



# **A SNAPSHOT OF OUR ACHIEVEMENTS**

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT  
JANUARY 2021-JULY 2021





## A SNAPSHOT OF OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

# 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 2021 to July 2021.

In June the sudden intensification of the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in numerous cancellations to Council services and events and the large-scale closure of community facilities.

Nonetheless essential services are being maintained and during the reporting period there have been several achievements of note,

Highlights include:

- ◆ Construction of the Lindfield Village Green is on target to be completed in 2021.
- ◆ The Council approved the implementation of a new waste service to improve the collection of household clean up and green waste, due to begin in early September.
- ◆ Consultation on designs for several playground upgrades is underway.
- ◆ Work was completed on upgrades to the St Ives community hall and the St Ives youth centre.
- ◆ The new Roseville Pavilion opened, a multi-purpose community facility which includes a new spectator area and all-weather cricket nets.
- ◆ Work has commenced on the youth precinct at St Ives Village Green.
- ◆ Work is well underway on converting St Johns Avenue Gordon into a pedestrianised outdoor dining precinct.
- ◆ The Council offered two new retailing opportunities to food businesses at St Ives Showground and Lindfield Village Green.
- ◆ The 2021-2022 budget and operational plan were adopted. The adopted budget includes \$75.8m on capital works and a further \$6.79m for operational projects, comprising a total projects budget of \$81.29m.
- ◆ The Net Zero Community initiative was launched, which aims to reduce Ku-ring-gai's greenhouse gas emissions to zero by the year 2040.

- ◆ A draft Community Engagement Policy was finalised for public exhibition.
- ◆ Applications opened for a total of \$150,000 being offered by the Council in community and environmental grants.
- ◆ The Council was awarded two more state government grants for upgrades to the St Ives Showground
- ◆ Consultation on public domain plans for Turramurra, Lindfield and Gordon was undertaken.
- ◆ Two new events – Enliven Ku-ring-gai, the Arts & Cultural Festival and the Ku-ring-gai Heritage Festival – were either planned or delivered during this period.

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







## A SNAPSHOT OF OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

# 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 fully utilised 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 a limited number of COVID-safe excursions.

Following the June lockdown, the centres cancelled excursions and out-of-centre activities during the winter school holidays. However children were cared for in the centres following strict COVID-safe plans.

Thomas Carlyle Children's Centre remained open throughout the period, with strict social distancing and hygiene rules in place for children, parents and staff. A promotional campaign for the Council's family day care service was ongoing to attract educators and new families.

The Wildflower Garden presented numerous educational programs and vacation care activities during this period. Following the June lockdown the Wildflower Garden July school holiday program and other educational programs were suspended.

### Youth

The Council's youth centres at St Ives reopened for some activities, including the January and April school holiday programs. Young people aged between 12 and 18 were offered photography workshops, excursions, BBQs, movies and games.

In February the Council voted to proceed with the preparation of a DA for two additional indoor basketball courts as part of the St Ives Indoor Sports Centre. This community facility will adjoin two other basketball courts at St Ives High School currently under construction. When built, a total of four indoor courts will be available for use by the community outside school hours.

A development application for the additional two indoor basketball courts plus ancillary rooms and car park was lodged at the end of June. The \$19.6m project will include borrowings of \$13.5m approved by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal, to be repaid from future asset sales.





Jubes mountain bike park is being remodelled using ideas from the community

The Council is partnering with local mountain bike riders and young people to redesign and build the Jubes mountain bike park to make it a more exciting experience for riders. Mountain bikers are being invited to help construct the new tracks once excavation is completed by joining the Council's Trailcare program.

The works currently underway build on two design days held in May and June. Ideas were collated on a map and a drone used to mark out ideas, trail alignment and features such as jumps.

The Single Track trail has been excavated in preparation for the new jumps to be built and this trail will be unavailable until the end of July to riders. The Pump Track and Skills Track are currently open to riders during construction of the new track, subject to COVID restrictions.

Work commenced on the St Ives youth precinct during this period. The Village Green will be redesigned as a recreation precinct with a new children's playground and skate park. 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.

During this period work on the upgrade to the St Ives youth centre was completed. However a public launch of the new centre has been postponed due to the latest COVID outbreak.

