building Strategy

Council's Better Building Strategy provides guidance for retrofits to help make Council's community facilities more sustainable by using less water, energy and raw materials. Retrofits completed during 2015-2016 will save an estimated \$20,138 in electricity bills and 89.07 tonnes in carbon dioxide equivalents (tCO₂-e) each year.

Solar City

We installed 35 kilowatts (kW) of solar panels to bring our total solar energy generating capacity to 481kW. Council's Administration Building is our largest installation, with a 178kW capacity.

Water-smart playing fields

As part of our water-saving Sports Field Improvement Program we completed irrigation system improvements at Charlestown Oval, Ernie Calland Field, Jack McLaughlin Field, Kahibah Oval, Marks Oval and Tredinnick Oval. We also completed soil improvement works at Balcomb Field, Cardiff No.2 Oval, Cooranbong Equestrian Reserve, Feighan Oval, Edgeworth No.2 Oval, Keith Barry No.2 Field, Lydon Field, Parbury Park, Ulingah Ovals, and Valentine Rugby League Fields.

Greenhouse gas reductions

As a result of all Council's programs to reduce greenhouse gas pollution, it is estimated that greenhouse gas emissions from our operations in 2014-2015 were 16,480 t CO₂-e, achieving our reduction target of 19.5 per cent.

Commercial recycling on the increase

Another 101 Lake Macquarie commercial premises were registered for Council's commercial recycling service during the year, bringing the total number of businesses, schools and Council-managed premises using the service to 640 and the total number of services to 1238. This represents a ten-fold increase from the 2008 baseline of 108 services.

Cutting waste to landfill

Our efforts to work with the community to manage our growing City's waste have achieved a 4.03 per cent average annual reduction in waste to landfill compared to the 2007-2008 baseline. This is well above our target of two per cent.

The total waste to landfill for 2015-2016 was 84,558 tonnes.

481kW
of solar generating capacity

19.5%
reduction in greenhouse gas emissions

1238
commercial recycling services

4.03%
average annual reduction in waste to landfill



We completed 22 on-ground works projects to protect and restore aquatic ecosystems.

Ecosystem enhancement

Delivery Program priority 1.2

On-ground ecosystem improvements

We completed ten terrestrial ecosystem improvement projects during the year. These included a City-wide dune ecosystem enhancement project as well as illegal dumping deterrence works at Cameron Park Drive, Cameron Park; Freemans Drive, Cooranbong; Mine Camp Road, Catherine Hill Bay; Racecourse Road, Teralba; Rutleys Road, Wyee; Summerhill Drive, Wangi; and Wyee Road, Wyee.

Biodiversity improvement projects were also completed at Fencott Drive, Jewells and Ivy Street, Dudley.

A further 22 on-ground projects were implemented to improve and protect our aquatic ecosystems. These included:

- wetland rehabilitation at Black Neds Bay, Blacksmiths, Cockle Bay, Dora Creek, Fullers Creek, Salts Bay and Tulkaba;

- foreshore stabilisation and littoral vegetation at Bonnells Bay, Kilaben Bay Park, Murrays Beach, King Street Balcolyn, Warners Bay, Village Bay and Yarrowonga Park; and
- streambank stabilisation and riparian improvement at Cocked Hat Creek, Cockle Creek Little Flaggy Creek and Slatey Creek.

Managing our coast

We implemented ten priority actions from our Coastal Zone Management Plan including a multi-stakeholder strategy for 4WD access to Nine Mile Beach, advocacy on a container deposit scheme, participation in the seagrass-friendly moorings working group and stormwater quality improvement device performance monitoring.

Increased illegal dumping enforcement activity

Illegal dumping enforcement and activities increased during the year, with an additional 192 hours in enforcement activity undertaken, 348 incidents investigated and 72 infringement notices issued by Council.

Fifty sites were cleaned up by the offender resulting in removal of 100.4 cubic metres of waste.

32
ecosystem improvement projects complete

10
priority actions taken for our coast

50
illegal dump sites cleaned up by the offender

Environmental security

Delivery Program priority 1.3

Flood risk management

A survey calling for community input on the flood history of Upper Cockle Creek, along with flood modelling and a calibration study were completed during the year as part of Council's work to develop a draft flood study for this priority flood-risk area.

Council also sought community assistance to manage for future flood risks engaging with the community to provide feedback on flood risk management plans for the Jewells Wetland catchment and the Winding Creek and Lower Cockle Creek catchments.

Data collection and modelling was also undertaken to inform development of the Marks Point Belmont South Overland Flood Study.

Bush fire risk and education

Council continued to maintain bush fire asset protection zones across the City, completing 12 hazard reduction burns covering 58 hectares during the year.

Air quality

Council continued to monitor and address air quality issues during the year through various initiatives including convening the Lake Macquarie Air Quality Reference Group.

The Lower Hunter Particle Characterisation Study was released by the Office of Environment and Heritage in April 2016 and assessed for significance to the Lake Macquarie City Council area. The findings of the assessment were that the air quality in Lake Macquarie is generally 'good', although wood heating may be a source of particulate pollution in the winter months.

Managing contaminated land

We continued our ongoing work to manage contaminated land and reduce exposure risks across the City. Actions included inspection of 35 sites for the presence of exposed black slag. Risk management works were undertaken at 11 of these sites.

We also updated our Contaminated Land Policy procedures and management processes, and participated in the NSW Environment Protection Authority Lead Expert Working Group and the Lead Community Reference Group.

We also published fact sheets to inform the community on management of contaminated soils.

12
bush fire hazard
reduction burns

11
sites managed
for black slag



Community participation on our ecosystem enhancement and monitoring programs increased by 13 per cent.

Sustainability engagement

Delivery Program priority 1.4

Sustainable Neighbourhoods program

Council continues to support community groups to plan and implement projects and events that contribute to a local vision of sustainability through the Sustainable Neighbourhoods program.

During 2015-2016, 4916 people participated in the program, which is a 14.2 per cent increase on the previous year. Activities that have contributed to this increase include the development of new groups in the Rathmines and Warners Bay areas and expansion of both the Cardiff Area Group and the Morisset and Peninsula Group.

More residents choose to reduce consumption

Participants in Council's campaigns to reduce their consumption of energy and water increased by 40 per cent from the same time last year.

More prepared for natural disasters

Activities with the flood-prone community of Dora Creek, finalisation of disaster plans with vulnerable groups, and continuing promotion and uptake of Lake Macquarie City Council Early Warning Network alerts have increased the number of participants engaged in our natural disaster preparedness campaign. Participation increased to 8406 residents at June 2016, representing an increase of about 10 per cent from 2014-2015.

Enhancing local ecosystems

Our work to monitor, protect and restore local ecosystems was boosted during the year with an increase in the number of people participating in Council-run programs and activities including Backyard

Habitat for Wildlife, community ecosystem monitoring activities, workshops and a film series on environmental and sustainability issues. Participation increased about 13 per cent, from 2955 people engaged in 2014-2015 to 3338 as at 30 June 2016.

Waste awareness cuts contamination

Council's waste awareness campaigns are proving highly effective, with only two per cent contamination in the recycling service, which was well below the target of five per cent, and 0.27 per cent contamination in the green waste service, which was well below the target of two per cent.

4916
active in Sustainable Neighbourhoods Program

1893
residents use less water and energy

8406
engaged in natural disaster preparedness

3338
engaged in ecosystem enhancement activities

5167
subscribers to Early Warning service

Challenges and targets not met

All 29 performance indicators were met during the year.

Looking forward

- Continue with preparations for commencement of Phase 2 of Council's green waste service in 2017-2018, which will allow residents to place household food waste in their green waste bin so that it can be diverted from landfill.
- Commence implementation of priority actions identified in the Lake Macquarie Coastal Zone Management Plan.
- Complete two projects demonstrating application of planning thresholds and adaptive design for Council assets.
- Continue to provide opportunities for the community to work actively on environmental sustainability activities through programs such as Sustainable Neighbourhoods.
- Continue to work with the NSW Environmental Protection Authority and Hunter New England Health to address long-term management of legacy lead contamination hazards and report progress to Council.



caring for our **community**

Council continues to host major events, run programs and support networks that engage and connect local communities and celebrate our diversity.

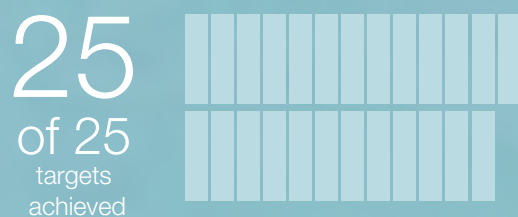
Our commitment to the safety and wellbeing of residents saw us complete health inspections of food premises across the City and extend our Ranger services. We also improved disability access at local halls, while delivering training and support to the hundreds of volunteers who help run our community facilities.

In pursuit of our aim to provide opportunities for all residents to participate in the economic and social life of our City, we provided high-quality family day care services and we developed long-term strategies to ensure Lake Macquarie is a great place to live for everyone in our community.

Strategic Direction A City responsive to the wellbeing needs of its residents.

Objective Advocate for and develop opportunities that will ensure all residents have equal opportunity to participate in the economic and social life of the community.

Snapshot of performance



Social and community planning

Delivery Program priority 2.1

A safer community

We carried out actions under our Crime Prevention Strategy 2015-2018 to address high priority crimes of residential burglary, theft from motor vehicles, malicious damage and assault (including domestic violence).

Site safety inspections were made throughout the year at various locations, including at Warners Bay, Marmong Point and Cameron Park, to address crime and public safety issues and concerns.

In October, Council hosted a Reclaim the Night march to raise awareness about violence against women. Approximately 120 people attended and marched to show their support.

We also raised awareness of domestic and family violence support services with an information stall at Glendale shopping centre, and delivered 10,000 coasters and 125 posters and magnets to clubs and businesses throughout the City.

Council continues to partner with the departments of Juvenile Justice and Corrective Services for the removal of graffiti throughout the City. This program resulted in the removal of graffiti on almost 200 occasions, at more than 50 individual sites.

A six-week recreation program at Charlestown Oval aimed to reduce the level of antisocial behaviour and increase positive ownership of the space and facilities by young people.

Youth celebrated

We provided \$8500 to support nine Youth Week activities and Council won the award for the Most Innovative Youth Week Program at the 2015 NSW Local Government Awards.

Council staff worked with the Lake Macquarie Youth Council to deliver projects to encourage positive use of spaces at Charlestown Square Shopping Centre, the Endless Summer youthfocused event at Charlestown Swim Centre, and consulted with young people regarding the proposed Charlestown and Windale skate facilities.

We also partnered with the Lake Macquarie PCYC and the Lakers Basketball Club to deliver a basketball program for young people at Charlestown Oval, and worked with services to hold the Cameron Park Twilight Festival in November.

Development with people in mind

Council provided comments on more than 250 development applications and provided advice on a further 75 proposals in the year regarding disability access, crime prevention through environmental design, social impacts and adherence to regulations regarding children.

Parenting support

Our parenting support program, You're Kidding Me, continues to expand, with between 60 and 100 people registering for each month's sessions. Topics included school readiness, child and family nutrition, behaviour management, speech screening, safe kids, and the nervous and anxious child. We also launched the Paint the Lake REaD program, to promote children's early literacy development.

Celebrations connecting our communities

Council provided more than \$11,000 to support 23 programs and events hosted as part of NAIDOC Week celebrations in Lake Macquarie. We also hosted activities and events to celebrate Youth Week, Children's Week, International Women's Day, Harmony Day and Seniors' Week.

200
graffiti clean-ups
at 50 sites

250 DAs assessed
for safety, access and
crime prevention



Our award-winning Family Day Care service caters for children from birth to 13 years.

Provide family day care

Delivery Program priority 2.2

Caring for our kids

Lake Macquarie Family Day Care service continues to exceed national quality standards.

All partnerships for the delivery of Family Day Care were in place and continued to function effectively during the year. Hunter New

England Health employer-sponsored places and Hunter TAFE play sessions were fully utilised, and Council met all requests for care under the Brighter Futures Early Intervention program.

Thirteen new educators were recruited during the year, bringing the total number of registered educators that operate Council's award-winning Family Day Care service to 113 as at June 2016.

113
registered Family Day Care educators

Respond to community concerns regarding Ranger and public health issues

Delivery Program priority 2.3

Health awareness updates

We provided two community awareness messages on public health issues to the community, including results of local monitoring of mosquitoes.

Protecting our pets

Our companion animal education and awareness programs continued throughout the year with nine events and three mail-outs to contact owners of unregistered pets.

Ranger services provided to the community

Our Rangers received 436 after-hours calls during the year and responded to all within the required timeframes.

755
health inspections of food premises

436
after-hours calls handled by our Rangers

Food premises inspected

Council health inspectors completed 755 inspections of local food premises, revealing a 94 per cent compliance rate with health regulations.

Community facilities management

Delivery Program priority 2.4

Access for all

We continued our works program to make community facilities more accessible for all. Works identified in our Disability Action Plan and Community Facilities Strategy were completed during the year, including replacement of the kitchen at Wyee Community Hall; construction of an accessible toilet and parking space at Kilaben Bay Community Hall; disability access works at Jack Stewart Netball Courts; and design of a toilet and kitchen upgrade at Garden Suburb Community Hall.

Cemeteries upgraded

New niche walls were installed to extend Whitebridge and West Wallsend cemeteries.

Supporting our volunteers

We held two workshops to provide information and training to 190 volunteers who manage Council-owned community facilities. These sessions included induction of suitably trained and volunteer safety officers.

Maintaining our community facilities

Regular meetings with organisations and committees managing Council-owned community facilities were hosted to assist them in maintaining stakeholder relationships. Council also performed regular inspections and risk assessments to enable proactive maintenance of halls, sportsgrounds and other community facilities throughout the City.

\$181,504
to improve accessibility
at community facilities

465
buildings inspected

190
volunteers trained

Challenges and targets not met

All 25 performance indicators were met during the year.

Looking forward

- We will consult with the community, service providers and other stakeholders to develop a new Disability Inclusion Action Plan for the City.
- Design of internal refurbishment of Rathmines Community Hall, construction of disability parking spaces, pathway and accessible toilets at Wangi Netball Courts and Oval, and construction of an accessible toilet at Belmont Foreshore will be completed in line with Council's Disability Action Plan and Community Facilities Strategy.
- We will carry out actions to improve our Child Care Centres including design of baby change room at Warners Bay Child Care Centre, design of a laundry and baby change room at Edgeworth Child Care Centre, and replacement of kitchenettes in the four playrooms at Warners Bay Child Care Centre.
- A community facilities study will be undertaken to guide expenditure in line with community needs under the Belmont Developer Contribution Plan.



sport, recreation and culture

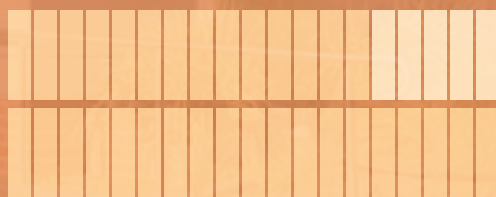
It was an exciting year for sport, recreation and culture in our City. Highlights included refurbishment of Speers Point Library, a new jetty at Sunshine Park and acquisition of 87 new artworks for Lake Macquarie City Art Gallery.

We also began to prepare the site for the \$15 million Cameron Park Recreational Area, which will become a major sporting and recreational hub in our City.

Our efforts to revitalise our swim centres, parks and playgrounds also saw progress, with design work completed for the redevelopment of Swansea Swim Centre and for a central promenade at Speers Point Park.

Snapshot of performance

33
of 38
targets
achieved



Provision of community-based swimming centres

Delivery Program priority 3.1

Better swim centres

Our actions to revitalise the City's swim centres and improve the leisure programs they offer are proving popular with the community, with the number of people using and enjoying our facilities increasing during the year.

Attendance figures for 2015-2016 were 324,843, which is 77,640 more than the previous year.

Satisfaction levels also increased, with user surveys completed for the 2015-2016 swim season revealing that 98 per cent of patrons were satisfied or very satisfied with our swim facilities and programs.

Following the successful \$3.3 million refurbishment of West Wallsend Swim Centre in 2015, Council has continued its plans to redevelop the City's

swim centres. A detailed concept design and an accompanying feasibility analysis was completed for Swansea Swim Centre during the year, and a DA lodged for the redevelopment of Charlestown Swim Centre in May 2015 remains under assessment.

324,843
visits to swim centres

98%
of swim centre users satisfied

Recreation and community land planning

Delivery Program priority 3.2

Safe and functional parks

Due diligence inspections were carried out at Council's 111 local playgrounds and on more than 3000 parks and reserves assets, including picnic tables, jetties, seating, fencing, retaining walls, barbecues, shelters and bollards.

Our parks infrastructure renewal program delivered a new playground at Forest

Lake, Toronto; new bollard fencing at Pacific Drive, Swansea and Blackalls Avenue, Blackalls Park; as well as two beach access pathways at Blacksmiths Beach. Under the program, Council also replaced the water charge fence at Windale Rugby League and stairs at Holford Oval, Mount Hutton this year.

New jetty at Sunshine Park

We installed a new jetty at Sunshine Park, including new piles, a pontoon and gangway, as well as a connecting pathway and landscaping.

111
playgrounds inspected

Delivery of major projects to the community

Delivery Program priority 3.3

Performing Arts Centre upgraded

New LED lights have been installed at Lake Macquarie Performing Arts Centre to improve energy efficiency and reduce ongoing operating costs.

Cameron Park Recreation Area

The Cameron Park Recreation Area will become the major sporting and recreational hub for Cameron Park, providing a vital pedestrian and cycle link between the areas of the growing suburb, and creating an important bushland reserve for native flora and fauna. The \$15 million project is estimated to be delivered in 2019

and includes a two-storey community building, a major combination sports field, a skate zone, netball courts and a multi-court, accessible path network, two playgrounds and an outdoor exercise area.

