



A SNAPSHOT OF OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT
JANUARY – JUNE 2020



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GENERAL MANAGER'S MESSAGE

Dear Councillors,

The General Manager's Report is a regular summary of operational highlights and other achievements for your information and interest.

This issue covers the period from January to June 2020.

The period has been marked by a series of storms and bushfires that occurred in the last three months of 2019 affecting Ku-ring-gai. The effects of these were then superseded by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

As a result Council facilities, events and operations have been impacted significantly during this period, although essential services have been maintained and facilities are gradually reopening as lockdown restrictions ease.

I'm proud to say our Council has risen to the challenges posed by the last six months and achieved some significant milestones.

Highlights include:

- ◆ Work on construction of the Lindfield Village Green commenced in April 2020.
- ◆ The Council approved submission of a planning proposal for the Lindfield Village Hub to the NSW Department of Planning for a gateway determination.
- ◆ A web-based portal called Life Online was created within two weeks and launched on 1 April 2020 to assist the community to keep doing business with Council and cope at home during the COVID-19 crisis.
- ◆ Planning got underway for a new Council website to be implemented by the end of this year.
- ◆ The Council approved a package of COVID-19 fee relief and \$100,000 in grant funding to assist the community and local businesses, with \$80,000 in grants dispensed to 23 community organisations.
- ◆ New playgrounds were completed and opened at Irish Town Grove Turramurra, Gordon Recreation Ground and Lindfield Soldiers Memorial Park.

- ◆ Construction began on the new regional playground at St Ives Showground and upgraded tennis facilities at Roseville Park.
- ◆ The new park and playground at Duff Street Turramurra called Boyds Orchard Park was completed and opened.
- ◆ An updated Climate Change Policy and accompanying action plan was placed on public exhibition for comment.
- ◆ Ku-ring-gai's draft Housing Strategy to plan housing needs for the next 20 years was placed on public exhibition for comment.

Details of these highlights and other items of interest during the period are contained within.

I hope you enjoy reading the report; if you have any questions please get in touch with me or the Directors.

John McKee
General Manager, Ku-ring-gai Council





The new playground at Gordon Recreation Ground in Werona Avenue opened in June



Ku-ring-gai's Housing Strategy will guide planning for new housing over the next 20 years

THEME 1 COMMUNITY, PEOPLE AND CULTURE



A healthy, safe, and diverse community that respects our history and celebrates our differences in a vibrant culture of learning



Children

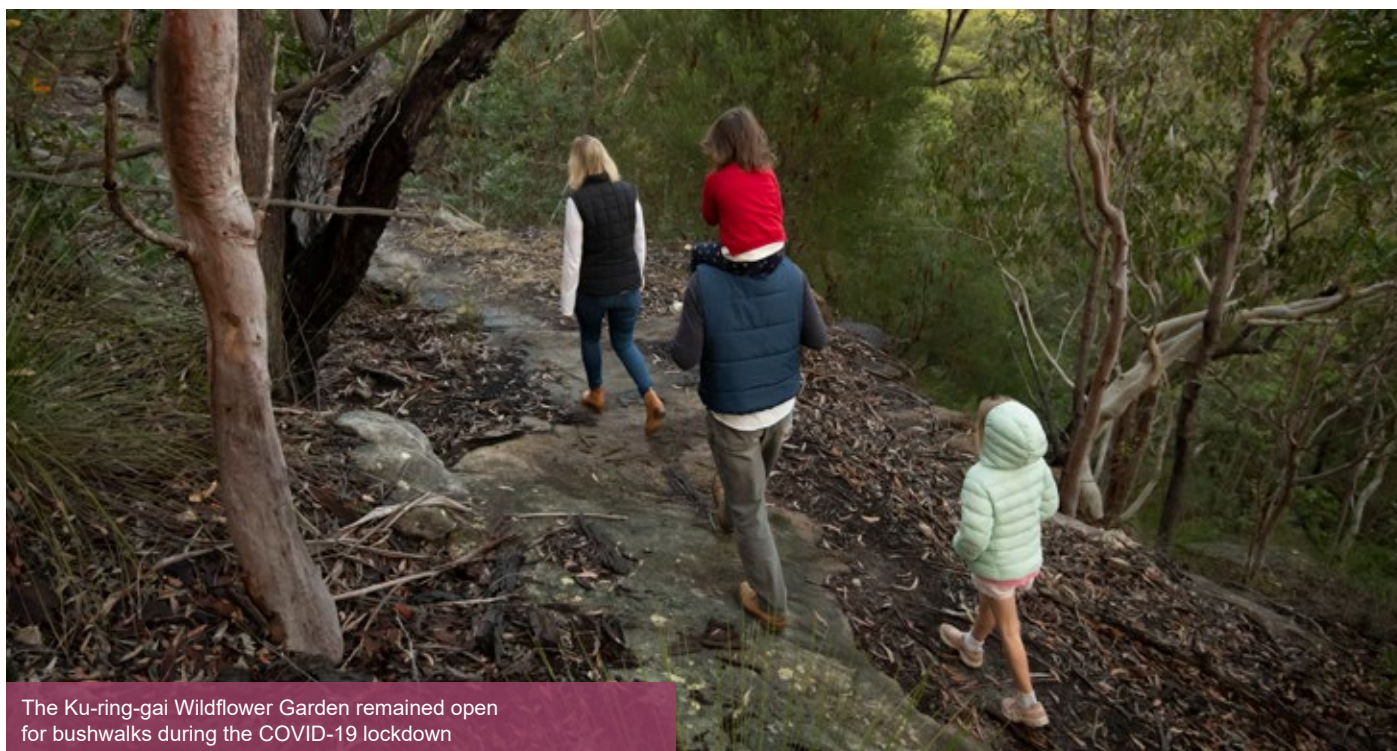
Vacation Care centres were kept busy during the January school holidays, with centres at St Ives, Pymble and West Lindfield all booked to near capacity. The centres offered children aged 5 to 14 a wide variety of arts, crafts, games, sports and excursions. The April vacation care service offered a centre based program due to the coronavirus pandemic with reduced numbers attending. An in-centre vacation care service is being offered during the July school holidays with no excursions due to Covid 19 restrictions. Council was advised that the NSW Government will provide \$75,000 in funding to support the school holiday programs between April and July, with further funding expected to be made available up to October 2020.

Thomas Carlyle Children's Centre has remained open throughout the period, with strict social distancing and hygiene rules in place for children, parents and staff. Council was advised that the NSW Government will provide \$202,814 in funding between April and July with further funding expected to be made available up to September 2020.

The Ku-ring-gai Family Day Care Service has remained in operation throughout the period, with strict social distancing and hygiene rules in place for children, parents and staff. Council was advised that the NSW State Government will provide \$49,000 in funding between April and July with further funding expected to be made available up to September 2020.