## Seniors

Activities for seniors resumed during this period and for those older residents reluctant to go out in group outings or attend activities, the Council's aged services team continued hosting virtual tours of the world's most fascinating places with group discussions afterwards by phone or online.

In January excursions and activities included a Spanish



cooking demonstration and visits to Hyde Park Barracks, the Australian Museum and the Ken Duncan Gallery at Copacabana. The Seniors Festival was held in March and April, with the highlight being an expo at Turramurra on 21 April featuring talks throughout the day, free trials of dancing, sport or exercise classes, plus info stalls on joining clubs, help-at-home services and volunteering, with free morning tea and lunch offered.

The 'Love the Life' program of activities continued in June, with excursions to the Hawkesbury, the Gunners Barracks at Mosman and the Norman Lindsay Gallery in the Blue Mountains. However due to the lockdown announced in June planned visits to the Archibald exhibition and the University of NSW were postponed.

The June lockdown prompted further assistance for older residents along the lines of what was provided during the lockdown last year. Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Community





Caleys function centre hosted a unique dining experience during the Gai-mariagal Festival

Transport provided a door-to-door service for older residents for shopping and medical appointments and Ku-ring-gai Neighbourhood Centre also offered older residents assistance with shopping. Ku-ring-gai Connect, a food bank service partially funded by a Council grant is providing food parcels for vulnerable residents.

## All Ability

The second Explorations exhibition was hosted by the Ku-ring-gai Art Centre and the Council's customer service centre during January. The exhibition is a direct result of Ku-ring-gai Council's Disability & Inclusion Action Plan, which seeks to include people with a disability in local activities and events.

This year Boona, Inala, Studio Artes, Unisson Disability Services, Artful Therapy and Macquarie University partnered with the Council to put together the exhibition, which attracted 41 entries.

In July the Council will consider the revised Access and Disability Inclusion Plan, which is reviewed every four years. The plan outlines the actions Council will take to make Ku-ring-gai a more accessible and inclusive community. Some of the actions include removing physical barriers to community facilities and spaces, promoting positive attitudes and behaviours within the community, increase access to services and information and support access to more meaningful employment. The revised action plan was on public exhibition for comment earlier this year.

## Events

Several major events had to be cancelled due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. These included the St Ives Medieval Faire, the Festival on the Green at St Ives and the annual Australia Day celebrations in Bicentennial Park at West Pymble. To replace the Australia Day event a drive in movie was shown on the evening of 26 January at St Ives Showground, which was attended by around 500 people.

Some events were able to proceed, including new events. A COVID-safe festival of food and entertainment took place in February at St Ives Village Green to celebrate the Lunar New Year. This included market stalls, food trucks, a gourmet dessert section and live music between 4pm and 10pm. Other Lunar New Year events included calligraphy demonstrations, storytelling, dancing and an art exhibition at Gordon Library.

New events include the Ku-ring-gai Heritage Festival held in April/May and the Ku-ring-gai Arts & Cultural Festival that was to be held in July.

The Heritage Festival was a month long series of events including photo exhibitions, open homes, historical talks, walking tours, fashion exhibitions and author talks. Highlights included a guided walking tour of Ku-ring-gai's smallest suburb Warrawee; a virtual tour of the iconic Tulkiyan House in Gordon; a self-guided tour of the classic Rose Seidler House in Wahroonga; a walk through Sheldon Forest and Rofe Park exploring Ku-ring-gai's indigenous heritage; a Mothers Day afternoon tea at the stately home Eryldene and a fashion

exhibition of the swinging 60s presented by The Calvacade of History and Fashion museum in Roseville.

The Arts & Cultural Festival was to be held between 1 July – 30 July featuring exhibitions, children's theatre performances, art workshops and film screenings. The Festival's aim is to increase awareness of Ku-ring-gai's creative arts and foster local creative talent. Due to the lockdown announced at the end of June events have had to be postponed. A further announcement regarding the Festival will be made once lockdown ends.