Earthworks and site preparations began in January, followed by community consultation about the design and features of a new skate zone to be included in the recreation area. The proposed skate zone will form part of a youth recreation precinct, and will be constructed close to picnic areas, barbecue facilities, senior and junior play areas, and the existing BMX track.

Planning for the future of Speers Point Park

Detailed designs for a central promenade and associated picnic areas at Speers Point Park were completed during the year and documentation was in progress to allow the project to move into the construction phase in 2017.

Fernleigh Track

We continued to deliver projects to improve the Fernleigh Track, including installation of a new toilet facility and landscaping works at Whitebridge, and interpretive signage at Whitebridge and Redhead Stations.

\$15M
recreation project
commenced



Tactile story book could be the first of many

Possibly the first of its kind in Australia, a storybook produced by Lake Mac Libraries on a 3D printer is enabling children with a vision impairment to experience the detailed illustrations that complement the children's classic, Goodnight Moon.

The tactile storybook allows visually impaired children to feel their way around 3D renders of objects and characters featured in the narrative, allowing them to experience the role illustrations play in storytelling.

Council has already started work on a second book, with the goal of creating ten tactile books to help vision impaired students have a higher level of participation in mainstream classrooms.



We opened the doors on our new-look Speers Point Library.

Delivery of an art gallery service for the community

Delivery Program priority 3.4

Lake Macquarie Art Gallery attracted strong audiences in 2015-2016 with 48,130 visitors. This is a 56 per cent increase from the 2014-2015 figure of 30,686. School tour group numbers also grew by 56 per cent, with 2149 school students visiting, compared to 1377 last year.

Numbers were boosted through the year in response to the *Impressions of Paris* and *Archibald Prize* exhibitions, but these figures are also the result of effective programming and marketing.

Aboriginal content

On average, 61 per cent of exhibitions contained Aboriginal content across the year, including the award winning exhibitions *Lore & Order* and *(in)visible: the First Peoples and War*.

87 artworks acquired

During 2015-2016 the Art Gallery acquired 87 separate artworks for the collection (64 of which are contained within three folios). These include *The Bicentennial Folio of Prints by Twenty Five Australian Artists* and works by Vernon Ah Kee, Michael

Bell, Thelma Bartman, Stella O'Halloran, Lezlie Tilley, Judy Watson, Brett McMahon and Irvine Homer. Of these, 32 were cultural gifts, 25 were donations and the remaining 30 were purchased for the art gallery by the Art Gallery Society. The acquisitions have greatly enhanced the gallery's collection as an asset and display resource.

During the year, gallery staff developed *Your Collection*, a set of six exhibitions designed to reinforce community ownership of the collection.

48,130
visitors to the art gallery

2,149
school children
visited the gallery

61%
of exhibitions included
Indigenous material

87
artworks acquired

Provide adaptive library services for the community

Delivery Program priority 3.5

New home for community history

We completed our refurbishment of Speers Point Library, providing the community with a new-look library and better access to the City's community and family history resources, along with a new study

space and upgraded air conditioning.

The refurbishment was supported with a \$200,000 grant from the NSW Government's Revitalising Regional Libraries program.

Thousands of events

Lake Mac Libraries hosted 2352 events with 27,434 people attending and an average attendance rate of 95 per cent.

2352
events at Lake Mac
libraries

27,343
attended

Provision of beach patrol services

Delivery Program priority 3.6

Safe in the surf

A total of 525,555 residents and visitors flocked to our patrolled beaches this year.

Council lifeguards helped save lives and deal with injuries throughout the beach season as part of our ongoing professional beach lifeguard service at Redhead, Blacksmiths, Caves and Catherine Hill Bay beaches.

Our professional lifeguards took 5772 preventative actions to ensure the safety of beachgoers, and performed 93 rescues and administered 1780 first aid treatments during the year.

Community satisfaction with Council's professional beach lifeguards was rated at 4.35 out of 5.

Water survival skills for kids

Thousands of primary school students participated in Council's winter water safety program, A Matter of Seconds. A total of 73 schools participated in this year's program, which saw Council's professional lifeguards present 357 water safety education sessions to 8079 students in Kindergarten, Year 3 and Year 6.

Improvements made to the program during the year included: a presentation tailored to local places, risks and conditions; 15 new resuscitation dummies,

providing a more realistic experience for students; and staff newly trained and rotated through the program to build the experience base.



93
rescues performed
by our lifeguards

8079
children learnt
water safety skills

Supporting community, cultural and sporting events in the City

Delivery Program priority 3.7

Financial support for community events

Through its community funding program, Council allocated \$90,167 in funding during the year for 45 community events including choral festivals, marathons and cultural celebrations.

Council also provided \$129,750 in corporate sponsorship to support 16 organisations to present local surfing and athletics events, community festivals and an opera program.

A further 21 events were funded with \$23,722 allocated under the Lake Macquarie Games program.

\$243,639
for 82 community events

Challenges and targets not met

Five of 38 performance indicators were not met during the year.

- The expansion of Allen Davis playing fields was delayed while Council pursued environmental investigations. These investigations are complete and construction will commence in 2016-2017.
- Speers Point Library was closed for three months for renovations, affecting library use during the year. As a result, visits to Lake Mac Libraries totalled 693,214, which did not reach the NSW State Library baseline target of 880,000 visits.
- Council fell just short of the NSW State Library benchmark of 6.91 loans per capita, which for Lake Macquarie City is 1,382,000 loans. Total loans for the year were 1,368,441, which is 99 per cent of the NSW State Library target.
- Lake Mac Libraries membership was 60,447 at 30 June 2016, which is 30 per cent of the population. This does not meet the NSW State Library baseline of 44 per cent of the population, which for Lake Macquarie City would be 89,177 members.
- Lake Mac Libraries fell short of its target to achieve 500,000 unique page visits for its website, with 485,461 visits reported for the year. An upgrade to the network is in progress to resolve network issues affecting customers' access to the library website and online resources.

693,214

visits to Lake Mac Libraries

99%

of library loans target met

60,447

library members

Looking forward

- Prepare and exhibit the final concept designs for an expanded and improved Hunter Sports Centre.
- Reconstruct the car park at Lake Street Swansea and extend the jetty at Valentine.
- Upgrade lighting at Wangi Netball Facility.
- Commence construction of the Cameron Park Recreation Area.
- Work with the community to develop a master plan for Thomas H Halton Park, Croudace Bay.
- Design enhancements for the interior of Toronto Library, including new cafe facilities within the library.



transport, roads and **drainage**

We achieved 93 per cent of our performance targets for this focus area this year, which brings us closer to our vision for a well-serviced and sustainable transport and drainage network for our City.

Construction commenced on the Lake Macquarie Transport Interchange, our major transport infrastructure project that will connect Glendale and Cardiff, providing a vital link to meet the future transport needs of the Lower Hunter region.

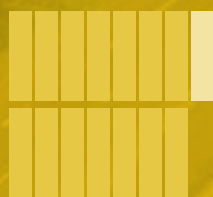
Priority stormwater infrastructure works and regular maintenance of our drainage system completed this year will help keep people and their property safe while helping to improve the quality of water in our beautiful lake in years to come.

Strategic Direction A well serviced and equitable City.

Objective Develop and maintain a sustainable road and drainage network and facilitate continual improvement of the City's transport network.

Snapshot of performance

14
of 15
targets
achieved



Improve the transportation network across the City

Delivery Program priority 4.1

Lake Macquarie Transport Interchange

Lake Macquarie Transport Interchange, at Glendale, is identified in the NSW Government's Hunter Regional Plan 2036 as a high-priority infrastructure project with potential to drive employment growth and improve the connectivity and viability of major centres throughout the Hunter Region.

Interchange under construction

Construction works commenced this year on the first part of the Interchange, with \$38 million in funding from all three levels of government.



These works extend Stockland Drive to connect with Glendale Drive, improving access to the Glendale shopping centre. Construction is due for completion in 2016-2017.

Funding sought for Pennant Street Bridge

The next part of the Interchange project will involve building the Pennant Street Bridge over the existing railway line and creating a link between Glendale and Cardiff, cutting travel time and accelerating development of commercial and industrial lands in Glendale, Boolaroo and Cardiff. This would create at least 6200 local jobs and allow for the construction of 6000 new residences. Detailed design and planning approvals were completed during the year and Council is now seeking funding contributions from the State and Federal governments.



Railway station and transport interchange

The third part of the Interchange project, the construction of an integrated transport interchange with a new railway station at Glendale, remains unfunded. Council is continuing to work with Transport for NSW to monitor patronage and demand for the station at Glendale in the long term.

\$38M
funding secured

\$32M
sought for
Pennant St Bridge

1.135km
of new footpaths
constructed

Maintaining our transport assets

City footpaths, cycleways, traffic facilities and street furniture were inspected for safety as part of Council's due diligence procedures and responsive maintenance was performed as scheduled.

Kerb extensions, guardrails and traffic calming projects were completed, and a roundabout at Minmi Road and Northlakes Drive is on track for completion in late 2016.

User-friendly bus shelters

Community access to public transport services improved this year with 10 bus shelters installed or upgraded across the City, in the suburbs of Argenton, Boolaroo, Belmont North (x 2), Cardiff, Edgeworth Floraville, Gateshead, Glendale and Wyee Point. The shelters are designed with people of all abilities in mind and comply with Disability Discrimination Act requirements.

Improving pedestrian access

We made it easier to access our City on foot with construction of 1.335km of new footpaths during the year, at Warner Street, Warners Bay (65m); Mariner Drive, Eleebana (145m); Mulbinga Street, Charlestown (130m); Charles Street, Charlestown (135m); James Street, Charlestown (130m); Powell Street, Charlestown (20m); Dora Street, Morisset (35m); Hutchinson Street, Redhead (100m); Woods Street, Redhead (105m); Brown Street, Redhead (50m); and Old Belmont Road, Belmont North (220m).

New cycleways and shared pathways

We exceeded our targets to construct 6km of on and off-road cycleways throughout the City during the year, with delivery of 1.4km of new shared pathways and 7km of on-road cycleways.

Off-road projects completed include a shared pathway along Bareki Road, Eleebana (800m) and another from Creek Reserve Road, Speers Point to Glendale (300m). The Fernleigh Track was extended along Alick Street, Belmont (305m).

We constructed 7km of new on-road cycleways along: Toonibal Avenue, Eleebana (150m); Wyee Road, Wyee (1.2km); Yarrowonga Park Road, Yarrowonga Park (1.34km); Ilford Avenue, Arcadia Vale (1.6km); and Weir Road, Teralba (2.72km).



1.4km

of new shared pathways

7km

of new on-road cycleways

10

bus shelters completed

Provide and maintain drainage infrastructure

Delivery Program priority 4.2

Priority drainage works

Council completed three high priority stormwater upgrade projects at Arcadia Vale, Coal Point and Wyee. A drainage easement and pipe upgrade at Yarrowonga Park Road, Yarrowonga Park was also undertaken to redirect stormwater runoff from the road system.

A major drainage improvement project for Station Street, Bonnells Bay, worth \$1.2 million, commenced during the year and was 70 per cent complete and three weeks ahead of schedule at the end of June.

Closed circuit television (CCTV) pipe inspections were completed and the data used to confirm the condition of the pipe and pit network and identify critical infrastructure risks.

4

stormwater infrastructure projects complete

Provide and maintain road infrastructure

Delivery Program priority 4.3

Smoother, safer journeys

Council reconstructed or resealed 90km of our City's existing roads this year, and sealed gravel roads at Becks Road, Freemans Waterhole (1.6km), and in Awaba and Eraring (400m).

Kerb and gutter

Council constructed more than six kilometres of new kerb and gutter throughout the year, against a target of 2.4km.

Major projects included kerb and gutter works at George Street, Barnsley (1km);

Yarrowonga Park Road, Yarrowonga Park (926m); Ilford Avenue, Arcadia Vale (777m); Wyee Road, Wyee (1.665km); and Government Road, Wyee (673m).

90km
of existing roads were resealed or reconstructed

2km
gravel roads sealed

>6km
kerb and gutter constructed

Challenges and targets not met

1 of 15 performance indicators were not met during the year.

Footpath construction

Council fell short of its target to construct 1.335km of new footpaths during the year. Site constraints in a number of locations meant that construction costs were significantly higher than forecast. As a result, the full extent of footpath could not be

completed with the budget available in 2015-2016. Construction works at Park Street, Belmont (200m) were outstanding as at 30 June 2016, but scheduled for completion in 2016-2017.

85%
complete

Looking forward

- Complete 1.6km of footpaths and 6km of on- and off-road cycleways.
- Install or upgrade eight bus shelters.
- Provide transport, road and drainage works for the Toronto Streetscape Master Plan.
- Complete three high-priority stormwater infrastructure upgrade projects and implement an improved maintenance procedure for our stormwater quality devices.



urban and economic development

We made strong steps for our future prosperity this year, in partnership with the City's economic development company, Dantia, and through development of our new Destination Marketing Plan.

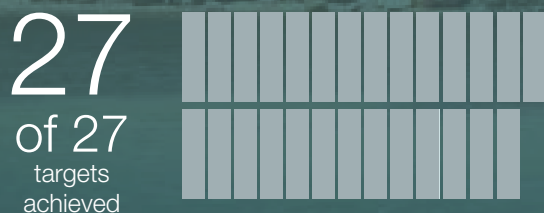
Our online tourism marketing is gaining increasing traction, with increased hits to our tourism website.

Council continued its excellent performance in reducing processing times for development applications and worked alongside the business and development industry to forge the right outcomes for our City, based on sustainable and socially responsible economic growth.

Strategic Direction A well designed, adaptable and liveable City.

Objective The City's economy prospers, with managed growth that enhances quality of life, while balancing employment and environmental aims.

Snapshot of performance



Develop sustainable and socially responsible economic growth

Delivery Program priority 5.1

Dantia fosters innovation

The Lake Macquarie Economic Development Company, Dantia, delivers economic development activities to support retention and growth of existing local businesses, and attract more business to Lake Macquarie City.

Dantia met all of its second-year performance targets while making a significant leap forward in its work to foster innovators and entrepreneurs in the City this year, with the opening of the Dantia Smart Hub (DaSH), a co-working space in Charlestown. DaSH provides an appealing modern workspace for local start-ups and functions as a hub for professional networking and the exchange of ideas.



Improving the identity of our town centres

Council adopted a new streetscape master plan for Glendale in June, which provides a blueprint for improved pedestrian accessibility and safety throughout the centre, with better linkages between the town centre and the natural environment. The plan will enhance the character of Glendale by providing opportunities for public art, high quality street furniture, trees, lighting and paving.

Council continued its roll-out of new City entry statements throughout the year, with new signs

installed on the Corner Woodford Street and Newcastle Link Road, Cameron Park; George Booth Drive, Seahampton; Freemans Drive, Freemans Waterhole; Wyee Road, Wyee; and Rutleys Road, Wyee Point.

100%
of Dantia's targets met

1
streetscape master plan adopted

5
town entry signs installed



Maximise economic benefit from tourism

Delivery Program priority 5.2

New Destination Marketing Plan

A new annual Destination Marketing Plan for Lake Macquarie City was finalised in August and includes strategies to promote Lake Macquarie through the Legendary Pacific Coast Touring Program, the Lake Mac Ambassador Program and the Tourism Partnership Program.

Pacific Coast Touring Program

Lake Macquarie Tourism's participation in the Legendary Pacific Coast Touring Program was confirmed during the year and promotion through the pacificcoast.com.au website commenced.

Lake Mac ambassadors sought

We launched the Lake Mac Ambassador campaign to encourage residents to get to know their City and promote it to friends and relatives. Residents were encouraged to visit different locations throughout the City, and have their ambassador passports stamped so they could enter in a prize draw.

Partnership program for tourism operators

A new Tourism Partnership Program approved by Council in 2015 has attracted 105 members in its first year.

Tourism website hits increase

The popularity of our online local tourism information has continued to increase, with 28,220 more visits to the Lake Mac Tourism website, up from 125,141 in 2014-2015 to 153,361 in 2015-2016.

105
members in new
tourism partnership

28,220
more visits to the
Tourism website

Develop tools to guide sustainable, safe and attractive development and infrastructure

Delivery Program priority 5.3

The City's adaptation plans

The City's first local area adaptation plan was adopted by Council in March. The Marks Point and Belmont South Plan will allow people to continue to live and build in these areas as sea and lake levels continue to rise. Community involvement will remain a central focus for Council as we begin to implement priority actions within the plan.

In light of the actions identified, work has commenced to review land use planning and development controls, including controls around building heights, setbacks, filling of land prone to sea level rise and adaptable housing.

Pelican and Blacksmiths plan

Consultation commenced in November to develop a local adaptation plan for the Pelican and Blacksmiths area. In March, residents were given the opportunity to engage with Council staff and independent specialists in coastal, channel and flooding hazards, and to explore ways we can plan for future uncertainty.

Stronger heritage protection

Council continued to identify and manage heritage values and mechanisms to support conservation at a high level. We successfully delivered the Local Heritage Fund grants program, providing \$14,000 to enable restoration and maintenance of heritage items in the City.

Smart City, Smart Council

Council's first-ever digital economy strategy, Lake Mac Smart City, Smart Council, was formally adopted in March. The strategy was developed with the community and provides the City with a long-term vision for capitalising on new high-speed broadband enabled technologies to create a more connected, innovative and resilient City - a Smart City.

1st
adaptation plan adopted by Council

800
responses to consultation on parking

\$14,000
for heritage restoration



Our median determination time for development applications was just 20 days.

City-wide parking strategy

Council is preparing a City-wide Parking Strategy to provide a long-term plan for the provision and management of parking across the City. The Strategy will enable the City to better prepare, plan for, and manage parking issues.

Council launched a City-wide parking survey during the year to gather community feedback on how parking is currently used throughout Lake Macquarie City.

Council received 600 survey responses and more than 800 comments identifying parking and other transport issues.