In April the Wildflower Garden introduced a virtual program of outdoor activities to replace its cancelled educational program and vacation care activities. Wild @ Home encouraged children to take part in nature play such as bark painting, a natural scavenger hunt and building a terrarium. The Junior Rangers program was also hosted online in May and June.

The Garden's Visitors Centre and Nursery reopened to the public in June. A contactless purchasing service for plants was offered has been offered by the Nursery since May.



The Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden remained open for bushwalks during the COVID-19 lockdown

Youth

In February the Council's youth services team sought tech-savvy 15-24 year olds to donate their time and teach older Ku-ring-gai residents the basics of iPads. However these sessions did not proceed due to the COVID-19 lockdown.

The Council's three youth centres at Turramurra, St Ives and Gordon all closed their doors in mid March and at the time of writing have not yet reopened. However as part of the Council's Life Online program, young people have been offered counselling, creative workshops and a photography competition online since April.

Planning for the St Ives youth precinct proceeded during this period. Work on the project will start in 2021 with the Village Green redesigned as a recreation precinct with a new children's playground and skate park. The public toilets and St Ives youth centre will also be upgraded. The design for the recreation precinct has been developed with the community's help, with young people and local residents contributing their ideas to the project as part of the consultation phase.

Seniors

Although most activities for the Seniors Festival in February and March had to be cancelled, around 40 community organisations, clubs and groups did gather for an Everything for Seniors Day expo style event at Turramurra to offer information, advice and 'come-and-try' activities.

Participating organisations included the Australian Plant Society, Sydney Wildlife Rescue, Computer Pals for Seniors, U3A, Table Tennis for Seniors and Sing Australia Gordon.

Around 500 residents aged 55 plus tried walking football, salsa dancing, chair yoga, indoor bowling and exercise classes. Presentations on how to stay in your own home for longer and volunteering opportunities were also part of the day.



Council staff from the Wildflower Garden, Library and Active Ku-ring-gai were there to discuss activities available for older residents and offered a workshop on how to protect your home from bushfires.

From mid-March services from the Council and allied organisations shifted to keeping older residents safe and cared for during the pandemic lockdown. An impressive number of offers to volunteer was generated by Council e-news and Facebook posts promoting the volunteering opportunities available in local service providers during this period.

Senior psychologist Lyn Worsley from the Resilience Centre led a series of online group therapy workshops for older residents who were feeling confused and anxious about the COVID-19 situation.

Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Community Transport provided a door-to-door service for older residents to shopping centres and Ku-ring-gai Neighbourhood Centre also offered older residents assistance with shopping.



Indigenous performers were part of the 2020 Australia Day celebrations

Ku-ring-gai Neighbourhood Centre and Lifeline Community Aid provided a phone contact service staffed by volunteers to arrange phone calls to isolated and vulnerable residents to check on their wellbeing.

Ku-ring-gai Meals on Wheels were awarded a grant through the Council's COVID-19 assistance program to provide a meals service for disadvantaged older residents, including those experiencing homelessness.

The libraries and rangers provided a home delivery service of borrowed library items to self-isolating older residents between April and June.

In June new program for older residents of virtual tours and chats was provided weekly to some of the world's most beautiful and fascinating places, followed by a group discussion. Guide books are mailed or emailed and seniors then meet by phone conference or Zoom to chat about each tour.

All Ability

Free music therapy workshops for children and adults with disabilities were hosted online between April and May. The classes were held on Zoom and participants made music using everyday items found in the home such as pots, pans and jars. Over 60 people registered to attend the workshops held via Zoom.

An online self-care workshop for parents and carers of a child with disabilities was also held in April.

Ku-ring-gai Council offered Studio Artes, northern Sydney's art group for people with a disability, a \$5000 grant for an artistic residency at the Wildflower Garden in St Ives.

Based in Hornsby, Studio Artes is a unique community organisation providing creative arts and life skills to adults with a disability. The group offers over 40 activities each week, ranging from art and dance classes through to breakfast clubs and social outings.

The creative residency will be at the Wildflower Garden for three months, culminating in exhibitions at St Ives Shopping Village and the Council Chambers. The body of work is being produced by the group through a series of excursions, research, walks and talks at the Garden.

Due to COVID-19 the residency was postponed for some weeks but the exhibition eventually took place in June at St Ives Shopping Village.

A workshop on bushfire awareness for residents with a disability due to take place in April has also been postponed.

Events

Community events during this period got underway with Australia Day on 26 January at Bicentennial Park in West Pymble.

The annual Australia Day celebrations included a citizenship ceremony, entertainment and games for the whole family, followed by an afternoon of water-based fun at the Ku-ring-gai Fitness & Aquatic Centre. Around 2000 people attended the event which was affected by extreme heat on the day.

Also in late January and early February, St Ives Showground was the only NSW location hosting The Big Bounce, the world's biggest jumping castle according to the Guinness Book of Records. Featuring a 300m long inflatable obstacle course, a giant 18m

high maze, slides, ball pits and a live DJ sprawled across 1,500 square metres the Big Bounce also featured numerous food trucks and stalls. Around 8500 attended this event.

For the first time the Council planned a series of events to mark Lunar New Year during January and early February. These included cultural performances, free language and calligraphy classes and a night noodle market. However due to the emerging coronavirus crisis in Australia and overseas, Ku-ring-gai's south-east Asian community asked for most events to be cancelled. The night noodle market proceeded at St Ives Village Green with around 20 stallholders participating and was well received by the local community.

A one-off performance of Shakespeare's Macbeth was performed for a sell-out crowd of more than 400 people at Lambert's Clearing at the Wildflower Garden in February.

St Ives Showground hosted a two-day exhibition of small home living on Saturday 7 and Sunday 8 March.

The Tiny House philosophy is part of a social trend of simplifying lives by reducing the size and therefore the resource consumption of homes without sacrificing quality of life. Over 100 exhibitors and 8000 people attended the Tiny Homes Carnival, showing the latest innovations in tiny home living and how to make a successful transition to small and mobile homes.

The Council's first ever events internship was completed between September 2019 and May 2020 for the International College of Management Sydney, with undergraduate Milly Gupta developing her skills with the events team while studying for a Bachelor of International Tourism and Events.

Since the lockdown commenced in mid-March, most other community events have either been postponed or cancelled.

These include Festival on the Green, the Wildflower Art & Garden Festival and St Ives Medieval Faire. Citizenship ceremonies are suspended until further notice.

ANZAC Day was commemorated through an invitation to school-aged children to send messages in the form of a story, poem, letter or artwork to serving members of the armed forces. A special Anzac storytime was hosted on the Council's website and children encouraged to make ANZAC craft to display in a window on Anzac Day. Council also encouraged Ku-ring-gai residents to participate in the nationwide Anzac Day driveway commemoration and a video was posted online of Councillors expressing their thoughts on ANZAC Day.

The Council's events team is continually reviewing its event program in the light of COVID-19 directives issued by the state and federal governments, with a view to scheduling some public events by the end of year.