Another new event called Enliven Ku-ring-gai was hosted by the Council during March. Enliven Ku-ring-gai was a series of pop up live street events held across four locations - Gordon, West Pymble, North Turramurra and East Lindfield - with live entertainment and roving performers, Council staff were there at each location to talk about projects in the area. The community was encouraged to show their support for business by dining and shopping locally. Artists performing over the month included Viva The Band, Bubble Girl, Danni Da Ros and Ben Brown.

The Council co-hosted a Remembrance Day service on 11 November 2020 at Roseville RSL Memorial Club, with COVID-19 restrictions meaning guests were limited. Several local schools took part in the service, alongside a number of veterans. Community-based services were also held across Ku-ring-gai on the day.

The Gai-mariagal Festival celebrating northern Sydney's indigenous culture was held between early May and June; however events planned in July had to be cancelled due to the lockdown announced in June.

The Warakirri Dining Experience at the Wildflower Garden's Caley's Pavilion on 5 June was a sold-out highlight, immersing guests in traditional food, music and cultural rituals. Other Gai-mariagal Festival events included children's art workshops and guided bush walks at the Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden and an Author Talk with Nardi Simpson with her book *Song of the Crocodile* at Gordon Library. The free screening of the film *Song Keepers* on Tuesday 6 July was cancelled.

In June the Council co-hosted events to mark Men's Health Week. These included a dinner with guest speaker at St Edmund's College Wahroonga on Thursday 10 June, for fathers and male carers of children with a disability; a Men's Health Expo on 16 June at Gordon Library covering topics such as heart health, hearing and mental wellbeing and a special Let's Chalk about Mental Health event on Friday 18 June in Philip Mall West Pymble. The Council also presented an info session for its staff in June on recognising the warning signs for male colleagues experiencing mental health struggles and how to offer support.





Face to face citizenship ceremonies resumed during this period, but were suspended again at the end of June due to the lockdown. If the lockdown is lifted in time, the Council is planning a citizenship ceremony on 21 July. The Council's events team is continually reviewing its event program in the light of COVID-19 directives and health orders issued by the state and federal governments.

## Art Centre

During this period the centre reopened for classes with social distancing safeguards in place. Visits to exhibitions were capped due to COVID restrictions and as a result can also be viewed on the centre's Facebook page.

Exhibitions held during this period were the Cornucopia exhibition featuring visual explorations of the concept of 'plenty' between February and March; the Let's Dance exhibition featuring representations of dance between March and April and the Recovery exhibition between May and June, exploring ideas around the notion of recovery.

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

The Arts Centre was closed on 26 June for all classes and visits due to the COVID lockdown announced by the NSW Government and is awaiting a decision on when to reopen.

## Libraries

Ku-ring-gai libraries held a variety of activities for children during the January and April school holidays with workshops



on animation, robotics and coding for primary school aged children booked out.

Between January and February the library service participated in the very first statewide reading program, NSW Reads. Participants read Lucky's by Sydney author Andrew Pippas. Central to the theme of Lucky's is the iconic Greek milk bar businesses found in so many Australian towns and suburbs. NSW Reads celebrated the heritage of these venues and the migrant experiences of food and community in what was described as NSW biggest book club.

The libraries are also promoting the statewide 1000 Books Before School initiative, encouraging literacy in young children from babies to the age of five. Each child receives a bag after 100 books with patches that can be added to the bag after that.

During this period libraries made available Book Club Kits for



Mayor Jennifer Anderson with a young reader at library storytime





Norman Griffiths Sportsground will be given an all-weather surface to help meet increasing demand for sportsfields

people wishing to start their own book clubs. Each kit contains ten copies of a single title and an information sheet about the book and its author, including suggested discussion questions.

Up to late June most library services had returned to normal with social distancing in place. As a result of the June lockdown all library branches have closed, with borrowers able to access the libraries e-library service. Loans on items have been extended until 31 July and after hours chutes are open 24/7. Library staff are also working on a series of storytime sessions to be streamed online.

## Recreation

The Active Ku-ring-gai program resumed in January and February 2021 with free or 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.

The results of community consultation on a proposed synthetic sportsfield at Barra Brui Oval St Ives for use as a regional hockey facility were reported to Council during this period. As a result the Council has opted not to proceed and will work instead with the North Shore and Beaches Hockey Association to find an alternative venue.