Faster development assessment

Council continued to improve its performance in development assessment during the year and our technical and supervisory staff were available to facilitate the delivery of timely decisions.

We achieved a median determination time of 20 days for all applications,

while our performance exceeded targets across all application types as follows:

- fast track – 15 days (target – 20 days);
- general – 20 days (target – 30 days);
- medium – 58 days (target – 60 days); and
- major – 67 days (target – 90 days).

Our median timeframe for approvals continues to be below NSW and Group 5 Council averages.

Building relationships with the development industry

Council staff attended development industry forums including the Property Council, Urban Development Institute of Australia, Building Surveyors – Housing Industry Association. Council also hosted meetings with development industry representatives.

Ensure responsible development

Delivery Program priority 5.4

Electronic assessment process

To further streamline the process for development inspections, Council implemented an inspection app tool and provided 60 mobile devices for staff to assist them in processing inspections on site.

Long-term land use planning

We launched Shape Your Future, a City-wide engagement program to develop a new statement of vision and values for the City and gather ideas that will inform our new Community Strategic Plan and long-term land use planning.

Erosion control for the City

We visited 1544 development sites across the City this year to proactively monitor, promote and enforce effective erosion and sediment controls.

60 mobile devices for development inspections

1544 erosion control inspections

Developer contributions

Delivery Program priority 5.5

Contribution plans for Charlestown, Glendale, Belmont and Toronto

Councils must adopt contributions plans before they levy developer contributions.

A contributions plan identifies public services and amenities to meet the demand of development.

Examples include open space, recreation facilities, car parking and community facilities.

Council approved the Glendale Contributions Catchment Plan in May.

The draft Toronto Contributions Catchment plan and associated

background studies will be reported to Council for exhibition in 2016-2017.

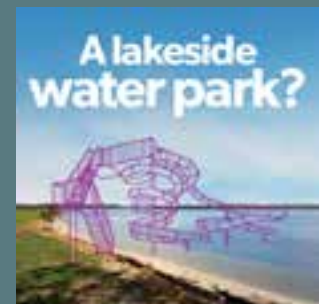
Projections for development in the Belmont Contributions Catchment were also completed during the year.

Challenges and targets not met

All 27 performance indicators were met during the year.

Looking forward

- Continue to promote Lake Macquarie destinations and services through the Legendary Pacific Coast Touring Route Program.
- Work with the community to develop a local adaption plan for Pelican and Blacksmiths.
- Complete the Shape your Future engagement program and deliver a new set of vision and values for the City.



CIVIC

leadership

Council provides opportunities for the community to participate in decision making and engage on key issues affecting the City.

Faster response times to customer enquiries and new ways to access advice, services and resources online or with specialist face-to-face support, reflect our commitment to delivering excellent customer service.

We continue streamline and develop our systems to deliver a highly integrated approach to planning and reporting that helps us identify the changing needs of our community and respond with services and facilities that maintain and improve their quality of life.

Strategic Direction Provide open and ethical leadership that is accountable to, and works with, the community to provide services and facilities that satisfy their needs while providing a sustainable future for the City and the region.

Objective Deliver Council's support, regulatory and corporate functions in an open, efficient and cost-effective manner.

Snapshot of performance

27
of 27
targets
achieved



Customer service

Delivery Program priority 6.1

Customer response times

Council continued to strive for excellence in timely customer service throughout the year, achieving average wait times at our customer service counter that were 61 seconds faster than our target.

A total of 84.7 per cent of calls to Council's Customer Service Centre were answered within 30 seconds, which is 4.4 per cent higher than our target, while 84.7 per cent of calls to the Service Centre were dealt with at first contact, well above our target of 80 per cent.

Online customer services

We are continuing to develop and expand our online information services across social media, our website and e-news services. Council's social media following reached 27,336 across all its platforms during the year, and we established a LinkedIn account.

Visits to our website increased by close to six per cent, from 4,210,138 visits in 2014-2015 to 4,461,063 in 2015-2016.

We now publish three e-newsletters (Your City Online, What's on and Over 55s) which are steadily growing in popularity. Distribution increased to 27 issues in 2015-2016, with a base of 3938 subscribers.



84.4%
of calls answered
within 30 seconds

27,336
follow us on social media

4.46M
website visits



Community engagement

Delivery Program priority 6.2

Community satisfaction levels high

Council's community survey in April 2016 revealed that 93 per cent of residents were at least somewhat satisfied with Council's performance.

Satisfaction with Council's provision of information improved between 2014 and 2016, with survey results indicating a rating of 3.47 in 2016 compared to 3.45 out of 5 in 2014.

Engagement on major issues

Through Council's engagement program, thousands of residents provided valuable input and feedback on major issues affecting the City this year, including development of our Digital Economy Strategy and our Multicultural Plan; redevelopment of Hunter Sports Centre; opportunities for new housing, jobs and improved open space in Windale; and planning for future flood risks at Dora Creek, Pelican and Blacksmiths.

We launched 18 sites through our engagement portal **haveyoursaylakemac.com.au**, which attracted 26,500 visits and provided a mechanism for the community to engage directly on a range of issues during the year.

Pages 38 to 41 of this report provide detail of our community engagement program in 2015-2016.

A connected and inclusive community

Council's major community events, such as the ever-popular Living Smart Festival, Carols by Candlelight and Lake Macquarie Festival were held during the year. We also welcomed new members of our community, with 245 residents naturalised in four Council-run citizenship ceremonies.

Keeping our community informed

Council provides information to the community using a range of media streams including traditional media outlets, social media, marketing, consultation and industry-specific media. We issued 266 media releases and articles this year as part of our proactive media strategy.

Council's online media centre was launched in June, with Flickr photo galleries and YouTube videos. Council staff will continue to extend the reach of Council's communications through specialist media and its content strategy for the new media centre.

93%
satisfaction rating

26,500
visited our have your say website

245
citizens naturalised

266
media releases issued

Governance

Delivery Program priority 6.3

Effective council meetings

Council met regularly as scheduled during the year and in accordance with Council's Code of Meeting Practice. Meetings were advertised accordingly in local papers and on the Council's website. Councillors were able to access accurate information in a timely manner through regular briefing sessions and advisory committees.

Promoting relationships with key agencies

Council staff played an active role in regional, state and national forums to build relationships with key agencies and share their knowledge and experience of best practice. This included participation in networks and forums such as Hunter Councils, LGNSW Learning and Development Network and forum on service delivery, LG Professionals benchmarking workshops, capacity building for the National Disability Insurance Scheme, the Elder abuse collaborative, Indigenous Fire Management Forum,

Hunter Regional Weeds Committee, Regional Emergency Management Committee and Lake Macquarie Local Emergency Management Committee.

Advocacy for our City

During the year, Council advocated for our City on a broad range of matters including:

- Transport – we sought funding for the Lake Macquarie Transport Interchange, liaised with NSW Regional Transport regarding installation of bike racks on buses, and participated in the Hunter Public Transport Roundtable;
- Funding – we sought improved funding for Financial Assistance Grants for local government;
- Social services – we participated in the NSW Council of Social Services round table discussion with local State Members of Parliament to raise issues regarding homelessness, housing, and child poverty;

- Cultural diversity – NSW Department of Fair Trading multicultural consultation;
- Smart Cities – Local Government involvement for transitioning to digital economy; renewable energy forum for Hunter; SOLGM Future Workforce Forum; and
- Planning – we engaged and provided information to the Joint Regional Planning Panel and SEPP65 (Design Quality of Residential Apartment Development) Committee, and gave feedback on the NSW Planning Reforms.

We also established a working group to progress ideas for the future use of Holmesville Tennis Courts and participated in the Newcastle and Lake Macquarie Career and Training Expo.

Long-term financial planning and modelling

Delivery Program priority 6.4

Accountability and transparency

The 2014-2015 accounts were submitted to the Office of Local Government on 29 October 2015 and presented to the public on 10 November 2015.

During the year, Council received more than \$25 million in recurrent

and one-off grant funds for 70 programs and projects, including \$8 million for Lake Macquarie Transport Interchange, \$500,000 for Lake Mac Libraries; \$489,000 for car and trailer parking at Thomas Humphreys Reserve Swansea; \$313,000 for bush fire hazard reduction

works; \$33,000 for disability pool hoists at Charlestown and Morisset swim centres; and \$85,000 for urban creek restoration.

\$25M
in grants received

Long-term workforce planning

Delivery Program priority 6.5

Workforce Management Strategy

Implementation of Council's Workforce Management Strategy 2013-2017 continued in 2015-2016, with all four-year strategic objectives on track for completion by June 2017.

Increasing productivity

Council made or investigated productivity improvements across most areas of its operations, to save money and reduce environmental impacts while delivering improved services to the community.

These productivity improvements are documented on pages 116 and 117 of this report.

Internal support services

Delivery Program priority 6.6

Our corporate management system software, Sycle continues to provide an integrated platform for activity planning and performance reporting,

with upgrades planned for 2016-2017 to further enhance integration.

Plant and fleet management

Delivery Program priority 9.1

Council's Fleet Management Strategy continues to deliver financial and environmental improvements.

Throughout 2015-2016, we worked to transform our fleet so that by August 2016, all passenger and light commercial vehicles will be four-cylinder models.

We achieved a 4.8 per cent reduction in fuel consumption from our passenger fleet, resulting in a 4 per cent reduction in carbon emissions and estimated cost savings of \$40,000.

Challenges and targets not met

All 27 performance targets were met during the year.

Looking forward

- Ensure information about the roles and responsibilities of a councillor are readily available in the lead up to the Lake Macquarie Local Government election. Induct new Councillors and provide access to training, support and resources.
- Work with the community to develop a new long-term vision and values for our City, to inform the next Community Strategic Plan and City-wide land use strategy.
- Implement three business process improvements to enhance the quality of Council's interactions with customers.



business activities

Council is involved in a range of entrepreneurial activities. Profits generated by Council businesses are returned to the community through the provision of new or improved services and facilities.

CiviLake

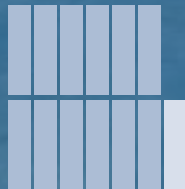
CiviLake is Council's principal provider of civil construction and maintenance, horticultural and building trade services. Additionally, CiviLake carries out external works and services for its public and private sector clients. CiviLake delivers quality works and services in a safe, cost-effective and environmentally-sound manner, providing solutions to meet its clients' needs.

Property and Business Development

Property and Business Development maximises the long-term value of Council's property portfolio and provides a range of services including management of our holiday parks, as well as property valuation, land reclassifications, disposal and acquisition, car pool management, footway dining and road closures.

Snapshot of performance

12
of 13
targets
achieved



CiviLake

Generate a commercial return for Council on its investment in external works

Delivery Program priority 7.1

CiviLake completed \$63 million worth of construction and maintenance activities during the year. Works included \$4.8 million in contracts for external

clients, which represents 7.6 per cent of annual turnover, well above Council's target of 5 per cent.



\$63M
of works completed

Bulk construction materials procurement, recycling and sustainability

Delivery Program priority 7.2

CiviLake continued to manage bulk material at or from its worksites in accordance with Environmental Protection authority requirements, and in a manner that minimises waste and maximises recycling opportunities.

During 2015-2016, CiviLake redirected 178,388 tonnes of bulk material, worth \$188,000, away from landfill.

Around 150,000 tonnes of virgin excavated natural material was generated by

a private subdivision and re-used for earthworks at the Cameron Park Recreation Area.

A further 13,700 tonnes of material was generated by a private subdivision and re-used for the partial rehabilitation of a dormant Council quarry.

On behalf of Roads and Maritime Services, CiviLake also stabilised 8,500 tonnes of pavement material in situ and excavated and

delivered 6,188 tonnes of public road material to another project during the year.

Filling and capping required for Stage 1 of the Sustainable Resource Centre site was slightly ahead of schedule at the end of June.

178,388
tonnes of material diverted from landfill and constructively re-used

Provision of high quality infrastructure works that have a positive impact on the community

Delivery Program priority 7.3

Breakdown of works

The \$63 million worth of works CiviLake completed in 2015-2016 included \$25 million of maintenance, \$25 million of road and drainage construction, \$10 million of minor asset replacement and three million of building construction works during the year.

Responding to service requests

13,809 responses to service requests were completed while successfully reducing the backlog of public tree service requests from more than 1200 to around 950.

13,809
service requests completed

Property and Business Development

Provide a high standard of facilities for holiday parks

Delivery Program priority 8.1

Holiday Park improvements

Capital improvements were made to the Holiday Parks were delivered in accordance with the five-year business plan for each park.

A new recreation room and barbecue was completed at Blacksmiths Beachside Holiday Park.

The reception area and office at Belmont Pines Holiday Park was improved and extended, and a larger workshop and storage building was built. Designs were also completed for a new recreation room and barbecue facility, and for high priority foreshore stabilisation works.

At Wangi Wangi, a section of road within holiday park was repaired and resealed.

Stage 4 of the Landscape Master Plan for Swansea Gardens Holiday Park was implemented. Extensive tree planting, new gardens and turfing works completed during the year have beautified the park while improving shade and grassed areas.

Council also completed substantial work on a new amenities block for Swansea Gardens commenced in May and was on track for completion in August 2016. The block includes stylish bathrooms with new showers and toilets.

Strategic marketing

Strategic marketing of our holiday parks continues to improve, with an increasing focus on social media and digital marketing. Sixty actions were implemented under the Strategic Marketing Plan during the year, resulting in additional business and a higher level of engagement with customers.

9
improvement projects completed

60
actions completed to improve marketing

Increase net yield on commercial and residential properties

Delivery Program priority 8.2

Council completed Town Centre development reports for Charlestown, Toronto, Belmont and Warners Bay town centres. The reports detail development opportunities and constraints, and identify options to value-add or dispose

of Council-owned land classified as 'operational'. Investment properties were reviewed and recommendations provided for potential property investment and/or development as opportunities are identified.

3
development reports completed

Challenges and targets not met

One of 13 performance indicators was not met during the year.

Nine of ten capital works planned for the year were completed. The remaining project, Swansea Amenities No 1 refurbishment, commenced in May and was on track for completion in August 2016.

90%
of capital works projects completed

Looking forward

- Ensure all construction and maintenance programs are completed in accordance with agreed levels of service.
- Carry out external works that target optimum utilisation of resources and an appropriate return on investment.
- Ensure bulk materials at and/or removed from work sites is managed in accordance with regulatory requirements and in a manner that both minimises waste and maximises recycling opportunities.
- Complete the works program and implement the marketing plan for Council-managed holiday parks.
- Continue the strategic commercial review of Council's property investment portfolio to identify properties that do not meet our investment objectives and provide recommendations for their divestment, redevelopment and where relevant, acquisition of additional properties.





OUR REPORTS

about our reports

In addition to reporting on our achievements in implementing the Delivery Program, Council reports annually to the community on its business activities and financial performance, as well as on the state of our City's infrastructure assets and the state of the environment.

Under the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework, a comprehensive State of the Environment Report is required every four years. This report is required for 2015-2016 and is published as a separate volume of this Annual Report.

The Annual Report also includes information prescribed by the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005*. These requirements have been included in the Regulation because the information is important and helps the community understand how their Council has performed, both as a service provider and a community leader.

fair and equal employment

Council's Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan provides a range of strategies to ensure that Council operates within the principles of fairness and equity. The Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan 2014-2018 builds on Council's previous efforts to develop a culture that supports and promotes an equitable and diverse workforce.

The plan requires that all our employees adopt fair practices, make unbiased decisions, and recognise and respect the social, personal and cultural attributes of fellow staff.

Council implemented several strategies during 2015-2016 to support these objectives:

- re-energised the existing Equal Employment Opportunity Contact Officer Network to provide ongoing support and assistance for employees;
- included an online module on bullying and harassment awareness for all new starters;
- continued to exhibit at the Newcastle Lake Macquarie Career and Training Expo promoting Council as a great place to work and encouraging people from many industries and fields to consider a career in Council;
- delivered an ongoing leadership program for supervisors and team leaders, and completed a pilot of an emerging leader program focused on skills and professional development. The program is designed to build the management capability of our existing and future leaders;
- completed a training program predominantly for outdoor staff to build their skills in English literacy, numeracy and digital technology. More than 170 staff completed the program;
- developed resources to reduce loss of workforce skills as mature aged workers retire;
- introduced an Education to Employment program, which is a framework to build the number of trainees, apprentices and cadets employed directly by Council. 17 participants have been employed in the program with many in non-traditional areas, such as events, arts administration, business analysis, building surveying and sustainability. An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander trainee is at Toronto Library studying Library Information Systems. The program demonstrates Council's ongoing commitment, as one of the largest employers in the region, to creating employment opportunities and skill development in our local area;



- implemented a workforce planning framework across all departments, with consideration to succession planning, skills recognition, targeted career planning, and equity and diversity, recognising that our people are our greatest asset;
- conducted cultural awareness training for relevant departments and roles to enhance knowledge and skills of employees; and
- supported carers through our Enterprise Agreement provisions. The 2014 Employment Agreement introduces Carer Break Leave. Increased access to extended leave recognises the additional responsibilities of carers within the community and our workplace.

Workforce diversity

Council participates in industry benchmarking which provides workforce data on diversity. Council uses this data and its analysis to manage:

- gender diversity, including: a gender-diverse succession of emerging leaders; and gender turnover rates.
- age diversity, including: attraction and retention of young people; attraction and retention of mature aged workers; and succession planning.

work, health and safety

The safety and wellbeing of our people and the broader community is our number one priority. Council has developed strategies aimed at continually improving the organisation's Work, Health and Safety (WHS) performance. This year, we achieved a number of milestones.

WHS management system

As a condition of our Workers' Compensation Self Insurer Licence, Council's Safety Management System is externally audited every three years by the State Insurance Regulatory Authority, formerly WorkCover Authority.

The most recent audit, conducted in November 2014, resulted in Council achieving an unprecedented 100 per cent conformance to the audit criteria, with no additional recommendations made.