The Big Bounce drew nearly 9000 people to the Showground

Art Centre

During the January school holidays Ku-ring-gai Art Centre hosted a full program of activities and classes for school-aged children, including pottery workshops, printmaking, jewellery making, sewing, drama, writing, and gardening.

The Arts Centre temporarily closed its doors in mid-March due to the COVID-19 situation and reopened in mid-June. During the lockdown the centre has hosted online exhibitions called Green Dream and Ancient and Modern. It has also offered virtual tours of its tutors' studios which are ongoing.

Libraries

Ku-ring-gai libraries held a variety of activities for children during the January school holidays.

Library branches offered workshops on animation and coding for primary school aged children which were all booked out.

In January and February the library launched its 75th birthday celebrations and also prepared to host a number of events and workshops to celebrate the Lunar New Year. However due to the emerging coronavirus crisis these were ultimately cancelled.

In mid-March all four libraries were closed to the public, leading to a surge of interest in e-library services. By early April library staff began streaming weekly storytime sessions on Facebook and uploading them to YouTube. Libraries also hosted virtual book clubs, an online Lego challenge, online jigsaw puzzles and librarians film reviews and recommendations. The e-library of films, books and magazines was boosted with additional content to help library members unable to access libraries.



Library staff worked in cooperation with Council rangers to deliver the contactless Knock and Drop service. This service delivered library items to hundreds of local residents at the height of the pandemic lockdown. In early June the libraries switched to a Click and Collect service whereby residents could reserve library items online and then collect from their nearest branch. Libraries were open for limited times during the week to provide this service.

On 29 June all branch libraries commenced a staged reopening of services to the public, including pre-booked two hour study sessions, face-to-face borrowing and appointments for research. At the time of writing libraries are awaiting approval for a full reopening of all services. Library events and Justice of the Peace services remain suspended.



Council rangers and librarians teamed up to create a home delivery service for library items called Knock and Drop during the lockdown



The Canoon Road netball courts now have new lighting and a physio shelter

Recreation

The Active Ku-ring-gai program continued during January and February with low-cost physical activities for residents of all ages and fitness levels. Activities and sports ranged from Yoga and Tai Chi to tennis and outdoor fitness classes. Active Ku-ring-gai was suspended in March and at the time of writing is planned to recommence with Junior Golf in the July school holidays and all other classes from the beginning of Term 3.

The annual Sports Forum with local sporting groups to discuss issues and projects affecting them was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Environmental assessments and consultation proceeded during this period on a proposed synthetic sportsfield at Barra Brui Oval St Ives. Last year the Council voted to reallocate development funds known as Section 94 contributions towards the environmental assessment, planning approvals, consultation, and other services for the Barra Brui project.

In mid-March all recreational facilities including playgrounds were closed to the public during the COVID-19 lockdown. The Council owned golf courses were allowed to reopen at North Turramurra and Gordon in April, leading to a higher than normal visitation rate. Council staff reopened all playgrounds, outdoor gyms, St Ives skate park and public tennis courts in a 24 hour period during mid-May. At the end of May sportsgrounds were reopened for training only in groups of ten or less and at the time of writing community team-based sport has not yet been permitted to resume.

During this period lighting for nine netball courts in addition to pathway lighting, a physio shelter and an additional pavilion were installed at the Canoon Road Recreation Area.

This project was delivered in partnership between Council, Ku-ring-gai Netball Association and the NSW Government through its My Community Projects scheme. The government contributed \$200,000 towards the supply and installation of the lighting.

The official opening was scheduled for the commencement of the netball season in April. However due to the COVID-19 situation this has been postponed until community sport resumes.

During the COVID-19 lockdown 67 tennis courts in 20 locations were closed for six weeks. Regular communication was provided to annual and permanent hirers with updates on the status of the courts. All court hirers have now returned and refunds have been processed for the closure period.

Work is well underway on a new single storey tennis pavilion at Roseville Park. The new building will have change rooms, accessible toilets, a kitchenette, office and storage space and an outdoor sheltered forecourt. It is expected to reopen to the public by summer this year.

THEME 2 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT



Working together as a community to protect and enhance our natural environment and resources



Environmental volunteering

All work on the 150 Bushcare and Streetcare sites involving over 600 volunteers ceased during the COVID-19 lockdown. Face-to-face community education and events funded by the Environment Levy were also suspended. However Council staff moved quickly to create an online events program and continued engaging with the community on environment and sustainability issues, ensuring that volunteers are ready to recommence their valuable work as restrictions continue to ease.

Despite the lockdown, the Council offered grants totalling \$50,000 to community groups and individuals for environmental projects in the local area between April and May.

The Environmental Levy Grants are distributed as a way of delivering community-based projects in local neighbourhoods.

The grants program is open to community groups, schools and individuals who need support for an environmental project in Ku-ring-gai. Projects may be ongoing, or a new initiative that requires start-up funding to get off the ground.

A total of \$50,000 in funding was on offer for projects worth up to \$5000 with potential funding available for larger projects. Projects that have previously received funding include native bee hives, bush regeneration work, community gardens, school education projects, wildlife audits and recycling initiatives.

Climate change

Due to the high public interest in bushfires, between January and February around 20 bushfire awareness and planning workshops were co-hosted with the RFS. Over 400 local residents, representatives from schools and childcare centres and other community organisations attended.

The heightened awareness of bushfire risk led to a doubling of traffic to the Climate Wise Communities website at climatewisecommunities.com.au with over 3000 accessing the online checklist for bushfire planning. The online checklist



enables residents to assess their vulnerability and develop action plans to strengthen resilience to extreme weather events such as bushfire, floods, storms and heatwaves.

Between March and June the Council offered rebates of up to \$1000 for properties in bushfire prone areas so owners could retrofit their properties to better protect them against bushfires. Over 14,000 houses in Ku-ring-gai are located in high risk zones and are eligible to apply for the rebate.

Homeowners could apply for up to \$1000 in funding to go towards items such as toughened window glass, gutter shields and sprinkler systems.

During this period the Council's Climate Change Policy and Action Plan was revised and updated. The Council is setting a target of net zero emissions by 2040 or earlier, aligned with the objectives of the Paris Agreement and the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees.

A range of solutions such as electric vehicles and renewable energy are proposed through the policy to reduce organisational greenhouse gas emissions and help support the local community in achieving zero emissions over the next 10-20 years.

The draft policy and accompanying action plan was placed on public exhibition between May and June.

Water

Water Smart rebates were offered to residents during this period to make improvements which reduce their water bills and improve the local environment. Rebates of up to \$1000 are available for installing green roofs, rainwater tanks, rainwater gardens and permeable surfaces around their home. The rebates program is funded by the Environmental Levy.

During March residents and business owners were asked to share their memories of flooding events for a new flood study and management plan.

The Middle Harbour Southern Catchments Flood Study and Plan is expected to be completed later this year and will guide the direction of future floodplain management in Ku-ring-gai.