The Council has decided to proceed with converting the Norman Griffiths Sportsground at West Pymble to an all-weather synthetic turf. The new synthetic surface would allow all-year-round use of the Sportsground and give residents

more opportunity to participate in sports such as soccer, touch football and cricket. The results of the tendering process will be reported to Council and following a decision on the successful tenderer, work will commence later this year.

The Council was awarded \$398,000 from the NSW Government's Streets as Shared Spaces grant program for a trial of a separated cycleway in Gilroy Road connecting Karuah Park with the Turramurra local centre. The Council is assessing community feedback before a decision is made on whether to make the cycleway permanent.

In June the Council lodged the development application for construction of two indoor basketball courts at St Ives High, in addition to the two courts already proposed by the school.

The new multi-purpose pavilion at Roseville Park has been completed. The new building has change rooms, accessible toilets, a kitchenette, office and storage space and an outdoor sheltered forecourt. New all-weather cricket nets have been installed at the rear of the building.

The Council is partnering with local mountain bike riders and young people to redesign and build the Jubes mountain bike park to make it a more exciting experience for riders. Mountain bikers are being invited to help construct the new tracks once excavation is completed by joining the Council's Trailcare program. Safety signage has been designed and is now ready to be installed at the Warrimoo mountain bike track at St Ives.





## A SNAPSHOT OF OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

### THEME 2 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

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



#### Environmental Levy

Funding of \$50,000 was offered in May for community-based environmental projects worth up to \$5000 each.

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.

Projects that could receive funding include native bee hives, bush regeneration work, community gardens, school education projects, wildlife audits and waste and recycling initiatives. Successful projects will be awarded funding this month.

During this period environmental levy also funded another community education program – the Wildflower Garden Sculpture Trail. Ku-ring-gai Council's environmentally themed

public art competition is open for entries until Friday 30 July 2021.

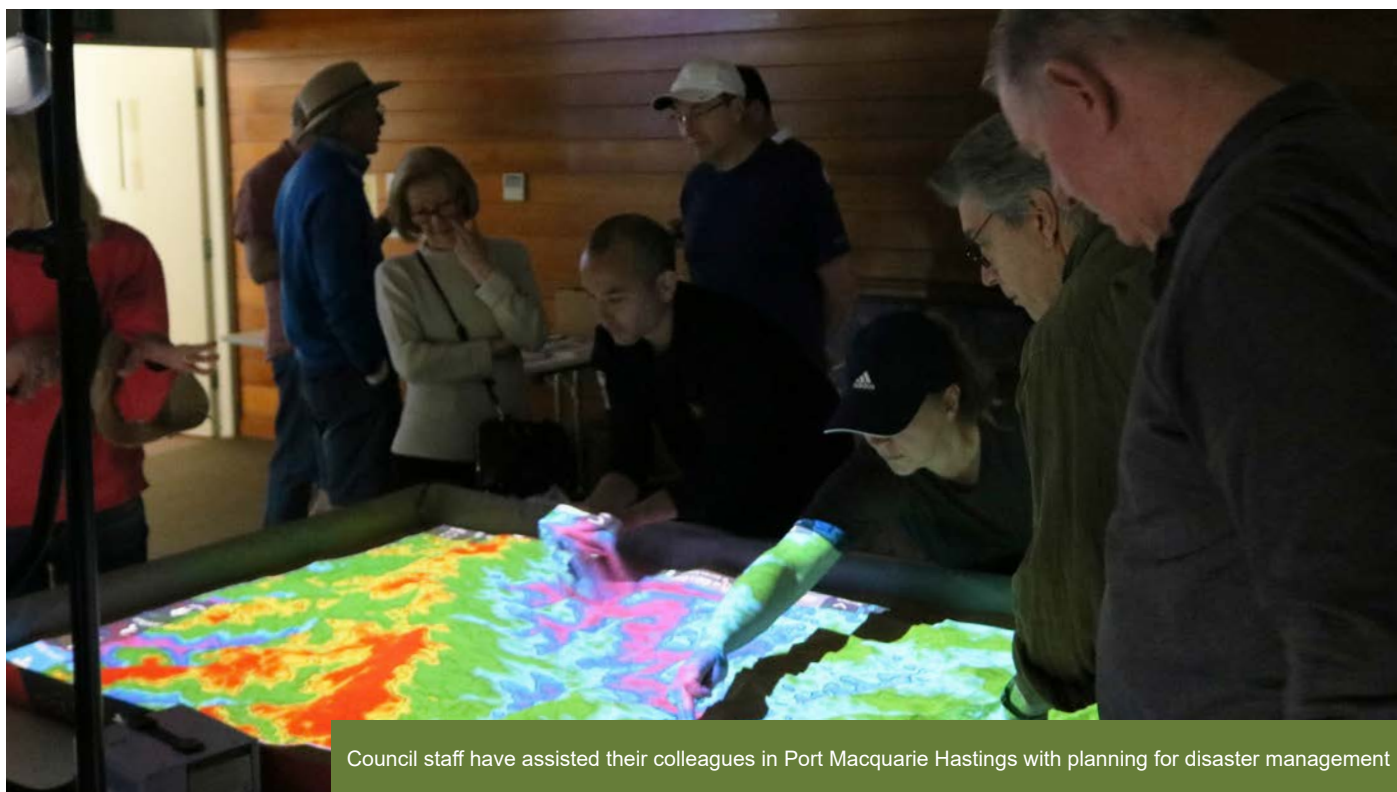
The Sculpture Trail gives local and regional artists an avenue to exhibit works in the beautiful bushland surroundings of the Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden at St Ives. Artists are asked to reflect on the uniqueness of the Australian bush landscape and showcase environmental themes through the use of sustainable materials. The Sculpture Trail will be open to the public from 4 September to 4 October.