Our Safety Management Team conducts a program of internal audit of departments each year aimed at continuous improvement in the implementation of our safety system. Departments are routinely achieving and exceeding the 85 per cent conformance target, which demonstrates a strong level of implementation and compliance across the organisation.

Safety culture

Council's staff safety culture continues to strengthen. In the most recent Staff Culture (VOICE) Survey conducted in 2015, 93 per cent of respondents agreed that keeping high levels of health and safety is a priority of Council. This represents a three per cent improvement on the result achieved in the 2013 survey, and is 20 per cent better than the average performance of the 2700 organisations that participate in the VOICE surveys across Australia.

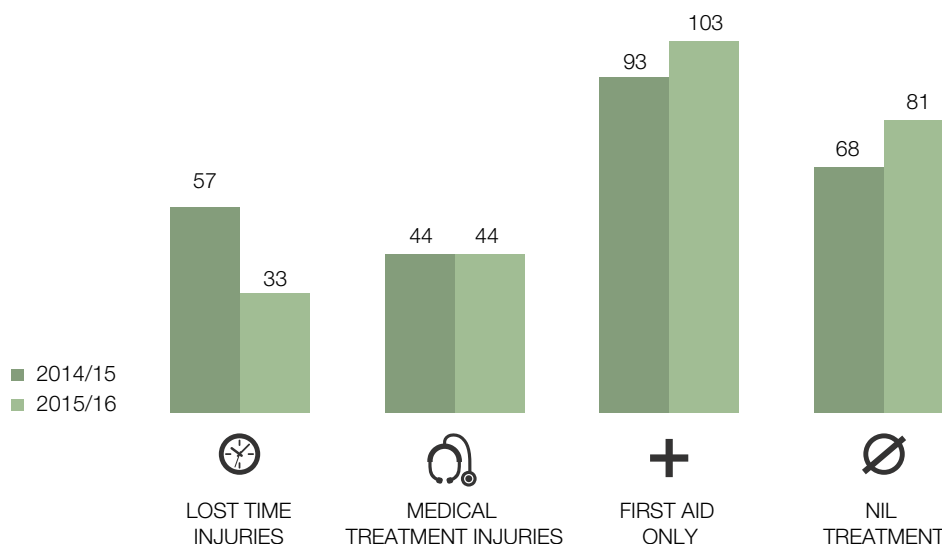
In October 2015, we participated in the National Safe Work Month, with a focus on Mental Health. We participate in the event each year, and this year, staff participation was higher than previous years, with the majority of feedback being positive and indicating the relevance of the topics. Activities included a series of presentations on mental health, recognition and awards for staff safety, and distribution of resources promoting mental health and wellbeing.

Safety Management Plan

Council has completed its Safety Management Plan 2014-2016 and achieved positive results across the majority of indicators.

In 2015-2016, we delivered:

- initiatives that helped achieve our lost time injury reduction targets;
- initiatives to improve compliance to our Safety Management System with regard to high-risk work; and
- our internal WHS auditing program across the whole organisation.



WHS performance

Council's injury reduction strategies have seen solid improvements in performance for 2015-2016, in terms of the number and severity of injuries, the number of hours lost due to injury, and the overall cost of injury claims.

- Injury performance:** During 2015-2016, we experienced 180 total injuries, an improvement on the previous year, in which we experienced 194. Total injuries include provision of first aid, medical treatment and lost time injuries. Nil treatment injuries increased during the year, which reflects improved early reporting practices.
- Injury severity:** The severity of injuries has decreased over the reporting period, with a reduction in lost time injuries from 57 in 2014-2015 to 33 in 2015-2016. Medical treatment injuries were the same as the previous year, at 44. First aid injuries increased from 93 in 2014-2015 to 103 in 2015-2016.
- Hours lost:** During 2015-2016, the total lost time injury hours fell to 2500, compared to 5621 in 2014-2015, and average hours lost per injury also trended downwards to 76 in 2015-2016, compared to an average of 99 hours lost in 2014-2015.
- Claims costs:** The total cost of injury claims in 2015-2016 has decreased to \$221,691, compared to \$357,415 paid in 2014-2015.

↓ **7.2%**
180 total injuries

↓ **42.1%**
33 lost time injuries

↓ **55.5%**
2500 hours lost

↓ **37.9%**
\$221,691 total cost

companion animals

Our Rangers are responsible for enforcing companion animal laws, as well as educating the community about responsible pet ownership. Council spent \$1,386,409 on companion animal activities and received \$357,387 in companion animal revenue in 2015-2016.

Impounded animals

Council Rangers impounded 1134 stray pets during the year. The rangers were able to release 548 pets to their owners and transported the remaining 586 pets to the RSPCA.

Dog attacks

Over the past year, Council rangers received 490 reports of alleged dog attacks. Of these attacks, 414 were considered to be minor attacks and 76 were major attacks.

Promoting the desexing of dogs and cats

To promote the importance of desexing pets and assist owners in paying for the procedure, Council participates in National Desexing Month each July.

Rangers promote the importance of desexing pets through media and communication campaigns, as well as by working with Hunter Animal Watch.

Registration Ranger project

In 2015-2016, Council was successful with an application for grant funding from the Office of Local Government under year two of the Responsible Pet Ownership Grants Program.

The Responsible Pet Ownership Grants Program provides funding to councils to target programs that increase microchipping, lifetime registration and desexing rates, and address dangerous dog issues in the community.

The funding from this program contributed towards Council's Registration Ranger project.

This project aims to increase companion animal registrations and educate owners of their responsibilities as a companion animal owner. Since this project commenced in October 2015, there has been an estimated comparative increase in companion animal

registrations of 845. The project has also resulted in a significant number of people updating their address and ownership details with the NSW Pet Registry. These corrections to the Registry increase the chances of returning animals impounded by Council Rangers to their owners.

Responsible pet ownership education

Rangers continue to deliver education programs, media campaigns and free microchipping days to increase responsible dog and cat ownership. Through these programs, Council emphasises the importance of microchipping, as it can increase the chance of owners being reunited with their pet.

If a Ranger collects an animal, it is checked for identification and returned to the owner as the first option. If the owner cannot be identified, a Ranger will take the animal to the RSPCA pound at



Rutherford, where it is held pending being claimed by the owner. If the animal is not claimed, Council's pound agent, the RSPCA, will assess the animal for its suitability for re-homing.

Online information at lakemac.com.au also educates people about their responsibilities as pet owners.

Alternatives to euthanasia for unclaimed animals

The RSPCA has established relationships with various companion animal welfare groups to increase the number of animals being re-homed in the community.

Off-leash areas for dogs

Council provides off-leash areas for dogs at:

- Barnsley
- Belmont North
- Buttaba
- Blackalls Park
- Blacksmiths
- Bolton Point
- Bonnells Bay
- Booragul
- Cardiff
- Caves Beach
- Charlestown
- Coal Point
- Croudace Bay
- Dora Creek
- Gateshead
- Marks Point
- Morisset
- Rathmines
- Redhead Beach
- Redhead
- Speers Point
- Swansea
- Toronto
- Valentine
- West Wallsend
- Windale
- Wyee

For details of off-leash areas, visit lakemac.com.au.

external bodies exercising Council functions

Hunter Resource Recovery Pty Ltd

Hunter Resource Recovery Pty Ltd provides Council's kerbside recycling service and is jointly owned and operated by Lake Macquarie, Cessnock, Maitland and Singleton councils.

Hunter Resource Recovery manages the kerbside recycling collection services contract with Solo Resource Recovery and subsequent recyclables processing by Visy Recycling, as well as services to allow residents to properly dispose of e-waste and other household items.

Hunter Integrated Resources Pty Ltd

Hunter Integrated Resources Pty Ltd (HIR), was established to administer the Hunter Region Waste Project on behalf of the member councils, Lake Macquarie, Cessnock, Maitland and Newcastle.

The Waste Project was terminated in 2009; however, the HIR company structure is being retained as a potential vehicle for other activities in the future.

Delegated authority to external bodies

Council delegates authority to external groups to manage and operate public facilities. This arrangement is more efficient for Council and gives the community greater ownership of public facilities, such as sporting and recreation facilities and community halls and centres.

The care, control and management of community halls and centres

Facility	External body
Dudley Senior Citizens Centre	Dudley Combined Pensioners and Senior Citizens Inc.
Holmesville Community Hall	Holmesville Community Hall Operating Committee
John Young Community Hall	John Young Community Hall Operating Committee
Marks Point Community Hall	Marks Point Community Hall Operating Committee
Rathmines Community Hall	Rathmines Community Hall Operating Committee
Redhead Community Library	Redhead Community Library Operating Committee
Ulinga Park Community Hall	Ulinga Youth Centre Inc.
Windale Community Hall	Windale Community Hall Operating Committee
Wyee Community Hall	Wyee Community Hall Operating Committee

The care, control and management of child care centres

Facility	External body
Birralee Longday Care Centre Whitebridge	Birralee Longday Care Centre Elected Management Committee
Bolton Point Child Care Centre	Bolton Point Child Care Elected Committee
Cardiff Early Education and Care Centre	Cardiff Early Education and Care Elected Committee
Charlestown Child Care and Early Learning Centre	Charlestown Child Care and Early Learning Elected Committee
Eastlake Community Child Care Centre	Belmont Community Child Care Elected Committee
Edgeworth Child Care Centre	Edgeworth Child Care Elected Committee
Glendale Early Education Centre	Glendale Early Education Elected Committee
KU Kahibah Road Child Care Centre	KU Children's Services
Mount Hutton Child Care Centre	Mount Hutton Child Care Elected Committee
Peter Pan Kindergarten, Wangi Wangi	Peter Pan Kindergarten Elected Committee
Redhead Community Preschool	Redhead Community Preschool Elected Committee
Toronto Community Preschool	Toronto Community Preschool Elected Committee
Warners Bay Early Learning and Care Centre	Warners Bay Early Learning and Care Elected Committee
Woodrising Community Preschool and Child Care Centre	Woodrising Community Preschool Elected Committee

The care, control and management of sporting and recreation facilities

Facility	External body
Aitchison Reserve	Belmont Swansea Junior Soccer Club Inc.
Auston Oval and Bernie Goodwin Reserve	Morisset United Football Club Inc.
Awaba Oval	Awaba Oval Community Operating Committee
Bahloo Reserve, Windale	Bahloo Reserve Community Operating Committee
Balcomb Field, Dudley	Balcomb Field Community Operating Committee
Baxter Field, Marks Point	Baxter Field Community Operating Committee
Belmont North Netball Courts	Belmont North Netball Club Inc.
Belmont Ovals (Cahill, Miller, Barton and Lumsden Ovals)	Belmont Ovals Community Operating Committee
Bill Bower Oval, Glendale	Glendale Ovals Community Operating Committee
Blackalls Park (Finnan, Waterboard, Croft and Todd Street Ovals)	Blackalls Park Ovals Community Operating Committee
Blacksmiths Oval	Belmont Swansea United Football Club Inc.
Blacksmiths Tennis Courts	Blacksmiths Tennis Club Inc.
Bolton Point Tennis Courts	Bolton Point Tennis Club Inc.
Bonnells Bay Netball Courts	Morisset Netball Club Inc.
Cardiff Ovals (No 1, 2 and 3 Ovals)	Cardiff Ovals Community Operating Committee
Cardiff Park Tennis Courts	Cardiff Park Tennis Community Operating Committee
Caves Beach Netball Courts	Caves Beach Netball Inc.
Caves Beach Tennis Courts	Caves Beach Tennis Club Inc.
Chapman Oval, Swansea	Swansea Football Club Inc.
Charlestown Oval	Charlestown Junior Football Club Inc.
Cooranbong Recreation and Equestrian Reserve	Cooranbong Recreation and Equestrian Reserve Community Operating Committee

Facility	External body
Croudace Bay Sports Complex	Valentine Eleebana Netball Inc. Valentine Eleebana JRLFC Inc. Valentine Eleebana Football Club Inc.
Dora Creek Ovals (Douglass Street Ovals)	Dora Creek Ovals Community Operating Committee
Edgeworth Junior Football	Edgeworth Junior Soccer Club Inc.
Edgeworth Little Athletics	Edgeworth and District Little Athletics Centre Inc.
Edgeworth Netball	Sugar Valley Netball Inc.
Eleebana Oval	Valentine Eleebana Soccer Club Inc.
Evans Park, Cardiff	Cardiff Junior Football Club Inc.
Fassifern Oval	Westlakes Archers Inc.
Feighan Oval, Warners Bay	Feighan Oval Community Operating Committee
Finnan Oval, Water Board Oval and Blackalls Park Ovals	Blackalls Park Ovals Community Operating Committee
Fishburn Fields, Rathmines	Westlakes Wildcats Junior Football Club Inc.
Fred Wright Oval, Gateshead	Kahibah Football Club Inc.
Gateshead Ovals (Allen Davis and Ernie Calland Fields)	Gateshead Ovals Community Operating Committee
Gibson Field, Morisset	Southern Lakes Rugby Union Club Inc.
Gregory Park, West Wallsend (Les Wakeman Field)	Gregory Park Community Operating Committee
Harold Knight Oval, Gateshead	Charlestown City Blues Football Club Inc.
Hillsborough Oval	Cardiff Junior Australian Football Club Inc.
Hillsborough Tennis Courts	Hillsborough Tennis Club Inc.
Holford Oval, Mount Hutton	Valentine Eleebana Football Club Inc.
Jack Stewart Netball Courts, Charlestown	Charlestown Netball Association Inc.
John Street Field, Warners Bay	Warners Bay Soccer Club Inc.
Johnston Park, West Wallsend	West Wallsend Senior Soccer Club Ltd
Kahibah Oval and Andy Bird Field, Kahibah	Kahibah Ovals Community Operating Committee
Keith Barry Oval, Toronto West	Keith Barry Ovals Community Operating Committee
Kindyerra Reserve, Argenton (Jack Edwards Fields)	Argenton United Junior Soccer Club Inc.
Lake Macquarie City Petanque, Teralba	Lake Macquarie City Petanque Club Inc.
Lakelands Oval	Warners Bay Soccer Club Inc.
Lakelands Tennis Courts	Lakelands Tennis Club Inc.
Lance York Field, Garden Suburb	Garden Suburb Soccer Club Inc.
Lenaghan Oval, Belmont North	Belmont North Junior Rugby League Club Inc.
Liles Oval, Redhead	Liles Ovals Community Operating Committee
Lisle Carr Field, Whitebridge	Charlestown City Blues Football Club Inc.
Lydon Field, Dudley	Dudley Redhead United Soccer Club Inc.
Macquarie Field, Speers Point	Lake Macquarie City Football Club Inc.
Marks Oval, Floraville	Belmont Football Club Ltd
Marks Oval Tennis Courts, Floraville	Marks Oval Tennis Community Operating Committee
Martinsville Oval	Martinsville Oval Community Operating Committee
Mick Middleton Field, Gateshead	Kahibah Football Club Inc.
Molly Smith Netball Courts, Belmont	Lakeside Netball Association Inc.
Mount Hutton Tennis Courts	Mount Hutton Tennis Club Inc.



Facility	External body
Nancy Dwyer and Ken Booth Netball Courts, Cardiff	Cardiff Netball Club Inc.
Neegulbah Park, Macquarie Hills	Cardiff and District Little Athletics Centre Inc.
New Tredinnick Fields, Speers Point	Lake Macquarie Football Club Inc.
Parbury Park, Swansea	Parbury Park Community Operating Committee
Peacock Field, Toronto Ovals	Toronto Ovals Community Operating Committee
Pendlebury Oval, Bolton Point	Lakers Baseball Club Inc.
Pickering Oval, Adamstown Heights	Pickering Oval Community Operating Committee
Rathmines Tennis Courts	Rathmines Tennis Club Inc.
Redhead Tennis Courts	Redhead Tennis Club Inc.
Ron Hill Oval, Toronto	Ron Hill Oval Community Operating Committee
St John Oval, Charlestown	St John Oval Community Operating Committee
Swansea Equestrian Ground	Swansea Horse and Riders Club Inc.
Swansea South Tennis Courts	Swansea South Tennis Club Inc.
Taylor Park, Barnsley	Taylor Park Community Operating Committee
Tulkaba Park, Teralba	Lake Macquarie Australian Football Club Inc.
Ulinga Park, Cardiff South (Tennis and Netball Courts)	Ulinga Youth Centre Inc.
Ulinga Park (Jack Neave Fields)	Ulinga Park (Playing Fields) Community Operating Committee
Walters Park, Speers Point	Lake Macquarie Rugby Club Inc.
Wangi Netball Courts	Westlakes District Netball Association Inc.
Wangi Oval	Wangi Oval Community Operating Committee
Warners Bay Netball Courts	Warners Bay Netball Inc.
West Wallsend Tennis Courts	West Wallsend Tennis Club Inc.
Windale Ovals (Hunter Barnett and Michael Bird Fields)	Windale Ovals Community Operating Committee
Windsor Park, Gateshead	Phoenix Charlestown Baseball Club Inc.
Woodrising Netball Courts	Bolton Point Fennell Bay Netball Club Inc.
Wye Community Tennis Courts	Wye Community Hall Community Operating Committee

partnerships, co-operatives and joint ventures

Program name	Participants with Lake Macquarie City Council	Description
Backyard and Beyond including Explore Our Great Outdoors	Hunter Valley Beekeepers Association, National Parks Association NSW, Native Animal Trust Fund, Ocean and Coastal Care Initiatives (OCCI), Royal Motor Yacht Club Toronto	Council partners with stakeholders to raise resident's awareness of importance of our natural environment. The program encourages residents to connect with natural areas, modify their behaviours, and actively participate in community monitoring and other programs
Backyard Habitat for Wildlife	Hunter Indigenous Plants, Morisset Nursery, Newcastle Wildflower Nursery, Poppy's Garden Centre, Riverdene Nurseries	Participating nurseries offer native plants at discounted rate to Backyard Habitat for Wildlife program members
Business Battery Storage Seminar	NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH)	An OEH workshop delivered with the support of Council to inform local businesses about battery energy storage technologies and techniques
Chemical Clean Out	NSW Environment Protection Authority (NSW EPA), Glendale TAFE, Cleanaway	Residents are encouraged to drop off their household chemical waste on two designated Saturdays, one in May and one October each year. This year Council partnered with Glendale TAFE as the drop-off location
Children's Week	Narunbah, Early Links, Milabah Southlake Neighbourhood Centre, Family Insight, Newcastle Men's Shed	Partners hosted a family fun day to Launch the Paint the Lake REaD program
Clean Up Australia Day	Clean Up Australia, Scouts, Guides, Lions Clubs, Sustainable Neighbourhood groups, Landcare groups, environmental groups, bushwalking clubs and churches	Council participates in Clean Up Australia Day and works with communities to clean up and conserve our environment
ClubGrants	All clubs in Lake Macquarie that meet the criteria for the ClubGrants funding program	Council is part of the ClubGrants committee that assesses and ranks the applicants
Community development activities	Various community organisations, government departments and agencies	Staff in Council's Community Planning team work with a range of community and government stakeholders to deliver policies and programs for the social services in our City. This includes service programs for young people, crime prevention, Aboriginal people, people with a disability, older people, children and families, and people from a culturally and linguistically diverse background
Community facilities	Various community groups	Community facilities managed on Council's behalf (under delegated authority), provide a broad range of services and activities in line with Council's vision for the local community. These include services, activities and events for young people, Aboriginal people, people with a disability, older people, children and families, and people from a culturally and linguistically diverse background
Community Recycling Centre	NSW EPA, Toxfree, Environmental Trust	Household problem wastes (light globes, batteries, paints, oils, gas cylinders, fire extinguishers, smoke alarms, polystyrene) collected for free and processed by Toxfree