The Middle Harbour Southern Catchments cover the areas of Roseville, Lindfield and Killara east of the Pacific Highway.

The Council has engaged independent consultants to collect data for the flood study and crucial to this will be residents' memories of previous flooding events.

Of particular interest were residents who have lived in the catchment areas for between 10 and 30 years, as they will have experienced a number of flood events.

This project is being supported by the NSW Government's Floodplain Management Program.

Energy

The Council expanded its Energy Smart rebates to include a broader range of energy management solutions for the home.

Rebates of up to \$2000 were offered during this period for solar panels and batteries, solar hot water, insulation and window retrofits. The rebate program is funded by the Environmental Levy.

In May three electric vehicles replaced petrol-driven vehicles as part of an overall low emission plan that could ultimately see the majority of the Council's fleet powered by electricity.

Two Renault Kangoo vans and one Hyundai Ioniq went into service for delivery of supplies and use by staff to conduct site visits. The vehicles are recharged at charging stations at the Council's Depot in Pymble before going on the road.



Between October and March Council staff managed the waste impacts generated by bushfires and storm damage

Community education

The Council's Loving Living Ku-ring-gai program of community workshops and events was suspended in mid-March due to the COVID-19 lockdown and at the time of writing has yet to recommence.

However by April staff had assembled online environmental education sessions delivered through the Council's website and these are ongoing.

Sessions included winter warming for the home, growing vegetables and herbs from food scraps, home baking, reducing energy and water costs at home, solar batteries and heat pumps and keeping native bees.

A proposal to create artworks out of sustainable materials for the Wildflower Festival sculpture walk as a permanent fixture was considered during this period. The Festival and sculpture walk art competition has had to be cancelled this year due to COVID-19.

Waste

The normal collection service for hazardous household chemicals scheduled for May was postponed to October due to the COVID-19 situation.

A new waste strategy for Ku-ring-gai was placed on public exhibition between December and early February, in preparation for a new waste contract to come into effect in 2021.

The draft strategy was developed after consultation with residents and a survey to assess satisfaction levels with current waste services.

The independent survey revealed a high level of satisfaction with Ku-ring-gai's waste services, with 91% of residents satisfied or highly satisfied.

The draft waste strategy proposed the following changes:

- ◆ A bulky clean-up service of four a year for each household to reduce waiting times. Bulky waste is defined as large household furniture items and whitegoods.
- ◆ The introduction of a booked bulky green waste service to remove larger items of vegetation such as tree branches.
- ◆ Including a kerbside recycling collection for e-waste, mattresses and metals, in line with the bulky waste collection.
- ◆ Consideration of a weekly green waste collection service to further assist with bushfire protection.
- ◆ Enhanced community education for waste reduction and recovery such as composting.
- ◆ Providing further research and development into the use of recycled waste such as soft plastics, glass and toner cartridges for road resurfacing.

Following the public exhibition period feedback was incorporated into the final strategy which was adopted by the Council in April.

Ku-ring-gai was declared a natural disaster area following the bushfire emergency in the Canoon Road area of South Turramurra in November and as a result, the waste levy was waived until 29 February for residents wishing to dispose of items damaged during the bushfire emergency.

During this period Council's compliance staff have refocused efforts on reducing the numbers of abandoned shopping trolleys, concentrating on the St Ives shopping precinct. Abandoned trolleys are being monitored and staff are liaising with local businesses to reduce incidences of abandoned trolleys near the Shopping Village. In June a community education program was planned to further reinforce the message to take the trolleys back to shops.

Biodiversity

Universities and Ku-ring-gai Council are working together on a unique experiment that aims to track the health of trees and plants in local urban areas.

As a result a 'Living Lab' was planted in April at Robert Pymble Park with the aim of identifying what kinds of plants will thrive in the cities of the future, as well as measure benefits such as their ability to attract wildlife and increase biodiversity.

The Ku-ring-gai Living Lab was planted with a selection of tree and shrub species and their health will be monitored over a two year period to determine each species susceptibility to climate change.

Tree species planted include the Blueberry Ash, Crepe Myrtle, Smooth Barked Apple and the Brush Box.

Between June and July Ku-ring-gai residents are being asked to participate in a citizen science project coordinated by the University of Sydney surveying what wildlife is visiting local gardens.

The survey asks residents to observe wildlife visiting their garden, describe what plants they eat and if any methods are used to protect plants.

Wildlife common to Ku-ring-gai gardens include brushtail and ringtail possums, swamp wallabies, brush turkeys, long-nosed bandicoots and grey-headed flying foxes. Residents are also being asked to report rabbit sightings.

The University of Sydney team led by Professor Clare McArthur will use the research obtained from the survey to develop new methods to attract or deter wildlife from plants, including threatened species.

In April it was announced that a Council project using concealed cameras in bushland to map the movements of feral rabbits had yielded an unexpected sighting. A large adult wombat was captured during night time on camera foraging for food in the bushland area in St Ives late last year.

The wombat is believed to have made its home in suburban bushland and Council staff are unsure if it has a mate or offspring.

The exact location of the wombat sighting is not being revealed due to fears of human interference.

Ku-ring-gai residents can register their interest between June and November to host a native bee hive from the Council.

Ku-ring-gai Council's 'bee lottery' is being trialled this year in response to the huge demand from local residents to participate in the native bee hive program.

This year residents can place their details on a waiting list from June until 21 November, with names drawn at random to receive a native bee hive in December if there are sufficient hives available.

Companion animals

Residents adjoining Toolang Sportsground in St Ives Chase and Bryce Sportsground in St Ives were asked their opinion on creating leash-free dog parks at both grounds in June. The proposed leash-free areas are being considered by the Council as alternatives to existing dog parks at Barra Brui Sportsground and Warrimoo Oval in St Ives.

Barra Brui has been identified as a potential new base for regional hockey and Warrimoo Oval is extensively used by a number of sports during winter.

Bryce and Toolang Sportsgrounds could be suitable locations for off-leash areas as they are under-used as sportsfields and in close proximity to Barra Brui Sportsground and Warrimoo Oval.

In April dog-owners in the vicinity of Toolang Sportsground petitioned the Council to convert the ground into a dog park. Comments from the general public are open until 7 July.

In January Council staff began offering advice to owners at dog parks in the local area, as well as a free talk by a senior vet on the best dog to buy for your family.

The free dog talks at local dog parks were planned to take place throughout the year at several locations. The talks offered dog-owners information, services and free giveaways. One dog talk was held in February but due to COVID-19 four other dog talks had to be cancelled.

A free talk at Turramurra Library was also hosted in February with senior vet Dr Prue Honson. Dr Honson discussed the merits of pure-breds versus rescue or mixed breeds, where to purchase or rescue a dog from and managing interactions between children and dogs.

In June around 600 local owners of dangerous/restricted dogs and non-desexed cats were advised by letter of forthcoming changes by the NSW Government to ownership of these animals. Changes to legislation by the government means that owners must apply for an annual permit in addition to lifetime registration by 1 July 2020.