#### Climate Change

Last year the updated Climate Change Policy and Action Plan was adopted by Council. One of the goals of the action plan is for Ku-ring-gai to become a Net Zero Community and reduce community greenhouse gas emissions to zero by the year 2040.

The action plan will help residents, schools and businesses





Council staff have assisted their colleagues in Port Macquarie Hastings with planning for disaster management

achieve zero emissions by 2040 through energy efficiency and renewable energy options.

The plan introduces community-wide targets and for the Council, increased efforts to reduce emissions through fleet vehicles, street lights and buildings.

Council's targets are:

- ♦ Net zero emissions by 2040, or earlier and a 50% reduction by 2030.
- ♦ Achieve 100% renewable energy by 2030 or earlier.
- ♦ A 100% reduction in fleet vehicle emissions by 2040.

During May and June the Council surveyed residents via its website and social media to find out what would make them take action to cut their emissions and what barriers stand in their way. Planned community discussion groups were postponed due to the COVID outbreak.

During this period the Council adopted a Single-Use Plastics Policy, which aims to see single-use plastics banned completely from both Council-run and externally run events on Council land over the next two years.

## Water

The Middle Harbour Flood Study and Plan was adopted during this period 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.

Crucial to the formation of this study were residents' memories of previous flooding events which were sought during

community consultation on the project. The project was supported by the NSW Government's Floodplain Management Program. Relevant planning certificates were updated during May and June to reflect the status of properties included in the flood study's findings.

The Environmental Levy continued to provide funds during this period for residents to claim up to \$1000 for new rainwater tanks, rain gardens and green roofs. The rebates also apply to permeable surfaces (for driveways, patios and pool decks) and plumbing connections for rainwater tanks.

## Community Education

The Council's Loving Living Ku-ring-gai program of face-to-face community workshops and events was reactivated during this period. Events were also hosted online. The Council's Envirotube channel on YouTube was improved and a number of sustainable living webinars were archived online for residents to access.

In June due to the latest lockdown the Council's sustainable living talks and other environmental events were postponed.

The wait list for the native beehive program in 2021 opened at the beginning of June for Ku-ring-gai residents. This is for those interested in taking care of a hive of native stingless bee. This year, hives will be allocated by a live lottery style draw online and there is no cap to the number of residents who can register their interest. Everyone who registers will have an equal chance of hosting a hive. Hives will be allocated by the end of the year once the splitting season is completed.

During this period Council staff assisted their colleagues in





Expanded waste services will come into effect in Ku-ring-gai in September

the Port Macquarie Hastings area to produce a community resilience plan based on lessons learned from past disasters. The Port Macquarie Hastings area has suffered both severe flooding and bushfires in the last 12 months.