Program name	Participants with Lake Macquarie City Council	Description
Dantia	The Lake Macquarie Economic Development Company Ltd	Dantia works with business, government, the community and partners to advance the sustainable economic prosperity of Lake Macquarie City.
Domestic Violence Committees	Staying Home Leaving Violence project, NSW Police, NSW Department of Family and Community Services, Nova Women's Accommodation and Support Service, Southlakes Refuge, Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service, Toronto Youth Service, Department of Human Services, Community Corrections	A partnership to raise awareness in the community about domestic and family violence. Council also works in partnership with these committees to deliver events such as the White Ribbon morning tea and the Reclaim the Night march
Eco Angel program	Tangaroa Blue, Sustainable Neighbourhood groups, Combined Hunter Underwater Group, OCCI, Inghams Lake Macquarie City Scouts	Local groups, and businesses participate in the program and encourage residents to take pride in their place. Tangaroa Blue coordinate the Australian Marine Debris Database in which data collected from Eco Angel activities is stored and available for public access
Environmental Upgrade Agreements	OEH, Clean Energy Finance Corporation	A service provided by Council to help commercial building owners enhance the environmental performance and operational costs of their buildings. OEH provides ongoing coordination support to a group of councils providing the innovative finance product
E-waste collection (part of the bulk waste collection)	Hunter Resource Recovery (HRR)	HRR provides a permanent e-waste drop-off location. As the result of a successful community-based trial, e-waste is now collected as part of the community bulk waste collection
Garage Sale Trail	Hunter councils, Hunter and Central Coast Regional Environmental Management Strategy	A regional partnership to bring the National Garage Sale Program to the Hunter. The Garage Sale Trail promotes waste avoidance and re-use by providing a marketplace for second-hand items
Graffiti Hotspot Program	Juvenile Justice NSW, Corrective Services NSW	This program involves engaging offenders to remove graffiti from private property, commercial premises, and other locations around the City that Council is not responsible for maintaining
Harmony Day and Refugee Week	Various community organisations, government departments and agencies	A partnership to raise community awareness and deliver events to celebrate Harmony Day and Refugee Week
Hunter Central Coast Regional Illegal Dumping Squad	Dungog, Upper Hunter, Muswellbrook, Singleton, Maitland, Newcastle, Gosford, Wyong, Cessnock and Lake Macquarie Councils, NSW EPA, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NSW NPWS), Hunter Development Corporation (HDC)	Council entered into a partnership agreement in June 2014 to commence planning and operation of a Regional Illegal Dumping squad. The RID squad is a partnership between 10 local councils and NSW EPA. The squad is hosted by Lake Macquarie City Council and provides rangers at Lake Macquarie, Cessnock, Wyong, Gosford, Singleton and Muswellbrook to tackle illegal dumping across the region. The RID Squad has completed joint on-ground operations with NSW EPA, NSW NPWS and HDC in the past financial year
Hunter Multicultural Expo	Northern Settlement Services, Department of Human Services, Multicultural Neighbourhood Centre, TAFE and various multicultural and non-multicultural organisations	A partnership to deliver an expo promoting services to the region's multicultural community
Hunter Region Sports Centre	Hunter Region Sports Centre	The Hunter Region Sports Centre is owned by Council but controlled by a community-based committee involving Council representatives, representatives of regional state athletics and gymnastics bodies, as well as a number of community representatives
International Day for People with a Disability	Disability Network Hunter, Newcastle City Council, various community organisations, and government departments and agencies	Council is a partner in the coordination of a regional program for International Day for People with a Disability
Lake Macquarie Air Quality Reference Group for Industry in the City	Local industry with air quality prescriptions in the Environment Protection Licence	Advisory group for air quality and air pollution management
Lake Macquarie Dune Ecosystem Enhancement Program	Hunter Water Corporation, Belmont Golf Club, Belmont Wetlands State Park Trust, OEH	Council partners with other coastal land owners to undertake dune rehabilitation between Redhead and Blacksmiths

Program name	Participants with Lake Macquarie City Council	Description
Lake Mac Loves Food Workshop Series	Slow Food Hunter Valley, Belmont Neighbourhood Centre	A workshop series and 'talking' dinner event delivered in conjunction with project partners to engage community on food waste avoidance
Lake Macquarie Youth Advisory Council	Community Activities Lake Macquarie	A partnership to resource and support the ongoing operations of Lake Macquarie Youth Advisory Council
Lead Expert Working Group	NSW EPA, NSW Health, health and academic experts	An initiative of NSW EPA, set up to provide technical advice about management of lead. Hosted by Council
Living Smart Festival	Lake Macquarie Farmers Market, Hunter Resource Recovery, Bunnings Warehouse, Metro Cycles, Hudson Homes, NBN, Newcastle Herald, The Good Guys Warners Bay	A one-day community event in Speers Point Park supported by a number of project sponsors to engage the community on ways to integrate sustainability into everyday living
Looking After Us and Our Place	Lake Macquarie Support Services, All Saints Belmont Anglican Church, Charlestown Caring Group, Morisset and Toronto Meals on Wheels Charlestown Meals on Wheels, Dora Creek Progress Association, Dora Creek Sustainable Neighbourhood Group, NSW State Emergency Service	Undertaken with grant funding from the Ministry for Police and Emergency Services, the program involved emergency planning for vulnerable people via social service organisations and working with the Dora Creek community to develop and pilot a community safety plan
NAIDOC Week	Various community organisations, government departments and agencies, and schools	A partnership to deliver events to celebrate NAIDOC Week, as well as providing funding to community organisations and schools to undertake activities
National Youth Week	Various community organisations	Council provided funding and worked with various community organisations to deliver nine events and activities to celebrate National Youth Week
OEH Energy Efficiency Training - Lighting and HVAC	OEH	OEH delivers energy efficiency training and provides follow-up technical support through preferred consultants and experts. Council has undertaken two training sessions and accessed support during 2015-2016
Over 55s Program (previously Annual Seniors Program)	Various community organisations, private businesses, government departments and agencies to deliver sessions	This is a free program for residents aged 55 years and over which focuses on health, safety and wellbeing. Sessions included: introduction to yoga; memory changes; mobility scooter safety; tai chi; hearing screenings; and lessons on using e-books, tablets and smartphones
Paint the Lake REaD	Narunbah, Early Links, Milabah Southlake Neighbourhood Centre, Family Insight, Newcastle Mens Shed	Supporting and encouraging the whole community to read, talk, rhyme and sing with children from birth so that they are more prepared for literacy and numeracy when they start school
Regional Capacity Building Program for Contaminated Land	Open to all Hunter Councils	A NSW EPA-funded reference group facilitated by Hunter and Central Coast Regional Environmental Strategy (HCCREMS). The program builds local capacity in the management of contaminated land issues
Seniors Week	University of the Third Age, Sing Australia	A partnership to deliver a concert for older people to celebrate Seniors Week
The Happy Lunch Box	NSW Environmental Trust, NSW EPA, Atune Health Centre, Kahibah Public School, Fennell Bay Public School, Lake Mac Libraries at Belmont and Cardiff	A six-week grant-funded program to help young families learn how to make healthy, affordable and waste-free lunches for children
The Place: Charlestown Community Centre	The GPT Group	The Place: Charlestown Community Centre is a positive investment in the community's future, particularly for Charlestown and surrounding areas. The management model for the facility is a governing Board comprising Council's General Manager, Mayor, Councillors, GPT Group, as well as general community and youth representatives. The Board employs a Centre Manager responsible for delivering the Centre's strategic plan
Tunbilliko Exchange program	NSW Police, Hunter TAFE, Belmont Rotary, NSW Department of Justice Crime Prevention Division, PCYC NSW, Minimbah Aboriginal Education Consultative Group	A pilot program to enhance and strengthen relationships between the Aboriginal community and NSW Police
You're Kidding Me	Early Start Speech Pathology, ATUNE Health Centre, Family Chiropractic Centre Charlestown, Julie Logan Music, Bronni Page Yoga, LifeWise Centre	Offering families access to free workshops and clinics to support their child's development

controlling interests and **service charges**

Controlling interest in companies

Council holds no controlling interests in companies.

Stormwater management charge

Council does not administer an annual charge for stormwater management services.

Coastal protection services charge

Council does not administer an annual charge for coastal protection services.

private **works**

Council has business units that carry out various private works on a cost recovery or commercial basis, both in and outside of Lake Macquarie City. Some of this work is carried out on private land.

The prices for this work are based on unit rates set by Council and incorporated in Council's annual Fees and Charges.

The Fees and Charges document is available at lakemac.com.au.



contributions and donations

Through the donation and financial assistance funding program, Council provides financial and in-kind support for not-for-profit groups and organisations, which have significant local membership or participation and/or are undertaking a project showing significant local benefits to Lake Macquarie.

Annual donations program

Group	Funds
Anglican Church of Windale	\$1000
Bonnells Bay Progress Association	\$200
Caves Beach Gym Inc.	\$1000
Coon Island Management Board	\$1500
Eastlakes Little Athletics	\$1000
Friends of Belmont Cemetery	\$1000
Lake Macquarie Live Steam and Locomotive Society	\$1000
Redhead Community Library	\$1000
Resident of Springvale Circuit, Cameron Park	\$65
Salvation Army	\$1000
Southlake Carers Inc.	\$1000
Sugarloaf and Districts Action Group	\$1000
Swansea Meals on Wheels	\$1000
Teralba Amateur Sailing Club	\$500
The Lake Macquarie Foundation	\$1000
Valentine Hydrotherapy Pools	\$10000
Wangi Ridge Preservation Board	\$1000
TOTAL	\$24,265

Donations and financial assistance program

Group	Funds
1st Teralba Sea Scouts	\$987
Central Newcastle Rugby League Club	\$500
Edgeworth Child Care Centre	\$250
Edgeworth resident	\$65
Eleebana Lions Club	\$375
Lioness Club of East Gosford	\$500
Lions Club Valentine	\$975
Lucky Stars Transplant Cricket Inc.	\$166
Marine Rescue NSW	\$1000
Novocastrian Swimming Club	\$500
NSW Justice Association	\$547.80
Resident Kahibah	\$25
Sailability NSW Toronto Branch	\$1000
The House with No Steps – Edgeworth Community Hub	\$75
Toronto Bridge Club	\$500
Toronto Uniting Church	\$256
Valentine Residents Association	\$190
Vivid Life Church	\$400
Wangi Wangi RSL Sub Branch	\$1000
Warners Bay Rotary Club	\$1000
West Wallsend District Heritage Group	\$1000
TOTAL	\$11,311.80

Rent subsidies

Grouping	Subsidy
Clubs, non-profit organisations and community groups	\$1,797,595
Child care centres	\$856,958
TOTAL	\$2,654,553

Community funding program

Council's community funding program recognises the vital contribution that community groups and organisations play in the development of social capital and quality of life in Lake Macquarie.

Funding is provided in three categories:

- **Seed funding** of up to \$5000 to help new community events get up and running; and
- **Growth funding** of up to \$5000 to improve existing events. Funding of up to \$4000 is also available to sporting and recreation clubs for events and activities they host under the banner of the Lake Macquarie Games.

In 2015-2016, Council provided \$113,890.20 through the program.

Seed and growth funding

Organisation	Amount
Alzheimers Aust NSW	\$4190
Australian Breastfeeding Association – Seminar and workshop	\$900.70
Avondale School Family Festival	\$1000
Belmont Chamber of Commerce	\$2500
Belmont Neighbourhood Centre	\$1500
Black Dog Institute	\$1520
Bonnells Bay Public School Parents and Citizens	\$1000
Boolaroo Speers Point Swim Club	\$3500
Caged Bird Exhibition and Judging; Family day and education activity	\$694
CALM	\$2450
Carols by the Lake 2015	\$3038.90
Cure Brain Cancer Foundation – Burpee Mile	\$190
Hunter Animal Rescue – Pet Picnic Day	\$1250
Hunter Valley Paddlesports Club – NSW Marathon Series	\$3910
Indian Association of Newcastle – Diwali Mela	\$400
Lake Macquarie Heritage Festival	\$5000
Lake Macquarie Lakefest	\$3595
Lake Macquarie Music Society – Eisteddfod and Festival of Choirs	\$4750
Lake Macquarie Suicide Prevention – Walk with Us	\$390
Lakes Athletics Carnival	\$1500
Miracle Babies	\$1810
Morisset and District Agricultural Association – Annual Show	\$1500
Newcastle Bangladeshi Community Inc.	\$900
Newcastle Bangladeshi Community Inc. – South Asian cultural night	\$400

Organisation	Amount
Nga Hau E Wha – Waitangi Day	\$1549
Northern NSW Schools Football Inc.	\$3140
Northern Settlement Services – Harmony Day	\$1240
Northern Settlement Services – Independence Day – Samoans	\$690
Northlakes Chamber of Commerce	\$4181
Northlakes Chamber of Commerce Inc. – Catch you in Cardiff	\$1681
NSW Rogaining – Paddy Pallin	\$3530
Opera Hunter	\$2384.70
Orchestra Nova	\$338.50
Redhead Surf Life Saving Club	\$5000
Southlake Christmas Spectacular	\$3965
The Canopy – Cameron Park Twilight Festival	\$1167.30
Toronto Chamber of Commerce and Industry	\$3564
Valentine Hydrotherapy Pool Inc.	\$2217
Valentine Public School Parents and Citizens	\$1000
Vedic Semiti Newcastle – Indian music concert	\$640
Wangi Area Sustainable Neighbourhood Group	\$1178
Wangi Carols	\$1700
Wangi Lions Club – Dobell Festival of Arts and Crafts	\$1500
Warners Bay Community Garden	\$613.60
West Wallsend Senior Football Club – 125 Years of Football	\$1000
TOTAL	\$90,167.70

Sponsorship

Our sponsorship program recognises the vital contribution that businesses, government agencies, and not-for-profit organisations play in the development of our social capital and quality of life through events and activities in Lake Macquarie City.

Applications are assessed against weighted selection criteria on a monthly basis, applications are then presented at a Council budget meeting for approval.

Organisation	Event	Amount
Athletics NSW	Fernleigh 15	\$17,500
Athletics NSW	Hunter Track Classic	\$5000
GC Management	Lake Mac Running Festival	\$10,000
Hunter Academy of Sport	SportsFest (Granted \$20,000 in total: \$10,00 from Sponsorship, \$5,000 from Community Funding, \$5,000 from Lake Macquarie Games)	\$10,000
Hunter Research Foundation	Regional research program	\$12,500
Hunter Surf Lifesaving	Summer of Surf	\$5000
Initiative Sport	Port to Port MTB	\$10,000
Lake Macquarie Music Society	Lake Macquarie Philharmonic Orchestra	\$5000
Lake Macquarie Rugby Union	Lake Macquarie International Rugby 7s	\$3000
NSW Department of Education and Communities	StarStruck	\$2500

Opera Hunter	The Marriage of Figaro	\$10,000
Rathmines Catalina Memorial Park Association Inc.	Rathmines Catalina Festival	\$5000
Surfest	Lake Macquarie Festival of Surfing	\$10,000
Swansea Chamber of Commerce	Swansea Spring Time, Swansea Carols and SwanFest	\$12,000
Variety The Children's Charity	Variety Children's Christmas Party	\$250
Warners Bay Chamber of Commerce	Music in the Podium	\$12,000
TOTAL		\$129,750

Lake Macquarie Games

Event	Organisation	Amount
3D Archery Event	Lake Macquarie Field Archers	\$280.50
Baseball Masters	Toronto Senior Baseball Club	\$810
Baseball Tournament	Toronto Junior Baseball Club	\$1475
Catherine Hill Bay Boardriders' Club	Catho Classic	\$650
Catho Challenge	Catherine Hill Bay Surf Life Saving Club	\$3070
Charlestown Netball	Twilight Competition	\$1350
Charlestown Netball Association	Netball Championships	\$1050
Eastlake Trampoline Sports	Lake Macquarie City Games All Schools Trampoline Championships	\$875
Lake Macquarie Rogain	NSW Rogaining	\$3383
Lake Macquarie Rowing Club	Rowing Regatta - Held at Berry Park	\$1610
Field Archery Championships	Westlakes Archers	\$682.50
Macquarie Hunter Athletics	Carrangal Shield	\$297.50
Petanque Competition	Lake Macquarie City Petanque	\$94.50
Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children	Kick for a Cause	\$1310
Sailability NSW Belmont 16's	Sailing for Disabled	\$500
Southlake Macquarie Amateur Sailing Club	Optimist National Championships	\$1097.50
Speers Point Sailing Club	Sailing Competition	\$220
Swansea Belmont Surf Life Saving Club	Lake Macquarie Games - u/8 to u/17 Surf Life Saving Carnival	\$2464
Toronto Croquet	Golf Croquet Doubles	\$778
West Wallsend Swimming Club	Swimming Competition	\$1725
TOTAL		\$23,722.50

Local Heritage Fund

Council offers small grants to owners of heritage-listed properties in Lake Macquarie on a dollar-for-dollar basis, to assist with the maintenance of their properties.