Between January and May, dog attacks in Ku-ring-gai increased by 44% compared with the same period last year. This rise coincides with the period where many residents were at home due to COVID19 restrictions.

Operating procedures for dog attack investigations were temporarily amended due to COVID19 to ensure contactless procedures.



THEME 3 PLACES, SPACES & INFRASTRUCTURE



A range of well planned, clean and safe neighbourhoods and public spaces designed with a strong sense of identity and place.



Mayor Jennifer Anderson 'turned the first sod' in June at the site of the Lindfield Village Green

Lindfield Village Hub

During this period the tenders received from a shortlist of preferred tenderers for the Hub project were evaluated and a report on the assessment was presented to the Council in June.

Located along Woodford Lane and in the Lindfield local centre, the Lindfield Village Hub will be a combination of public spaces, a local park and plaza, community facilities including a new library and community centre, car parking, residential housing, retail and dining.

During this period the Council also approved the submission of the planning proposal for the Lindfield Village Hub to the NSW Department of Planning Industry & Environment for a gateway determination.

Lindfield Village Green

Following completion of the pre-construction dilapidation inspections of properties adjoining the site, work on the Lindfield Village Green project began at the end of April.

The Village Green will transform the public car park at Tryon Road into a new community space that could feature outdoor dining, markets and music. Three levels of short and long stay parking will be underground and the Village Green is expected to open next year.

Council staff liaised with businesses located on the perimeter of the site to assist them to continue trading during construction. Signage and hoardings directing vehicles to alternative parking sites have been installed and a letterbox drop of properties in Killara, Roseville and Lindfield was conducted to advise residents of parking changes during construction.

Work on the new regional playground at St Ives Showground will be completed by October



In June a smoking ceremony conducted by Brendan Kerin of the Gaimariagal people took place at the site of the Lindfield Village Green. Mayor Jennifer Anderson also ‘turned the first sod’ after the smoking ceremony.

Turrumurra Community Hub

A decision to pause the Turrumurra Community Hub project was made by the Council in May due to the need for a new Ku-ring-gai Local Environmental Plan (LEP).

LEPs and DCPs are the planning guidelines that councils must have to plan land use and development in each of their areas. The NSW Government has asked all councils in the state to prepare new LEPS by 2021.

Planning studies on the Turrumurra Community Hub had been progressing during this period, but with a review of Ku-ring-gai’s Local Environmental Plan (LEP) and Development Control Plan (DCP) currently underway, the Council has decided to pause the Hub project to allow these to be completed.

Ku-ring-gai Council’s masterplan for a Turrumurra Community Hub includes a new library and community centre, open space, new housing and shopping outlets designed to revitalise Turrumurra’s centre between the railway line, Ray Street and the Pacific Highway.

St Ives Showground

A large regional playground is being built at St Ives Showground and due for completion by October.

The new playground will replace the existing play equipment located south west of the main arena at picnic area 7.

When completed, the playground will offer inclusive play for children of all abilities.

Areas for younger children aged 6 and under will include junior swings, a spinning carousel, a rocker, cubby house with low slide and an imaginative farm/showground play setting. Areas for older children will have challenging rope climbing, high slides, elevated enclosed rope walkways, a double flying fox and a giant bird’s nest swing.

Nature play areas will include logs, timber, boulders, a stone sculpture and other materials intermingled with plants, providing children opportunities for imaginative play. Accessible parking and pathways will provide easy links between the new playground and surrounding parkland and toilets.

Council has won a \$250,000 Metropolitan Greenspace Program grant from the NSW Government to help meet the construction costs of the large new playground, which has a budget of \$2.24 million in total.

In June Council was also awarded \$88,000 from the NSW Government’s COVID-19 Stimulus Package for a power supply upgrade to the Showground, with work underway. A second application for funding through the Stimulus Package has been submitted for further improvements to Showground amenities.

St Ives Village Green

The Village Green is being redesigned as a recreation precinct for young residents. The design includes a new children’s play space and a skate area, with a central promenade linking facilities with the surrounding park. New paths, seating, shelters, lighting, picnic facilities, shade tree planting and landscaping are also planned, together with improvements to the existing public toilets, St Ives Community Hall and the St Ives youth centre.

Work commenced during this period with the relocation of a pedestrian crossing in Village Green Parade to provide safer access between the park and accessible parking.

Construction of the new inclusive playground and skate facility will commence later this year after the tender is awarded.

Upgrades of the existing amenities building and the Youth Centre and Community Hall have commenced, with work starting on the amenities block in June.

The recreation precinct is expected to be completed by 2021.



Planning

The Council's draft Housing Strategy, which will guide housing needs for Ku-ring-gai's population over the next 20 years, was placed on public exhibition between April and May 2020. It followed several months of early consultation with local residents, businesspeople and other stakeholders through surveys, online discussion forums and focus group meetings.

The Strategy's two main aims are accommodating future population growth and ensuring an appropriate mix of housing types for residents' different stages of life.

The draft strategy outlines where additional housing can be accommodated near public transport, the mix of housing types and how Ku-ring-gai's unique character can be protected.

Councils are required by the NSW government to prepare housing strategies that plan for future population change and growth across the Sydney region.

During this period Ku-ring-gai Council's first Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) was adopted by Council. The LSPS is a blueprint for Ku-ring-gai's economic, social and environmental land use needs for the next 20 years (2016-2036). The LSPS draws together the priorities and actions from Councils existing land use plans and policies to present an overall land use vision for Ku-ring-gai.

The LSPS also identifies where additional strategic planning is required, such as a Housing Strategy and Retail / Commercial Centres Strategy.

Between June and July the Council sought from the community on the draft consolidated Ku-ring-gai Development Control Plan.

The Ku-ring-gai Development Control Plan and Ku-ring-gai Local Centres Development Control Plan are planning documents that provide detailed guidelines to support the Ku-ring-gai Local Environmental Plan 2015 and Ku-ring-gai Local Environmental Plan (Local Centres) 2012.

The amendment seeks to consolidate Ku-ring-gai Development Control Plan (KDCP) and Ku-ring-gai Local Centres Development Control Plan (KDCP LC) into a single plan.

During this period all registered swimming pools were added to the Council's GIS mapping system. This means it is now relatively easy for staff to check whether a pool is registered with the NSW Government when safety audits are conducted.

Public spaces

During this period the Council adopted a design for an upgrade of the St Johns Avenue area in Gordon. With additional funding obtained from the state government, the upgrades will extend along Wade Lane up to Park Avenue and over to Werona Avenue.

The aim is to make the Gordon station precinct more pedestrian friendly, safer and attractive area through new landscaping, widened footpaths, street furniture and an improved layout for outdoor dining. Work on the project is expected to start in the first half of 2021

In February the Council released a draft plan on how Ku-ring-gai's playgrounds will be constructed and managed in the future. The strategy was developed to ensure Council staff assess where needs exist now and are likely to be required in the future. The overall goal of the strategy is to make Ku-ring-gai's play spaces and equipment as inclusive and safe as possible for children of all ages and abilities.