Ku-ring-gai Council staff presented on the Climate Wise Communities program and demonstrated the award-winning Simtable to the Mid North Coast Joint Organisation. The Simtable provides 3D simulations of past and potential future bushfires and storms, based on local topography, wind speeds and fuel loads. Both the Simtable and Climate Wise Communities website will be incorporated into the Port Macquarie community led planning exercise.

## Waste

During this period the Council approved a new contract for an improved waste service coming into effect on 6 September. This is to assist residents better manage green waste and recycle some items in the general clean-up collection. The main changes are:

- ◆ Weekly kerbside collection of green waste bin (previously fortnightly).
- ◆ Booked clean-up collections will include electronic waste, mattresses, metals and whitegoods for recycling. Pre-booked collections will increase to five days from the current four days a week.
- ◆ A new booked bulk green waste collection for larger items such as tree branches. This will replace the current mobile chipping service and green waste vouchers for properties on bushfire prone land.

Reverse vending machines for recycling bottles and other containers in return for cash were installed in Turramurra and St Ives in January 2021. The Ray Street public car park at Turramurra and the St Ives Shopping Centre car park are the first local sites to have reverse vending machines installed.

Other machines will be installed elsewhere in Ku-ring-gai as suitable locations are identified.

More local schools have joined the Council's initiative Worn Up to reduce clothing waste by recycling unwanted school uniforms into usable products. The Council joined the Worn Up project in response to the results of a waste audit carried out in Ku-ring-gai last year. The audit found that on average 3% of red bin waste and 3.7% of booked waste kerbside collections was unwanted clothing.

Worn Up works by installing a 'pod' at each participating school for unwanted uniform items. When the pod becomes full uniforms are collected and either recycled for further wear or turned into products including dog beds and even school desks.

During this period a community education program with videos and advertising in strategic locations in the shopping centre was launched to reinforce the message to take shopping trolleys back after use.

## Trees

During this period planning was undertaken on a community-wide education campaign focussing on the value of Ku-ring-gai's trees. This is in response to an increase in private trees being cut down without Council consent, illegal operators in the local area and the need to educate the community on encroachment of private trees onto public land such as footpaths and roads.

Aspects of the campaign are being progressively rolled out and include:

- ◆ Translations in the Ku-ring-gai Update rates newsletter emphasising the value of trees and how to get permission on pruning or removing trees
- ◆ Publicity for illegal tree lopping operators in Ku-ring-gai



- ◆ Translated information on the Council's website pertaining to trees on private land
- ◆ An animation explainer on encroachment
- ◆ Video explainers about tree management in several languages.

In March the Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden marked Eucalypt Week with a range of programs and activities to celebrate the iconic Australian species. The week long program included children's and family activities and art workshops with local artist Olivia Reily, teaching the art of eucalypt bark dyeing and ink drawing.

Young environmental ambassadors and school leaders from five local schools were invited to the Garden to learn about the importance of the eucalypt to the ecosystem. Each student was gifted a scribbly gum to plant in their school.

## Biodiversity

Local residents were surveyed in January 2021 as a first step in updating the Ku-ring-gai Flying Fox Reserve Plan of Management.

The Council's current plan of management was adopted in 2013 and is due to be updated in accordance with state legislation. Council received a grant from the Department of Planning Industry and Environment to update the plan.

Grey-headed flying-fox, the species predominantly found in Ku-ring-gai is listed as 'vulnerable' under state and national legislation. A community workshop was held in March with state government representatives, the consultants and Council staff. The draft plan was placed on public exhibition between May and June and the findings of the public exhibition are due to be reported to Council.

During March Council staff and the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) monitored the endangered Southern Brown Bandicoot in the Wildflower Garden as part of the NSW Government Saving Our Species program. Three cameras were installed to try to detect the bandicoots in the Garden.

Southern Brown Bandicoots are much shyer than the more common Long Nosed Bandicoot and have been negatively affected by foxes, cats and dogs. The Southern Brown Bandicoot prefers areas such as the Wildflower Garden due to its connection to the national parks and expanses of dense vegetation.