Heritage item address	Project description	Total project cost	Applicant's contribution	Local heritage funding
27 Appletree Road, Holmesville	Verandah restoration	12,693	8193	4500
10 Council Street, Speers Point	Brick work repair	4200	2200	2000
661 Freemans Drive, Cooranbong	Wall repair and window replacement	11,527.13	7527.13	4000
32 Wilkinson Road, Martinsville	Exterior repainting and minor repairs	6199.99	3699.99	2500
495 Martinsville Road, Martinsville	Exterior repainting and minor repairs	2750	1750	1000
TOTAL		\$37,370.12	\$23,370.12	\$14,000

Environmental Sustainability Grants

Through the Environmental Sustainability Grants program, Council supports residents who want to work together to make our City environmentally sustainable and reduce our impact on the local and global environment. In 2015-2016, Council awarded \$37,481 in grant funding to 15 community groups and schools.

Applicant	Project title	Grant funds awarded (\$)
Avondale School - Toronto Primary Campus Parents and Citizens Association	Sustainable Living Gardens	2750
Belmont Neighbourhood Centre	Habitat Hut Water Tank	2000
Birrilee Long Daycare and Preschool, Whitebridge	Birrilee Interactive Native Flora Garden	3000
Central Rankin Park Landcare	Rehabilitation and revegetation of a Riparian Zone of Blue Wren Creek	2645
Community Environment Network Inc.	Land for Wildlife Bushmatters and Wildlife Wonders workshops	3000
Glendale Early Education Centre	Outdoor Sustainable Learning Area	3000
Greater Charlestown Sustainable Neighbourhood Group	National Tree Day Native Tree Planting	2926
Green Point Foreshore Reserve Landcare	Orchids of Green Point Foreshore Reserve	1824
Jewells Primary School Parents and Citizens Association	Jewells Primary Green Team	1650
Lake Macquarie Rowing Club	Rowers are Green 2	3000
Lakeside School Parents and Citizens Association	Lakeside Sensory Rainforest	2900
Our Community Place Inc.	School Habitat Rehabilitation	3000
Peter Pan Preschool Wangi Wangi	Garden Bed	982
Southlake Community Services	Keeping It Green	2504
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Parents and Friends Association, Kilaben Bay	The Habitat Garden	2300
TOTAL		\$37,481

legal proceedings

Matter	Court	Costs paid	Costs awarded	Status
Australasian Conference Association	Land and Environment Court (Class 4)	-	-	Enforcement proceedings in respect of planning breaches. Resolved by agreement.
Australian Native Landscapes	Land and Environment Court (Class 4)	-	-	Enforcement proceedings in respect of planning breaches. Ongoing
Dalzotto	Local Court	-	-	Appeal against Penalty Infringement Notice (PIN) for unlawful development. Appeal upheld.
Glasson	Local Court	-	-	Appeal against PIN for not microchipping dog. Dismissed.
Gordon	Land and Environment Court (Class 4)	-	-	Enforcement proceedings in respect of planning breaches. Orders made against respondents.
Greenham	Local Court	-	-	Appeal against PIN issued for dog attack and appeal against dangerous dog declaration. Dismissed.
Griffiths	Local Court	-	-	Appeal against illegal dumping PIN. Dismissed.
Lovatt	Local Court	-	-	Appeal against dangerous dog declaration. Ongoing.
Maxymenko	Local Court	-	-	Debt recovery. Ongoing.
Misonpet Investments Pty Ltd	Land and Environment Court (Class 4)	-	-	Appeal against Council adopting the Ada Street, Cardiff Area Plan. Listed for hearing. Ongoing.
Newport Central	Land and Environment Court (Class 1)	-	-	Appeal in respect of deemed refusal of Intensive Livestock Agriculture DA. Ongoing.
Pasminco Cockle Creek	Land and Environment Court (Class 4)	-	-	Declaratory proceedings relating to consent conditions. Hearing completed, awaiting judgement.
Ridgemont Developments	Land and Environment Court (Class 1)	-	-	Appeal against deemed refusal of DA. Matter resolved by agreement.
Russell	Local Court	-	-	Appeal against PIN issued for dog attack. Dismissed.
Saville	Local Court	-	-	Appeal against PIN issued for dog attack and appeal against dangerous dog declaration. Dismissed.
Van Ruge	Local Court	-	-	Appeal against PIN issued for dog attack and appeal against dangerous dog declaration. Ongoing.
Waldrip	Land and Environment Court (Class 1)	-	-	Appeal in respect of DA approval. Dismissed.

overseas visits

Position	Destination	Purpose	Notes	Date	Cost
General Manager	Whakatane, New Zealand	LGCOG meeting	Attendance at Local Government Chief Officers Group meeting	17-19 Feb 2016	\$2700
General Manager	New Zealand	SOLGM Future Workforce Forum 2016	Presented keynote address on Australasian Management Challenge and developing future leaders	20-21 June 2016	Costs covered by host
Manager Organisational Performance	New Zealand	SOLGM Future Workforce Forum 2016	Attended Australasian Management Challenge and developing future leaders	20-21 June 2016	\$2029
Manager Sustainability	Idaho, USA	Field trip to Bunker Hill Superfund site to investigate contaminated land management practices	Insights informed development of the Lake Macquarie Lead Expert Working Group findings.	6-15 June 2016	\$3606

public access to information

The main purpose of the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* (GIPA Act) is to provide the public with access to as much information held by local government agencies as possible, in the circumstances of each request. The benefit of this legislation is to provide more open, accountable and transparent government.

Council provides information to the community in three key ways:

- open access to information that is readily available;
- access to information that can be disclosed to the public by informal release, for example where no third party personal information is involved; and
- access to information that requires a formal access application, for example where consultation with a third party is required.

Open access to information

Council releases a wide variety of information for open access through its website, including policies, planning documents, development application information, Council business papers and Council meeting minutes.

Proactive release of information

Council is committed to the proactive release of information on its website and through social media.

This year, Council used social media platforms Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube to distribute information to the community.

Each year, Council conducts a review, as required under Section 7 of the GIPA Act, to identify further information it will proactively release through its website, social media and other publications. In addition, Council continuously reviews the content available on its website to ensure it is transparent, accurate and informative.

Council's program for proactive release of information involves reviewing formal and informal access applications received to

determine the kinds of information the community is seeking. Customer Service Centre staff are consulted about the types of requests they receive through telephone calls and the service counter. Council has determined that the types of new enquiries received generally relate to a program or initiative that Council is undertaking at that time.

During 2015-2016, improvements were made to Council's website including improved online access to information and services.

Council issued more than 450 media releases during the year, along with summer and winter editions of *Your City* magazine, which was distributed to each household.



Redeveloped website

Council launched its redeveloped website during the year. The new site, which was developed in consultation with the community, industry and staff, provides improved usability, is more responsive to customer needs and encourages community engagement.

To improve the site, Council performed a content review to help create a simpler navigation structure and the site received a new mobile-friendly visual design. Council also conducted extensive prototyping and user testing.

The new website, launched in October 2015, has delivered improved information discovery for users and has increased access to online and offline services.

Property Flooding Information Summary

In May 2016, Council launched an online Property Flooding Information Summary. The online service provides details of the possible effects on the specified property from flooding, tidal inundation and predicted sea level rises.

Council also provided on its website a series of flood maps. These include the:

- Lake Waterway Flood Study Maps showing the extent of flooding for most of the foreshore areas and lake waterway;
- Flood Control Lots Map showing the whole lake and flood control lots;

- Inundation Hazard Map showing the area that may be inundated with a 0.9m sea level rise; and
- Lake Macquarie Catchments and Flood Studies Map – showing areas in the City for which Council has completed a detailed flood study or flood risk management plan.

This information may be useful when assessing risk for building or planning, or for providing evidence to help reduce insurance premiums.

Media Centre

Launched in June 2016, the Lake Mac Media Centre is a news hub providing an online space for Council to communicate and interact with the community, entertain and inform residents, discuss issues and advocate views.

The Media Centre integrates with social media such Facebook and Twitter, can present information from a variety of sources and formats such as YouTube and Flickr, and provides access to Council's latest Have Your Say community engagement campaigns.

A new email newsletter subscription service was created to allow the community to choose the news and information they would like to receive as an e-newsletter.

Fit for the Future

Council created a section on its Have Your Say site to keep the community informed about the NSW Government's reform process for local government, Fit for the Future, and the potential impact proposed changes on local residents.

Under the reforms, the State Government required NSW councils to submit a proposal by 30 June 2015 outlining how they would become 'fit for the future'.

Council's official submissions and responses were made available on the site, along with fact sheets and responses to frequently asked questions.

Fees and charges online search

In June 2016, Council replaced its lengthy Fees and Charges document with a searchable online database. The new web tool provides an improved user experience and makes finding fees associated with Council services significantly easier.

Implementation of the required software has also streamlined the annual preparation of the Fees and Charges.



Formal public access requests

In addition to open access and proactive release of information, Council provides information to the community in response to formal information requests under the GIPA Act.

Number of access to information requests received:

Fifty-two formal access applications (including withdrawn applications, but not invalid applications).

Number of access to information requests declared invalid:

One.

Timeliness of (valid)

applications: All applications were decided within the statutory timeframe (20 days plus any extensions).

Number of applications in which access to information was refused or granted only in part:

Twenty-one applications, comprising 16 applications that were granted in part and five that were refused.

Reasons information was not disclosed:

More than one public interest consideration may apply in relation to a particular application. The reasons recorded for the 26 applications refused or granted only in part are reported overleaf.

Number of applications reviewed:

Two.

Reasons against disclosure (public interest considerations)	Number received
Legal professional privilege	1
Responsible and effective government	5
Law enforcement and security	5
Individual rights, judicial processes and natural justice	13
Business interests of agencies and other persons	4
Environment, culture, economy and general matters	1
Outcome of applications received	Number received
Access granted in full	
Private sector business	6
Not for profit organisations or community groups	2
Members of the public (application by legal representative)	5
Members of the public (other)	15
Access granted in part	
Private sector business	1
Not-for-profit organisations or community groups	2
Members of the public (application by legal representative)	1
Members of the public (other)	12
Access refused in full	
Not-for-profit organisations or community groups	1
Members of public (other)	4
Information not held	
Private sector business	1
Information already available	
Members of public (other)	1
Applications withdrawn	
Private sector business	1
Members of the public (other)	3
TOTAL (*some applications had more than one outcome)	55

special rate variation

In 2012, Council received approval for a seven-year special rate variation to increase its general income in order to secure its long-term financial sustainability and maintain the assets and levels of service needed for our growing City.

IPART approved the variation in accordance with Council's Funding Option 2 – Maintain Services. Under this option, Council services would stay largely the same, with minimal improvements or upgrades, the condition of assets would be maintained at current rates, and an operating deficit would remain until 2016-2017.

For the 2015-2016 financial year, this special rate variation raised \$5.949 million of revenue, which Council used to maintain levels of service and invest in community infrastructure renewal and maintenance.

Council is currently on track to achieve a projected Operating Surplus in 2017-2018, with this position continually monitored and revised in line with required changes to our Long Term Financial Plan.

The actual Operating Deficit (before Capital amounts) achieved in the 2015-2016 financial year of \$15.959 million was a pleasing result.

Program of expenditure

The program of expenditure for the seven-year rate variation is outlined in Council's Long Term Financial Plan and detailed annually in the Operational Plan and Budget.

Outcomes achieved

Key outcomes achieved as a result of the variation are detailed in the 'our results' section of this report.

Asset renewal and maintenance expenditure

During 2015-2016 Council spent \$31.5 million on capital renewal works to restore existing assets to their original condition, and a further \$24.6 million on regular ongoing maintenance on infrastructure assets to keep these assets operating efficiently to ensure they provide the required levels of service at the most economical cost.

A full report on the state of Council's infrastructure assets is provided on pages 124 to 132 of this report.

Productivity savings achieved

In making its determination for the seven-year special rate variation, IPART commended Council for addressing financial sustainability and managing the City's infrastructure backlog. IPART also acknowledged

that Council is efficient and has a culture of continuous improvement.

In resolving to apply for the special rate variation, Councillors made a commitment to operational efficiency and an ongoing culture of productivity improvement.

Productivity savings achieved during 2015-2016 are provided on pages 116 and 117 of this report.

Addressing financial hardship

There was no significant change in the percentage of rates and charges outstanding. The outstanding rates and annual charges for 2015-2016 was 3.87 per cent, compared to 3.64 per cent for 2014-2015.

To assist any ratepayers facing difficulty paying their rates, satisfactory arrangements can usually be made to tailor payments to more manageable amounts. Council also offers the option to pay by a monthly direct debit to assist ratepayers in managing the payment of their council rate obligations. Residents of rateable properties who hold a Pensioner Concession card are generally entitled to a rebate on their rates.

productivity improvements

Area of operation	Improvement
City Projects	<p>Staff have activated an electronic plan lodgment and validation system, developed by NSW Land and Property Information (LPI). The system, known as ePlan, provides a more secure and efficient way to process land title plans, streamlines plan lodgments and will deliver both cost and time savings.</p> <p>Council staff, in collaboration with LPI, have been actively engaged in the installation of a geographical positioning system (GPS) reference station at Council's Administration Building. This reference station forms part of CORNet NSW, the state-owned system of GPS reference stations used by government and industry.</p> <p>The station will improve accuracy in survey of GPS results in the Lake Macquarie area, for engineering and property surveys, and for organisations that have GPS survey or asset capture equipment. Savings have been achieved for Council through removal of the annual LPI licence fee for the life of the reference station.</p>
CiviLake	<p>Capping and filling of the approved recycling site at Teralba and other approved sites resulted in the re-use of 33,880 tonnes of compliant material. This resulted in savings of \$7.59 million in disposal fees. These savings are based on disposal at Awaba Waste Management Facility at a rate of \$224 a tonne.</p>
Human Resources	<p>Productivity improvements of approximately 150 hours of staff time each year have been achieved following launch of a toolkit for internal job applicants.</p> <p>Recruitment advertising protocols were reviewed, resulting in more effective advertising of vacant positions, with no increase in costs.</p>
Integrated Planning	<p>Scanning of old planning documents and photos has been completed in-house, with collaboration between departments. The cost to outsource this work was estimated at \$10,000.</p>
Library, Leisure and Culture	<p>Lake Mac Libraries and Lake Macquarie City Art Gallery implemented a successful change in a recycling contract, resulting in savings of \$6000.</p>
Mechanical, Depot and Supply	<p>The Plant and Fleet Team implemented a condition-based replacement strategy for small plant. Small plant due for replacement is subject to mechanical condition assessments to determine if operational lives can be extended. The strategy has resulted in the doubling of service lives for a number of small plant categories. The extended intervals have resulted in \$150,000 in capital funds returned to the Asset Replacement Reserve with no appreciable impact on maintenance costs.</p> <p>An expansion of the steel fabrication area in the Council's workshop will allow the bus shelter fabrication program to be delivered at lower cost. By having the space to fabricate five shelters at a time (rather than one at a time as has been the practice), we estimate a reduction in costs of \$280,000 over the five years remaining in the program.</p>

Area of operation	Improvement
Sustainability	<p>Retrofits implemented under our Better Building Strategy are projected to save \$20,138 in electricity costs and 89.07 tonnes of CO₂-e annually. Retrofits were completed at 15 facilities during the year.</p> <p>An increased focus on illegal dumping compliance through the RID Squad program has led to \$73,600 in infringement notices being issued and clean up at the offender's cost of 100.4 cubic metres of dumped waste at 50 sites.</p> <p>Council's water leak detection and billing verification program saved Council \$379,000 in water charges and 152,672 kilolitres in billed consumption.</p>
Waste, Environment and Rangers	<p>The useful life of the Awaba Waste Management Facility was extended by excavating on-site material, at a cost of \$94,000. The material is used to cover waste to prevent odours and vermin, as required under Council's EPA operating licence for the site. Use of on-site material has resulted in savings of about \$1 million for the year.</p> <p>Council implemented changes to the missed bin procedure for our kerbside waste collection services to increase communication between collection and administration staff, and to improve customer satisfaction.</p> <p>Public amenity cleaning staff trialed a smartphone to enable improved communications with their coordinator. Further investigations are under way to improve tracking of cleaning activities.</p> <p>Purchase of a folding and enveloping machine for use in processing companion animal identification and registration forms has resulted in time savings of four staff hours a week, equivalent to \$6000 a year.</p>

fit for the future

improvement plan

In December, the NSW Government announced that Lake Macquarie City Council was, in its opinion, 'fit for the future' and able to remain a stand-alone council. The determination requires Council to report on improvements over a nine-year period.

In the first year, we have made significant progress in implementing actions that further strengthen our performance and financial sustainability and improve the services and assets we deliver for the community.

These actions extend and complement Council's ongoing program of productivity improvements, as detailed on pages 116 and 117 of this Annual Report.