The strategy was prepared with the help of feedback from parents, carers and community groups, including those representing children with disabilities.

Among the recommendations proposed are that where possible, new playgrounds will be located within 400 metres walking distance from residential areas. Council adopted the strategy in April following its public exhibition.

Planning and design concepts are underway for suburb signs and other wayfinding signage across Ku-ring-gai to be redesigned, following the installation of new street signs last year.

During this period Council undertook an audit of recently constructed buildings and in conjunction with NSW Fire and Rescue and Department of Industry, Planning and Environment. The audit identified 28 buildings in Ku-ring-gai containing the inferior cladding on their facades.

All buildings identified are in the process of retrofitting the cladding. Fire safety upgrades at the Gordon Centre and Village Arcade are nearing completion.





Boyd's Orchard Park

Parks and playgrounds

A large new park created through land acquired by the Council's Open Space Acquisition Policy was completed and opened to the public in mid-March. Boyd's Orchard Park is on the corner of Allen Avenue and Duff Street Turramurra.

Features of the new park include a playground for all ages and abilities; open areas of lawn with shade trees; picnic tables, seating and an accessible pathway. The design for the new park has been shaped by community feedback, with local residents invited to comment on the design.

Work is underway on upgrades to playgrounds at Kissing Point Village Green in Turramurra and Abingdon Road Reserve in Roseville.

Community consultation on designs for the new playgrounds concluded in January with the Council approving the designs in March.

Both playgrounds will have accessible pathways and play equipment, new fencing, drinking fountains, seating, and areas where children can enjoy nature play.

At Kissing Point Village Green existing picnic shelters and the junior bike path will be upgraded, with an accessible car space added and a pathway linked to the playground.

In January new playgrounds were completed at Irish Town Grove in Turramurra and Lindfield Soldiers Memorial Park.

Both playground designs were guided by consultation with local residents and contain play equipment suitable for all ages and abilities.

Irish Town Grove playground contains a multi-swing set, carousel, play boat and climbing tower as well as a picnic shelter, seating and drinking fountain.

Lindfield Soldiers Memorial playground also has a multi-swing set, trampoline, voice tubes and a combination play unit as well as a picnic shelter, electric BBQ, and drinking fountain.

Both playgrounds have extra car parking areas with an accessible car space at each.

In June Stage 1 of the upgrade to Gordon Recreation Ground was completed and the new playground on the Rosedale Road side of the park opened to the public.

The playground has been designed according to feedback received during the consultation process for the masterplan. The playground includes a giant climbing dome, slides and a multi-swing set. New picnic facilities and a drinking fountain have also been installed.

Stage 2 of the works will be the refurbishment of the heritage listed tennis pavilion and amenities block to provide accessible toilets and an improved layout. These works will begin by August this year.

Stage 3 will be landscaping, new lighting, more picnic shelters and accessible pathways, starting in November.

Work is underway on an upgrade to the playground at Putarri Reserve in St Ives. In addition to a new playground, outdoor exercise equipment and animal sculptures are also being installed at the reserve. Work is expected to be completed by August this year.

Heritage

Applications for grants of between \$1000 and \$5000 opened to owners of heritage properties in Ku-ring-gai between April and May for heritage property projects that will be carried out in the 2020-2021 financial year.

Grants of between \$1000 and \$5000 will be allocated on a dollar for dollar basis, where Council will match the amount spent by the applicant up to the funding limit.

Examples of projects that could qualify for up to \$5000 worth of funding include:

- ◆ Repair or replacement of original roof slates or tiles.
- ◆ Repointing of brickwork or masonry.
- ◆ Repairing decorative ceilings or pressed metal work.
- ◆ Conservation of original fireplaces.
- ◆ Conserving or repairing original timber detailing.

Applications closed on 31 May and will be awarded by July.

THEME 4 ACCESS, TRAFFIC & TRANSPORT



Access and connection to, from and within Ku-ring-gai provides safe, reliable and affordable public and private travel, transport and infrastructure



Traffic and transport

A draft traffic and transport policy was placed on public exhibition between December 2019 and February 2020. New measures to slow traffic in residential and pedestrian areas and changes to parking around new developments were some of the measures proposed by the draft policy.

Among the changes proposed by the draft policy were:

- ◆ Speed cushions made from recycled rubber to slow down traffic in residential streets. These allow buses and emergency vehicles with wider axles to straddle them with minimal impact.
- ◆ New parking restrictions around driveways in new developments on busy roads.

- ◆ Loading areas for delivery vehicles in driveways of multi-unit developments containing 12 or more units.
- ◆ The creation of a car sharing policy to be publicly exhibited later in 2020.

The policy also considered the introduction of a resident parking permit scheme. However this has not been progressed due to local roads not meeting state government requirements for the implementation of such schemes. The draft policy was adopted by Council in March.