First-year actions completed	
Introduction of food waste to the kerbside green waste bin	A community engagement program has commenced to prepare for introduction of the food waste service. A trial of the new service is proposed for October 2016. Council's green waste processing facility is on track to be commissioned, with full service to commence in 2017.
Diversion of recyclables from landfill	New 360-litre recycling bins were made available across the City. A total of 1133 new 360L bins were delivered in 2015-2016. Commercial recycling increased by 101 new services during the year.
Waste construction management	Development consent was granted for a quarry rehabilitation program.
On-site recovery of landfill cover material	Importation of cover material was substantially reduced due to identification of on-site sources. Detailed planning was completed for the landfill extension.
Energy and water savings	Soil and irrigation improvements were completed at 14 sportsfields. We installed 178kW of solar panels on Council's Administration Building.
Swim centre improvements	A new swim centre entry and booking system is now operational. A new knowledge management and business tracking system was introduced and staff trained. Trial of a new centre management structure has commenced and will continue until April 2017.
Family Day Care business model revised	A new business model introduced and additional educators were engaged.
Tennis court leasing and licensing	New court leasing and licensing fees now apply to 53 per cent of our tennis court facilities.
Fleet management improvements	An extended replacement interval for passenger vehicles was introduced and we commenced an oil additive replacement program.
Infrastructure backlog and asset maintenance	The 2015-2016 infrastructure backlog ratio was three per cent, which puts us on track to meet our target to achieve and maintain an infrastructure backlog ratio (replacement cost method) of less than two per cent within five years.
Improved modelling of financial performance forecast	We revised and updated the model for our Long-term Financial Plan. The new model provides increased confidence in our 10-year financial performance forecast.
Procurement improvements	Improvements to our supplier management and contract management were completed and staff were trained in this new approach.
Cash management strategy	An internal borrowings program was introduced.
NSW Rural Fire Service contributions	Revised indexation was applied from June 2016.
Business process reviews completed	Six business process reviews were completed for the following areas: customer service, financial management maturity, legal services, purchase-to-pay process, requisitioner process and internal borrowings.

sustainability and environmental levy

In 2009, the Minister for Local Government approved a special rate variation to increase general rates income for sustainability and environmental projects.

This funding has helped Council to:

- carry out on-ground works to protect and improve the health of Lake Macquarie and its catchment; and
- improve environmental sustainability of the City, focusing on water, energy, transport, waste, ecosystem enhancement, climate change adaptation, natural disaster risk minimisation, monitoring and reporting of environmental performance, and community engagement.

The special variation expired in June 2014. At that time, \$555,495 of special variation funds remained unspent, and additional income in 2014-2015 of \$62,564 brought the balance of unspent funds to \$618,059.

During the 2014-2015 financial year, \$176,720 was spent, and in 2015-2016, \$232,802 of the remaining funds were allocated to environmental improvement activities, of which \$53,926 was unspent.

The table opposite gives an overview of the project areas funded by the special rate variation in 2015-2016.

The total remaining amount of special variation funding of \$262,463 has been allocated to environmental improvement activities programmed for 2016-2017.



Project Area	Funds allocated 2015-2016	Funds spent 2015-2016	Activities
Ecosystem Enhancement	\$27,125	\$27,125	Undertook on-site verification works to validate vegetation mapping at various sites.
			Prepared a consolidated biodiversity map layer for the City.
			Undertook foreshore stabilisation and littoral vegetation works at Murrays Beach and Marks Point.
Governance and Audit	\$55,000	\$55,000	Set up e21 Energy Plus billing verification service to verify Council is billed correctly for energy consumption.
			Environmental Incident Tracking for Figtree Expansion Project.
Sustainable Living	\$48,000	\$48,000	Implemented improvements to irrigation systems at three sites to improve water use efficiency and effectiveness.
			Metering and clean energy regulator accreditation.
Environmental Security	\$102,677	\$48,751	Assessment and management of Pasmenco black slag contamination at high priority public sites.
			Undertook Flood Warning System maintenance and replaced a water level sensor at Stony Creek, Toronto.
			Constructed cliff stability and safety fencing at Redhead and Caves Beach.
			Prepared a scoping study for a foreshore voluntary house-raising scheme in Lake Macquarie.
			Lake Macquarie City-wide Flood Warning System - stage 2 high priority rain and water level gauge installations and upgrades completed.
Totals	\$232,802	\$178,876	

NB: No Levy revenue in 2015-2016 – Levy funds carried forward from the previous financial year

contracts awarded

Contractor	\$ Amount ex GST	Goods and services
AGL Retail Energy Limited	\$231,287	Supply of gas to amenities
AGL Sales Pty Limited	\$1,412,411	Supply of electricity to large sites and public lighting
ATI Australia Pty Limited	\$706,310	Hardware, services and maintenance support for microwave radio hardware, power systems, and networking systems
Chesterfield Australia Pty Ltd	\$259,817	John Deere 6090MC agricultural tractor fitted with John Deere front end loader attachment
Daracon Quarries	\$708,961	Supply of aggregate materials
Data#3 Group	\$164,509	Core client access software licenses
Dell Australia Pty Ltd	\$226,321	Leased computer hardware
Downer EDI Works	\$278,480	Pavement enrichment and rejuvenation works
Downer EDI Works	\$3,894,888	Supply, deliver and lay asphaltic concrete
Downer EDI Works	\$1,427,048	Supply asphaltic concrete
Fenworx Pty Ltd	\$4,989,171	Supply, deliver and lay asphaltic concrete
Fulton Hogan Industries Pty Ltd	\$183,721	Supply asphaltic concrete
Fulton Hogan Industries Pty Ltd	\$918,231	Bituminous surfacing
Gleeson Civil Engineering Pty Ltd	\$163,528	Mount Sugarloaf road rectification works
GW Building Pty Ltd	\$340,850	Refurbishment of the Swansea Gardens Lakeside Holiday Park amenities building 1 – stage 2
GW Building Pty Ltd	\$252,228	Construction of a recreation room and barbeque facility at Blacksmiths Beachside Holiday Park
GW Building Pty Ltd	\$259,567	Upgrade works to the Belmont North Neighbourhood Centre
Hitachi Construction Machinery Aust	\$244,454	Hitachi ZX180-5 wheel loader with 4-in1 bucket
Liebherr Australia Pty Ltd	\$458,305	Liebherr LR634 tracked loader
Metormix Quarries	\$778,377	Supply of pavement materials
Newcastle Commercial Vehicles Pty Ltd	\$1,097,804	Mercedes Benz Econic cab chassis fitted with Bucher Municipal rear loading garbage compaction body

Contractor	\$ Amount ex GST	Goods and services
Northrop Consulting Engineers Pty Ltd	\$659,730	Cameron Park Recreation Area design
Rees Electrical Pty Ltd	\$166,216	Auston Oval lighting upgrade
Renworx Pty Ltd	\$415,476	Sports field renovation services
Signature Custom Floats Pty Ltd	\$729,810	Supply and delivery of nine worksite caravans
SMEC	\$280,827	Lake Macquarie Transport Interchange construction phase support
The Green Horticultural Group	\$220,744	Sports field renovation services
Think Projects Group Pty Limited	\$221,175	Upgrade works to the Peacock Field amenities building
Think Projects Group Pty Limited	\$522,384	Refurbishment of Speers Point Library
Think Projects Pty Limited	\$194,102	Construction of a new storage shed and first aid room at Swansea Belmont Surf Life Saving Club
Turspec Pty Ltd	\$77,787	Sports field renovation services
Tutt Bryant Equipment	\$150,200	Bomag BW25 pneumatic tyred roller with hydraulic power divider

state of our infrastructure assets

Providing infrastructure that meets community needs and expectations is fundamental to the economic, social and cultural vibrancy of Lake Macquarie City.

The challenge in managing our assets is to maintain and enhance existing infrastructure while continuing to provide new infrastructure for our growing City.

Council's infrastructure assets were valued at \$2.69 billion at June 2016. These assets include roads, bridges, drains, footpaths, cycleways, parks, reserves, community buildings, childcare centres, libraries, swim centres and beach facilities.

Asset management plans

Through our Asset Management Plans (AMPs) Council takes a whole-of-life approach to managing infrastructure assets. Our AMPs identify the levels of service we currently provide, future demands on our assets, as well as planned improvements.

Expenditure projections and funding requirements are identified for the next 20 years, allowing for projected cost increases and growth in assets. This includes planning, creation, operation, maintenance, renewal and disposal of assets.

The AMPs are closely aligned with the Long Term Financial Plan to ensure that required funding is identified for the upkeep of our assets.

Six AMPs cover Council's key infrastructure asset classes:

- Buildings
- Drainage/stormwater
- Natural areas
- Parks and reserves
- Roads and bridges
- Traffic and transportation

Capital renewal

Capital renewal is usually major work that restores an existing asset to its original condition. The total amount spent on infrastructure capital renewal for the 2015-2016 financial year was \$31.5 million.

A key performance target relating to asset management is the Capital Renewal Funding Gap. This is the difference between the required renewal expenditure (which is based on a range of factors, including asset condition and remaining life) and what is planned to be funded in the Long Term Financial Plan.

The current Capital Renewal Funding Gap for Council's infrastructure is \$55.56 million.

A primary reason for the renewal funding gap is that, over past years, infrastructure costs have increased faster than Council's income.

A range of measures continue to be implemented to manage the funding gap over the long term, including:

- increasing expenditure on asset renewal including implementation of the IPART special rate variation;
- improving asset knowledge (performance, condition and remaining life);
- improving maintenance to extend asset lives and defer projected renewal;
- improving efficiency in delivery of maintenance and renewal;
- developing and using low-cost renewal methods;
- rationalising (disposing) of unnecessary and low-use assets;
- reviewing service levels; and
- redistributing funding allocations.

Expenditure on infrastructure maintenance 2015-2016	
Buildings	\$2,054,043
Drainage/stormwater	\$3,258,308
Natural areas	\$2,871,060
Park and reserves	\$8,316,194
Roads and bridges	\$7,402,130
Traffic and transportation	\$729,935
TOTAL	\$24,631,670

Maintenance

Asset maintenance is the regular ongoing work that is necessary to keep assets operating so they provide the required levels of service. Maintenance funding needs to keep pace with rising costs associated with the growing size and age of the infrastructure base, changing standards and increasing community expectations.

Asset management improvements

In 2015-2016 Council continued to make significant improvements to its asset base and asset management capabilities in line with its Asset Management Improvement Plan. The Plan was developed using the findings of an Asset Management Maturity Audit previously conducted by an external specialist. It identifies 42 key actions to ensure Council's asset management continues to advance. Target timeframes have been set for these actions based on the risk implications identified during the audit. Clear responsibilities for completing the actions within target timeframes have also been assigned.

Council's Asset Management Steering Group monitors implementation of the Asset Management Improvement Plan. This innovative internal Group was formed to oversee execution of the Asset Management Strategy. It provides a platform for staff from Council's Assets, Development Assessment and Compliance, Community Planning, City Projects, CiviLake, Integrated Planning, Finance and Sustainability departments to collaborate in pursuit of the shared goal of sustainable asset life cycle management on behalf of the community.

The Steering Group oversaw numerous enhancements to Council's asset management practices in 2015-2016, including:

- completing Asset Management Plans (version 7) for the City's infrastructure and community assets and an Asset Management Plan (version 4) for natural areas;
- further improving its capital works and maintenance processes to support Council's integrated project management system;
- continuing to expand the use of Council's GIS mapping system to complement Council's asset management systems;
- further assessing asset conditions to determine condition profiles for all asset classes including a representative sample of the drainage system;
- bedding down the new corporate estimating system to achieve more accurate and consistent unit rate and resource-based estimates for capital works and maintenance;
- undertaking further training to enhance asset management knowledge, skills and abilities across the organisation;
- updating information on key infrastructure that provides regional and national benefits where Council requires funding support from other levels of government;
- reviewing standard drawings and guidelines for managing donated and developer funded assets
- reviewing processes for the transfer of developer constructed assets to Council to ensure they meet Council's standards and requirements;
- developing an assets register for Council's commercial and residential buildings, consistent with the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australia International Management Manual;
- reviewing maintenance practices and programs for open channels and natural watercourses to reduce blockages, flooding and bank erosion;
- reviewing the process for monitoring and reporting works for fire asset protection zones in natural areas;
- undertaking an audit of Council facilities to review existing security configuration, identify security risks and recommend controls to manage the risks;
- reviewing and documenting procedures for processing of asset financial information;
- reviewing the structure of the Asset Management department to ensure it is best placed to meet current and future opportunities and challenges; and
- undertaking revaluations of a number of asset classes including swim centres, open space and recreational assets, valued at \$221.5 million.

During 2015-2016 Council's external auditors reviewed the systems and processes Council has in place for capturing, recording and reporting asset information. The purpose of this audit was to assess the adequacy of the information contained in the Financial Statements Special Schedule No. 7 Report on Infrastructure Assets. The results of this preparedness audit, as submitted to the NSW Office of Local Government, indicate that Council's systems and processes are adequate to meet the requirements.



Buildings

Council provides a strategic asset management system for all of its building assets, to enable the effective and efficient delivery of building related services to the community. Some of the major challenges facing Council in providing these services include meeting our growing City's need for an increase in infrastructure and balancing these needs with those forecasted on ageing infrastructure.

Council has made further progress in gathering and incorporating information regarding the needs of the user groups of public facilities such as community halls, public toilets, swim centres and libraries, combining condition ratings with serviceability and functionality, to ensure the best approach is taken. Managing this class of assets involves ensuring that our existing buildings comply with current

regulations and includes, but is not limited to, essential service regulations (fire ratings, correct egress), Australian Standards, the National Construction Code, guidelines for safe pool operations and retro-fitting of sustainability features to our buildings.

Buildings assets	
Halls	37 community halls providing meeting places for community groups and not-for-profit organisations.
Operating buildings	39 operating buildings, ranging from works depots and administration buildings, to Rural Fire Service buildings and State Emergency Service facilities.
Childcare-related buildings	14 childcare-related buildings and structures, ranging from full day care facilities, to family day care and operational structures.
Aged and disability service facilities	10 aged care and disability service facilities which provide support for seniors and people with a disability, including the Cardiff Senior Citizens facility and many Meals on Wheels operations.
Libraries	Nine library facilities, one of which is located at the Toronto Commercial Centre. We recently opened a new 'lifestyle' library in the main retail precinct of Cardiff.
Cultural buildings	Two cultural buildings: the Lake Macquarie Performing Arts Centre and the Lake Macquarie City Art Gallery.
Multi-purpose facilities	Eight multi-purpose buildings located in key locations throughout the City.
Aquatic and athletic facilities	Six aquatic facilities, and an Athletics Australia-accredited Regional Athletics Centre.
Public amenities	135 public amenity buildings.
Surf lifesaving clubs	Four surf lifesaving clubs along the City's coastline.
Sporting facilities	104 sporting facilities, providing for sports such as cricket, soccer, netball, tennis, rugby union and rugby league.



Drainage/stormwater

Council provides a stormwater network to enable safe and effective collection and disposal of stormwater. There are performance deficiencies of stormwater assets at several locations throughout the City.

Works to address these issues are prioritised systematically to develop a forward program for capital upgrade works.

Drainage/stormwater assets	
Pipes	632 km
Pits, inlets and outlets	30,493 items
Open drains	102 km
Stormwater quality improvement devices (SQIDs) and flood mitigation structures	671 items
Replacement value	These infrastructure assets have a replacement value of \$461.3 million.



Natural areas

Council manages an array of natural area assets. The area is largely bushfire-prone and Council has fire trails and asset protection zones to protect life and property from the risk of bush fire. The major issues facing the area are increasing costs, an increasing population and continued changes to legislative obligations.

The natural areas asset group provides vital safety, amenity and ecosystem services for the local community and broader region.

The major asset issues for the natural areas group are the extensive interface between developed and natural areas, the fragmentation

of natural areas into smaller sites and the lack of historical asset management for the natural areas group.

Natural areas assets	
Natural areas	About 4000 ha of natural areas consisting of approximately 1200 individual clusters or sites.
Trees	An unspecified number of trees located on Council-managed land, including streets, parks and reserves.
Bush fire protection	Bush fire protection assets, including 11 fire trails and 171 asset protection zones.
Replacement value	These infrastructure assets (excluding trees) have a replacement value of \$480.9 million.



Parks and reserves

Council provides a parks and reserves network to enable a diverse range of quality passive and active recreational opportunities for residents and visitors of Lake Macquarie. Many existing park and reserve services are reliant on associated infrastructure across parks, sports grounds, foreshore areas and cemeteries.

Management of these assets includes ensuring the existing network of infrastructure is replaced in line with the forecasted demands identified in the relevant strategies. These actions must also be balanced with a whole-of-life approach to asset management, including maintaining agreed service levels.

Parks and reserves assets	
Park play facilities	111 playgrounds distributed across parks and sporting grounds in the City.
Park foreshore facilities	31 jetties, 31 boat ramps, 5 marine waste transfer facilities and 19 fish cleaning tables.
Open space utilities	Includes bubblers, outdoor showers, barbecues, lights and lead-in poles.
Sport-specific structures and surfaces	Includes netball and tennis courts, tiered seating, dug outs and sports lighting.
Open space structures	Includes park furniture such as seats, tables, shelters, viewing platforms and fences.
Cemetery and memorial-specific structures	Niche walls, cemetery beams, war memorials and commemorations.
Replacement value	These infrastructure assets have a replacement value of \$81.9 million.



Roads and bridges

Council provides a network of roads, bridges and associated assets to meet the local transport needs of the Lake Macquarie community.

The condition of roads and bridges assets are assessed annually. Actions to address any

issues identified are prioritised systematically to develop a forward program for capital and maintenance works.

Roads and bridges assets		
Roads	1322 km	
Kerb and gutter	1764 km	
Vehicle bridges	Road bridges Park bridges	78 items 10 items
Pedestrian bridges	Road bridges Park bridges	36 items 80 items
Park viewing decks	14 items	
Underpasses	Three items	
Car parks	Sealed Concrete Gravel	298 items 16 items 83 items
Replacement value	These infrastructure assets have a replacement value of \$1.59 billion.	



Traffic and transportation

Council provides and maintains transportation infrastructure assets to serve the transport needs of local communities, including people with a varying range of abilities. Transport assets are integrated with Council's roads, drainage, parks and community facilities.

Traffic and transportation assets	
Footpaths/cycleways	533 km
Road/street furniture	883 items
Traffic facilities	2,753 installations
Replacement value	These infrastructure assets have a replacement value of \$116.6 million.

Councillors' and Mayor's expenses

Mayoral allowance	\$60,922
Councillors' allowances	\$303,278
Provision of dedicated office equipment (leased laptop computers, iPads, faxes, mobile phones and accessories)	\$3938
Telephone calls and communications	\$23,350
Councillors' attendance at conferences/seminars	\$29,452
Training of Councillors	-
Overseas visits including transport and accommodation	\$1282
Interstate visits including transport and accommodation	\$4093
Meeting expenses	\$18,919
Motor vehicle for Mayor	\$20,539
Motor vehicle for Councillors	\$16,189
Mayoral secretarial services	\$99,841
Councillor support service (one day a week)	\$17,570
Mayoral office expenses	\$3646
Councillors' vehicle allowance (for use of their own private vehicles/taxis)	\$5089
TOTAL	\$608,108

financial position

Operating result before capital

Council has reported an operating surplus before capital revenue of \$15.959 million.

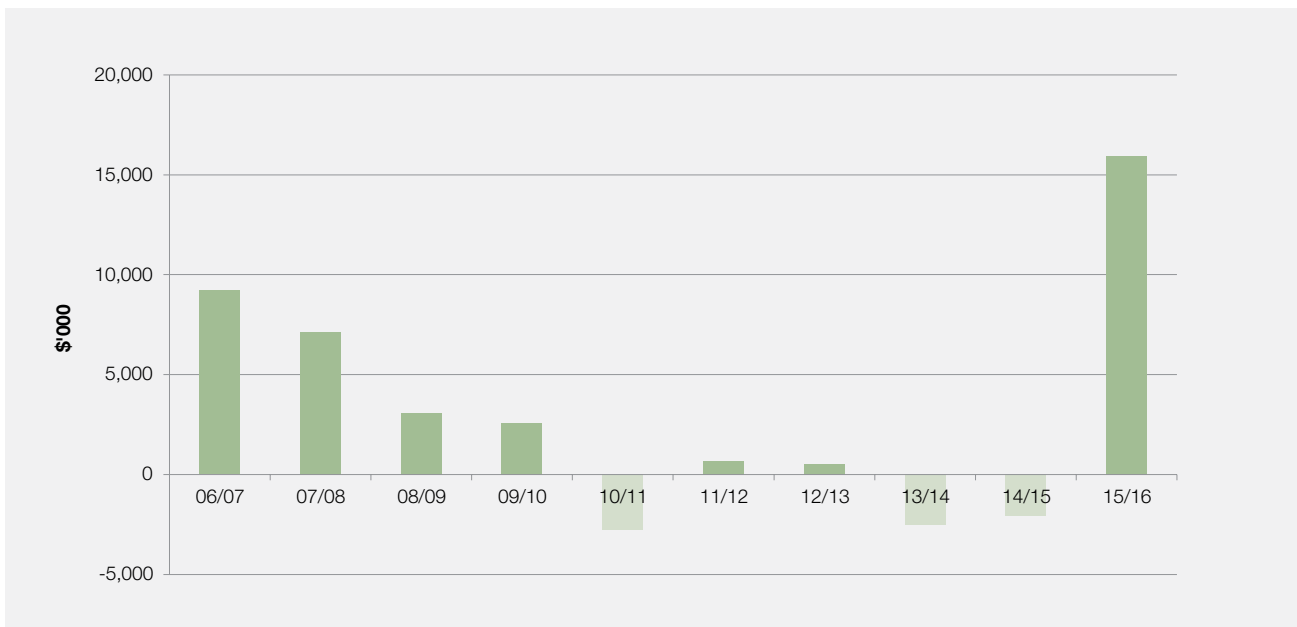
The operating result for 2015-2016, although pleasing, can be attributed to a number of one-off items.

Despite this surplus, Council's financial resources remain under pressure, often because of factors beyond our control, while the ability

to generate sufficient revenues to cover expenditure is limited by legislative requirements.

The seven-year special rate variation for Lake Macquarie City, approved by IPART in 2012, greatly assists Council in overcoming financial challenges.

Council's Long Term Financial Plan provides a 10-year blueprint for our continued financial stability. The plan forecasts an operating deficit in 2016-2017, and a return to surplus in 2017-2018.



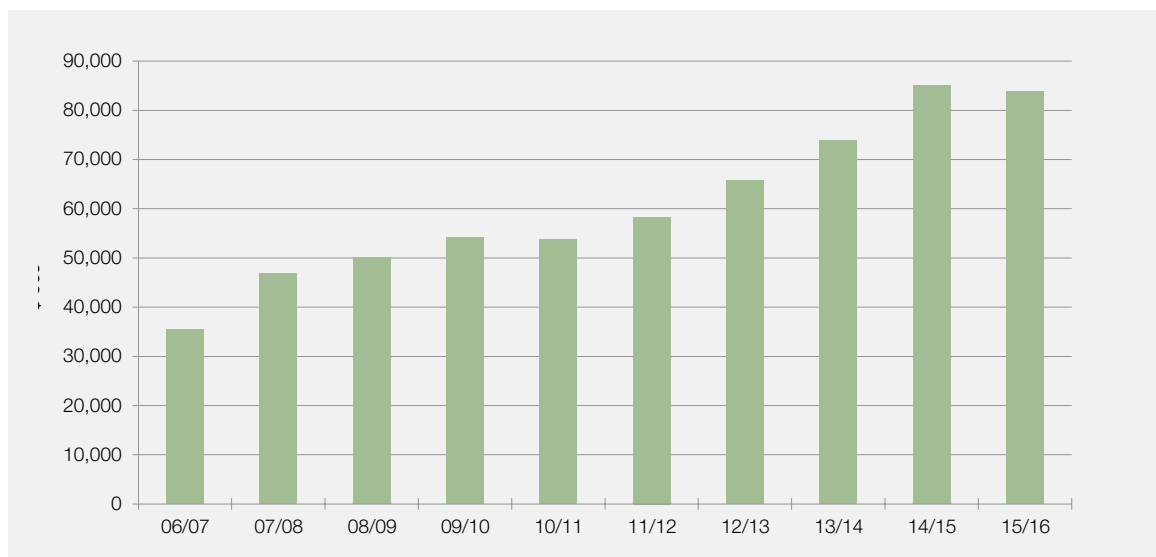
Gross outstanding debt

The amount of gross outstanding debt remains manageable and affordable, with total outstanding debt now just under \$84 million.

The level of new borrowings in 2016 was \$1.868 million, compared to \$15 million in 2015. The lower level of new external borrowings for 2016 was achieved through Council's use of unallocated reserves.

The level of debt remains affordable with Council's debt service ratio remaining strong and within an acceptable range. However, as a result of restrictions placed on us by cost shifting and constraints on income, we are still experiencing increasing pressure to fund a significant amount of new capital works from loan borrowings.

In an attempt to reduce the short-term financial impact of our borrowings, we have increased the term of our loans over recent years so that they more readily match the life cycle of the assets the funds are used to acquire or build. This action also supports the principle of inter-generational equity, which attempts to ensure that future ratepayers pay for the use of capital initiatives by way of future loan payments.

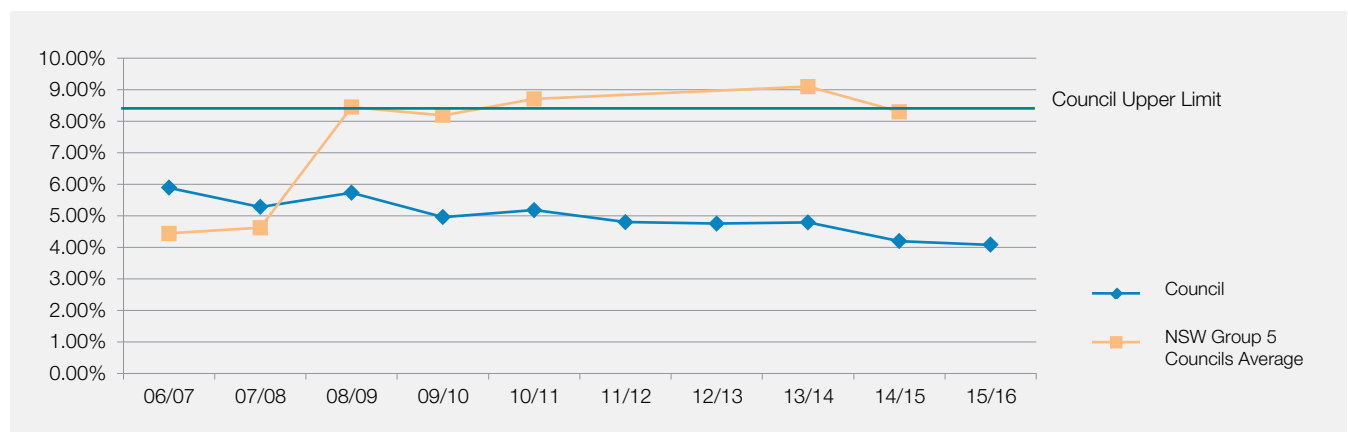


Debt service ratio

The debt service ratio compares the net debt service cost (including principal repayments and interest) to operating revenue and is a relevant indicator of the affordability of an organisation's debt position.

The debt service ratio for 2015-2016 was 4.08 per cent and as can be seen from the below graph, the ratio is in a downward trend and well below the NSW Group 5 Councils average indicating that current levels of debt remain manageable.

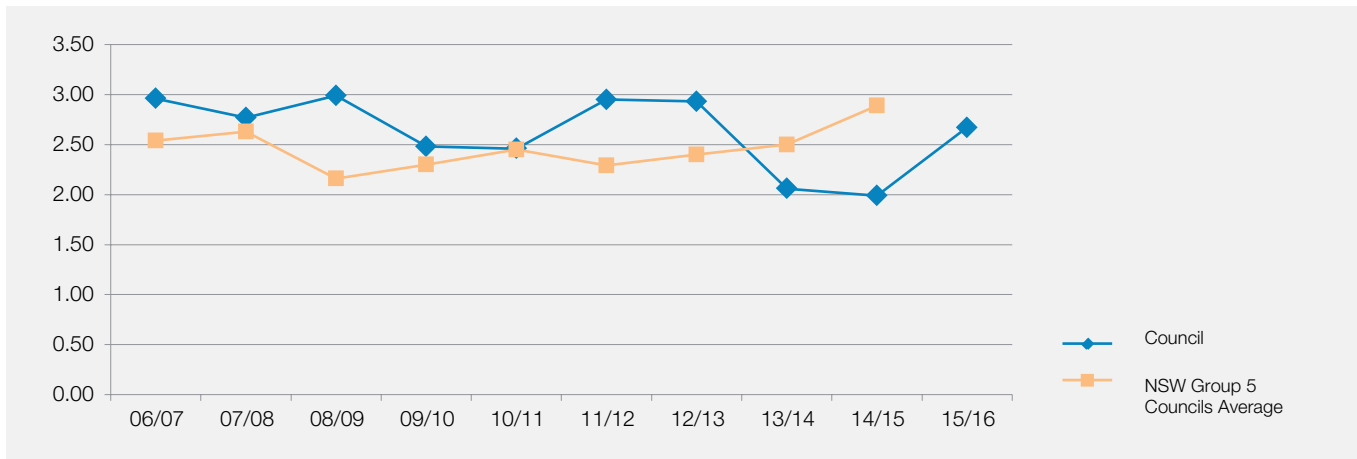
Increasing demands placed on Council to borrow additional funds to provide various levels of works demanded by our community may well see this ratio increase over coming years.



Unrestricted current ratio

The unrestricted current ratio is a measure of the ability to satisfy financial obligations in the short term and is a ratio of current assets, less externally-restricted assets, divided by current liabilities, less specific-purpose liabilities.

The unrestricted current ratio for 2015-2016 was 2.67:1, which is considered satisfactory and indicates Council has no problem in meeting all payments when they fall due.



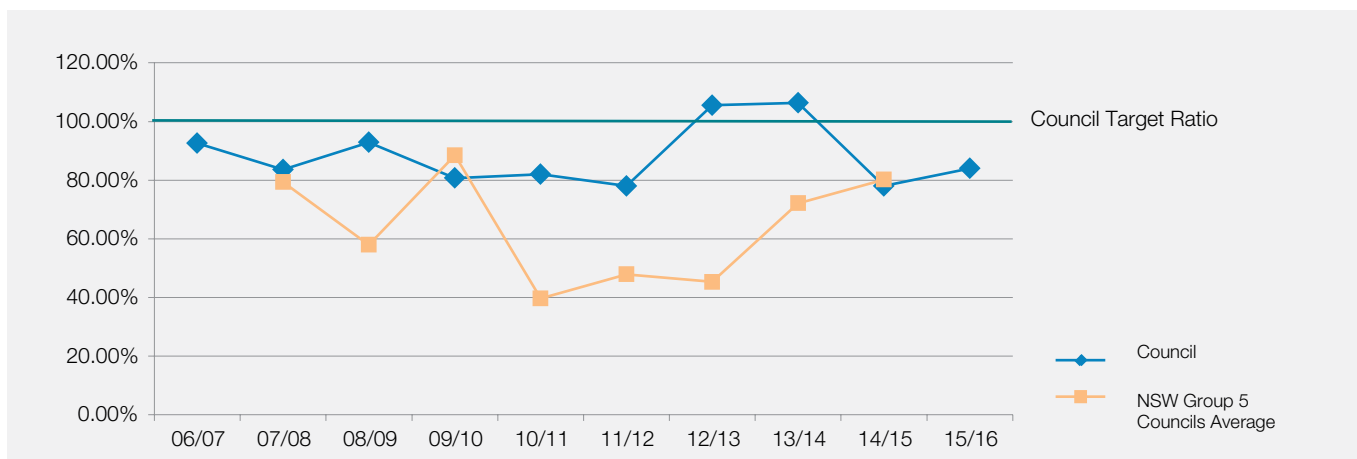
Building and infrastructure renewals ratio

The building and infrastructure renewal ratio was .84 (84 per cent) for 2015-2016 and was determined by dividing total asset renewals (building and infrastructure) by the depreciation charge. A ratio of one or greater (100 per cent) indicates

that we are replacing our assets at a rate equal to or greater than the consumption of these assets.

We are currently implementing sophisticated Asset Management

Plans to ensure we get an optimum return on each and every dollar we expend on asset maintenance and renewal. Over time, this strategy should see the trend of the above graph continue to improve.



(Data only available for last 9 years)

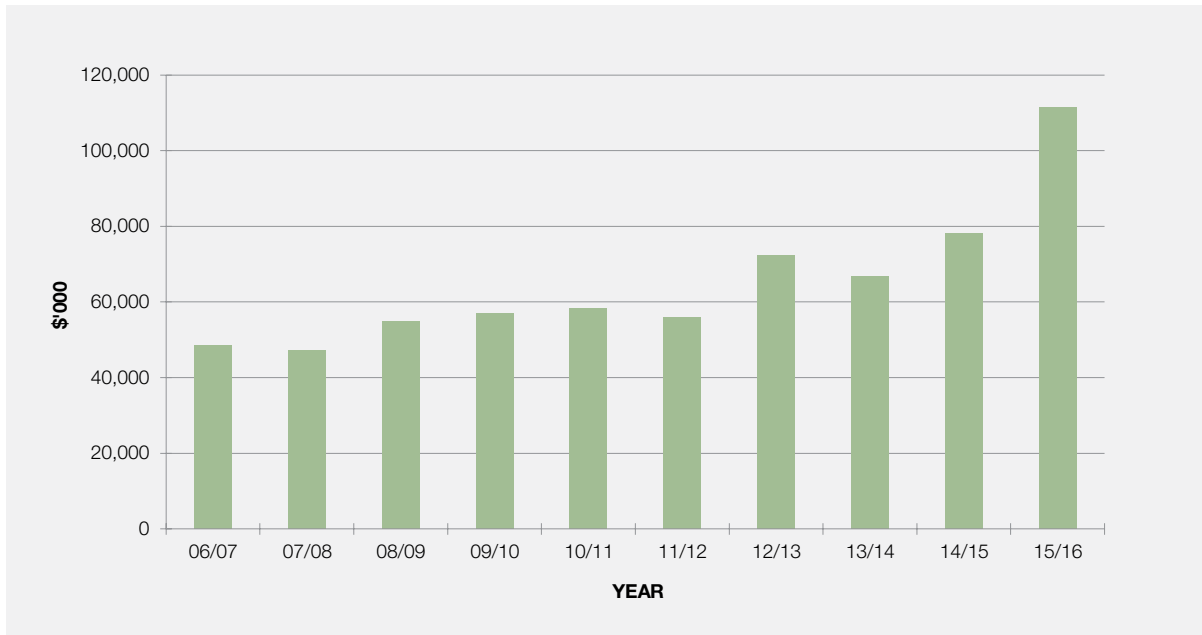
Internally restricted cash

The graph below shows the amounts of 'internally restricted' cash held by Council over the past 10 years.

Internally restricted cash is funds held by Council for specific future purposes as determined by the Council. Each balance of internally

restricted cash supports a number of different projects that have been approved by Council which are, for various reasons, awaiting commencement at some time in the future.

These funds are invested in accordance with Councils' investment policy until the expenditure is required.



financial statements for the year ending **2015-2016**

You can find the complete version of Council's Annual Financial Statements 2015-2016:

- online at lakemac.com.au, or
- by phoning Council's Customer Service Centre on 4921 0333.

City of Lake Macquarie Annual Report 2015-2016

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