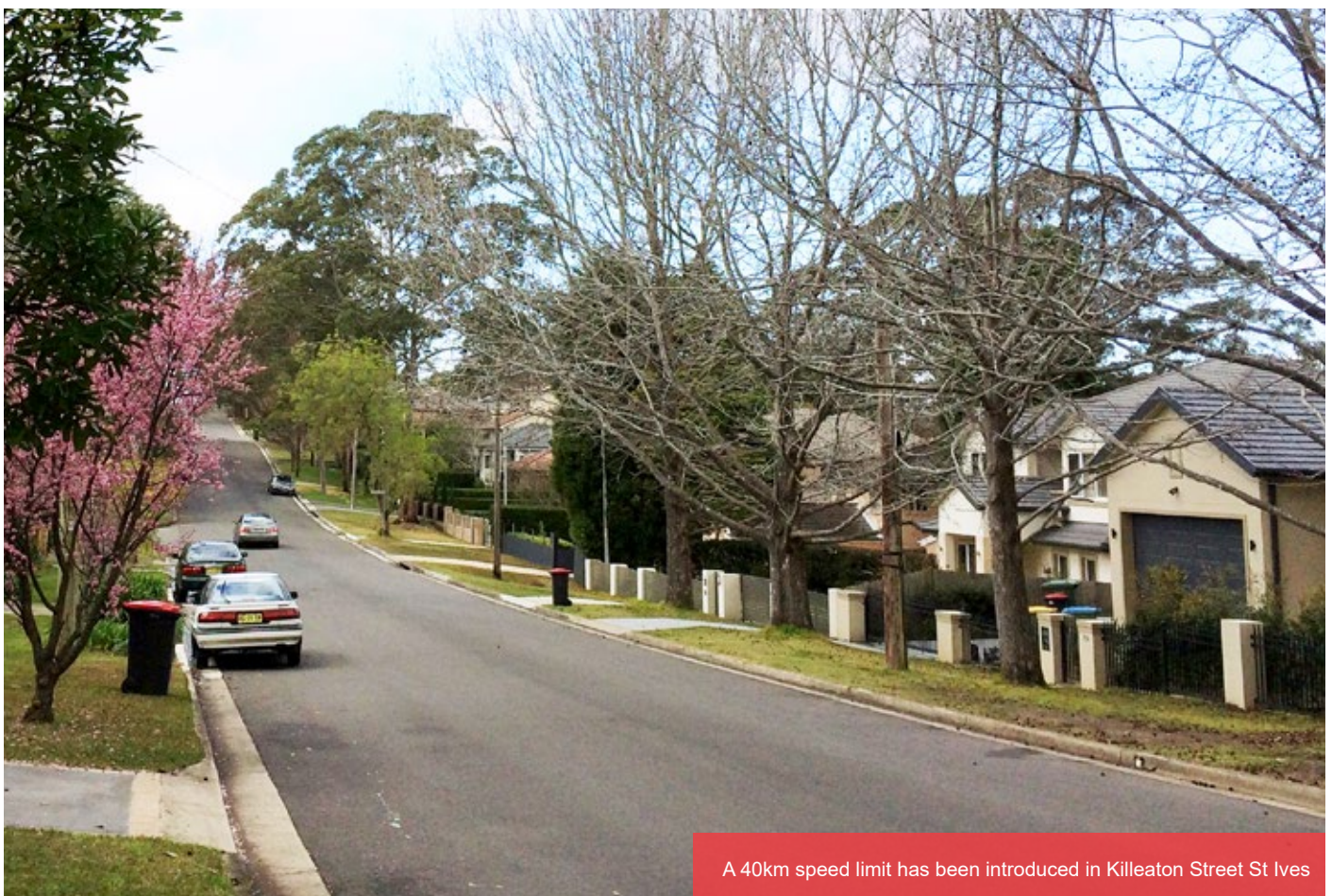


A car sharing policy for Ku-ring-gai could be considered by the Council later this year

Pedestrian safety

A series of traffic calming measures were installed around the shopping area in St Ives during this period. Funding was obtained from Transport for NSW to assist with meeting the costs of the project. In Cowan Road a 40 km/h speed limit between Mona Vale Road and Kanoona Avenue was implemented, along with speed cushions and a roundabout at the Village Green Parade intersection.

In Memorial Avenue a 40 km/h speed limit was implemented between Mona Vale Road and Killeaton Street along with speed cushions. A pedestrian refuge island was also installed between Village Green Parade and Killeaton Street.



A 40km speed limit has been introduced in Killeaton Street St Ives

THEME 5 LOCAL ECONOMY & EMPLOYMENT



Creating economic employment opportunities through vital, attractive centres, business innovation and technology



Business

During this period one face-to-face event in the Business Connections program of events was held in February. Business Connections events came to an abrupt halt in mid-March due to the COVID-19 crisis. As a result Council staff immediately reached out to a range of local business experts and using their advice, devised a free webinar series to help local companies and individuals maintain and protect their businesses during the pandemic. The webinar series was planned and developed within a two week period.

The Open for Business webinars commenced in mid-April and were held approximately every week. So far, six webinars have been held on topics including:

- ◆ Maintaining a functioning business during COVID-19
- ◆ Ways to improve current business practices
- ◆ Improving digital/online presence
- ◆ Planning for recovery and the future

The total number of business people attending the six webinars to date is 381. Other webinars planned for later this year include post-COVID-19 business and financial planning; using LinkedIn to boost networking and marketing opportunities and maximising access to government grants and support.

In April, recognising the impact of the pandemic on the local economy, the Council approved measures aimed at cushioning financial stress on the community, in particular local businesses.

Fees for the following business services are currently suspended:

- ◆ Outdoor dining permits
- ◆ Administration fees for trade waste collections
- ◆ Fire safety inspections
- ◆ Public health inspections

Deferred rate payments, fee reductions or waivers will be considered on a case-by-case basis with ratepayers or tenants of Council buildings who are experiencing financial hardship.

COVID-19 Resilience Workshops

For Carers of Children with a Disability

Ku-ring-gai Council is offering support to parents and carers of children with a disability through online workshops. Workshops are facilitated by Lyn Worsley, a senior psychologist from the Resilience Centre.

The free online Zoom workshops are on Tuesdays, 8pm - 9pm. Login to book: kmc.nsw.gov.au/lifeonline (Activities at home)

FREE

1 Tues 14 April Keeping connected when socially isolated	2 Tues 21 April Self-Care for carers of a child with a disability
3 Tues 28 April Home schooling for a child with a disability	4 Tues 5 May Planning for life after COVID-19

Sessions will run on Zoom.

ENQUIRIES: For booking assistance or to download zoom, please contact Samantha Marren: 9942 0992 or smarren@kmc.nsw.gov.au




Technology

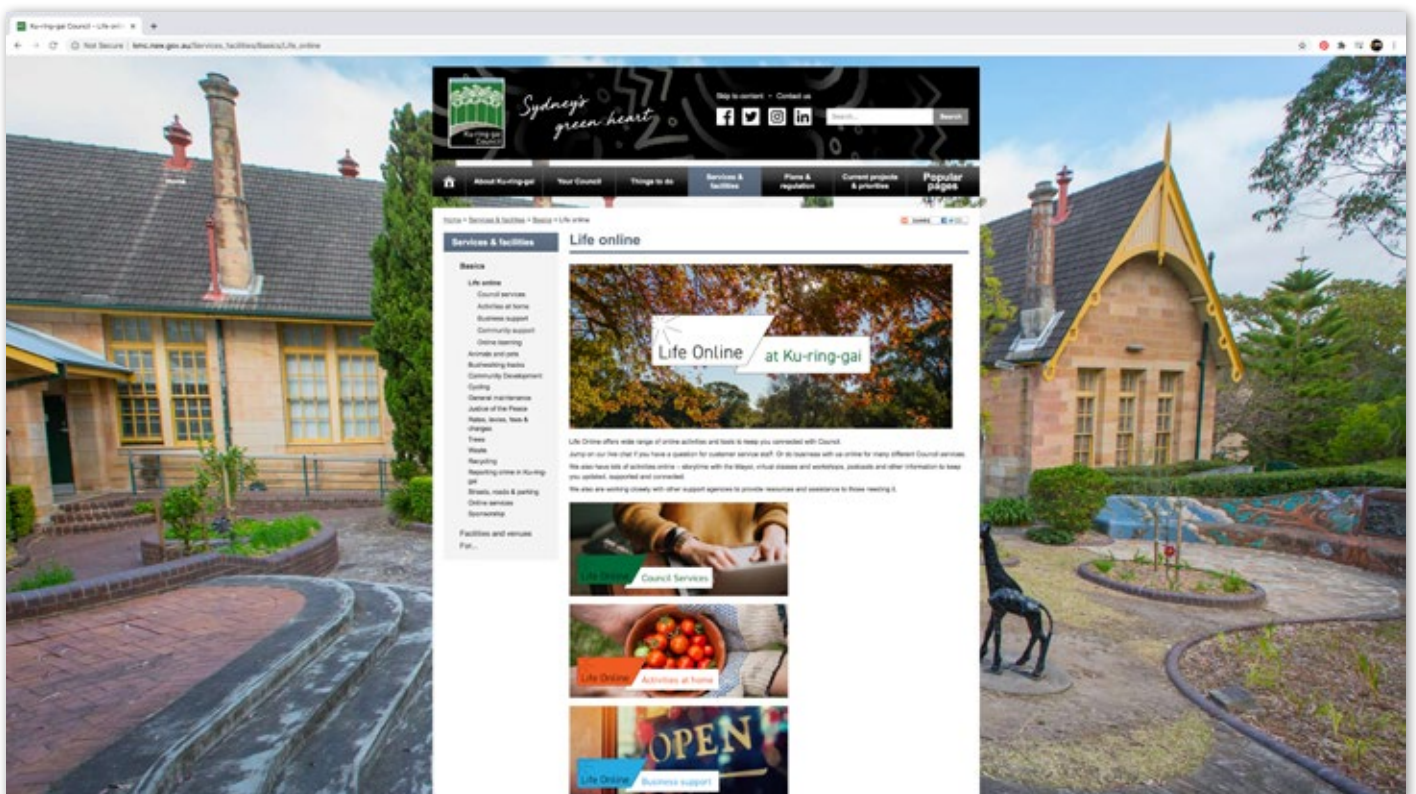
Within two weeks of the COVID-19 lockdown in mid-March, Council staff had created a web portal called Life Online to help residents do business with Council and cope with life at home during COVID-19.

The Council closed its over-the-counter customer service centre at 818 Pacific Highway and moved its customer service operations online via Life Online. The customer call centre continued operating throughout the lockdown.

Life Online allowed residents to lodge permit applications, waste requests, request planning certificates, register pets and request repairs to roads and other Council assets.

Other features of Life Online included group therapy sessions with a psychologist; storytime readings for children by Mayor Jennifer Anderson, online exercise classes, free webinars for small businesses and free access to the Council's e-library of music, magazines, books and movies.

Planning is well underway for a new Council website to be implemented by the end of this year. A request for tender has been issued for a content management system and a content strategy developed, after consultation with stakeholders and Council staff.



THEME 6 LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE



Ku-ring-gai is well led, managed and supported by ethical organisations which deliver projects and services to the community by listening, advocating and responding to their needs



COVID-19 support

In mid-March the Council effectively moved many of its operations online due to the statewide lockdown announced by the state and federal governments.

Essential services were maintained throughout the lockdown period such as road maintenance, waste collections and building inspections.

During this period the Council agreed to hold its meetings via Zoom from March, with the livestream allowing members of the public to observe the meetings. Meetings of the KLPP have continued on Zoom and members of the public able to submit comments to panel members before meetings.

The monthly Public Forums have been temporarily suspended and replaced by submissions from the public either as written questions and comments, audio recordings or video recordings.

In April the Council approved a total of \$100,000 in grants for community organisations helping vulnerable residents in Ku-ring-gai, or those experiencing hardship as a result of the COVID-19 situation.

A total of 23 local community organisations benefitted from the Council's COVID-19 grants package, with \$80,000 of funding distributed in June. Each of the organisations successfully applying was allocated up to \$5000 for in grant funding.

Successful applicants included:

- ◆ St Ives Occasional Care – providing flexible childcare for workers at short notice.
- ◆ The Cerebral Palsy Alliance – online therapies for vulnerable Ku-ring-gai families to access at home.
- ◆ Hornsby Connect Service – for a Ku-ring-gai Connect project, including a food bank grocery service and food hampers for needy residents.
- ◆ St Lucy's School Wahroonga – for the school's welfare team to deliver vital assistance to at-risk families.
- ◆ KYDS youth development service – funding for KYDS clinicians to continue providing at-home therapeutic support for their clients.
- ◆ Ku-ring-gai Meals on Wheels – for a meals service to frontline workers, disadvantaged and homeless people.

Hirers of the Council's community centres and halls have had payments refunded or suspended while these remain closed.

NSW Health hired the St Ives Community Hall for two weeks in June prior to its closure for refurbishment to conduct a temporary COVID-19 testing clinic. The clinic was free and open daily between 8am and 3pm.

The customer service centre at 818 Pacific Highway Gordon reopened on 1 June with social distancing and capacity limits in place. The reopening of the customer service centre means that customers can now lodge DAs and other service requests in person.

Community

During this period the Council reviewed its consultation practices to ensure residents' views are captured through a range of ways into the future.

The review comes as residents are increasingly going online to express their view on new services and projects. The Council is seeking input to ensure updated policies and procedures match current trends in consultation and meet community expectations.

The consultation review will cover other areas where the community is for its views about other projects and services that affect local people.

The review will be carried out in three phases between March and June, beginning with information gathering and ideas from the local community through surveys, workshops and face-to-face interviews.

This phase will also focus on 'hard to reach' groups such as residents who have English as their second language and young people aged 12 to 30 years old.

Feedback received will be incorporated into a revised community consultation policy. The policy will be presented to Council and then go on public exhibition.

During this period the Council also adopted its first Community Participation Plan that details how the Council will engage with its community across the planning functions it performs.

Since November last year designated Council staff have worked on a number of emergencies requiring additional services to the community. These included the bushfire emergency at Turrumurra, the storm emergency across Ku-ring-gai and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Operations and communications staff have been at the forefront of these additional services, as well as community services staff and rangers.

As a result of these emergencies, a Crisis Management Team comprising senior management was formed in February. The Crisis Management Team is responsible for coordinating the Council's response to emergency situations and allocating staff and budgetary resources to meet the community's needs during times of crisis. Currently the team is meeting weekly to plan and assess the organisation's response to the easing of the COVID-19 restrictions and the gradual reopening of public facilities.

Finances

The Council sought public comment on its draft budget and delivery program for the new financial year, foreshadowing a loss of income caused by the ongoing COVID-19 lockdown.

A detailed report presented to the Council in April outlined a wide-ranging program of improvements and capital works set to start from July. However the report also highlighted an anticipated reduction in income of around \$5.6 million due to COVID-19.

Over \$18 million has been set aside for roads and footpaths in the capital works budget. Parks and sportsfields upgrades will be boosted by an extra \$13.5 million and nearly \$1 million will be spent on new equipment for local playgrounds. A further \$1.1 million has been allocated to Ku-ring-gai's public toilets and shower blocks.

Council has underlined its commitment to environmental protection with a proposed \$4.7 million in funding and \$1.5 million for stormwater drainage.

Council adopted the Delivery Program and Operational Plan for 2020-2021 in June.

NSW Health opened temporary COVID-19 testing centres in Roseville, Turrumurra and St Ives