## Companion Animals

Following community consultation Toolang Sportsground in St Ives Chase has been designated as a leash free dog park. Bryce Sportsground in St Ives will not be created as a leash free park, following the Council decision not to proceed with the creation of a regional hockey centre at Barra Brui Oval.

The Council's guide to companion animals was updated during this period and is now available for distribution to the public.

Another series of visits to local parks to talk to dog owners was planned by Council staff during this period but have had to be postponed due to the latest COVID lockdown.







## A SNAPSHOT OF OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

### 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.



An artist's impression of the Lindfield Village Green

#### Lindfield Village Hub

Council resolved in December 2020:

A. Note that the Lindfield Village Hub tender and subsequent negotiation period has coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic, creating a global economic downturn, uncertainty in the property market and impacting on project viability and competitive tension.

B. Note that an offer has not yet been received that is financially viable.

C. Continue to negotiate with any possible providers, while undertaking a review of Council's project assumptions and objectives.

The independent review of Council's project assumptions and objectives is now complete. A report has been prepared for the July 20 Council meeting.

#### Lindfield Village Green

Construction of the Lindfield Village Green is progressing well and the project is on target to be opened to the public by the end of 2021. The Village Green will transform the public car park at Tryon Road into a new community space for outdoor dining, markets and music. Three levels of short and long stay parking are being relocated underground.

The underground car park has largely been completed. Work is now concentrated on landscaping the surface of the Village Green above the car park and building the café in the centre of the Green.

Council staff are continuing to liaise with businesses located on the perimeter of the site to assist them to continue trading during construction. A regular e-news update is being provided on the project to those who have asked to receive it.



The new playground is just one of several major improvements to the St Ives Showground



## St Ives Showground

The Council has been awarded two more state government grants for upgrades to the Showground during this period

The additional funding from the government's Showground Stimulus program totals \$284,350

Around \$20,000 will be put towards wayfinding and interpretative signage at the Showground and the remainder will be spent on installing new picnic and BBQ facilities

Planned upgrades are being progressively completed over the next six months, using government grants of \$1.7 million awarded in 2020. Around \$1.8 million from Council's budget was used to create the new regional playground at the Showground, which opened in December last year.

The upgrades include:

- ◆ Resurfacing and upgrading of the main arena loop road & parking bays.
- ◆ Fencing, soft-fall surfacing and signage for the new playground.
- ◆ Refurbishment of the amenities block near the playground including accessible change rooms.
- ◆ An upgraded kitchenette in the Louise Lennon building.
- ◆ Improvements to the Douglas Pickering Pavilion.
- ◆ Rebuilding of the kiosk for use as an information centre for major events.

## 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.

Upgrades to the St Ives Community Hall and the St Ives youth centre were completed during this period. Due to the COVID lockdown an open day planned in July to showcase both buildings has been postponed.

Construction of the new inclusive playground and skate facility has commenced and the entire recreation precinct is expected to be completed by the end of this year.

## Planning

During this period the Council considered and noted the retail centres strategy, following its public exhibition last year. The strategy examined issues facing the centres and how they may adapt in the future. The main findings of the study were an under supply of retail floor space in centres, high vacancies in commercial areas such as Pymble Business Park and ageing retail facilities. Other key findings include land and development constraints such as fragmented ownership, the high cost of consolidating land and the impact of the Pacific Highway dissecting the centres.

Some of the strategy's recommendations include promotion of mixed-use development, more flexible approaches to planning controls, incentives for investment and investigating a night-time economy.

During this period the draft Ku-ring-gai Local Character Study was placed on public exhibition, with further community engagement through workshops. Following community consultation a final draft was reported to Council in June and adopted.

In March public domain plans for Gordon, Lindfield and Turramurra were placed on public exhibition for comment. The Council uses public domain plans to guide the design and construction of street and park upgrades within and around the centres. Following the public exhibition the Council decided in June to defer the draft plans for a site inspection, which has





been postponed due to the latest lockdown.

Also in March, members of the Ku-ring-gai community were invited to help decide future development in the area by joining Ku-ring-gai's Local Planning Panel. The Ku-ring-gai Local Planning Panel was set up by the NSW Government in 2018 to make decisions on local development applications. The Panel usually meets monthly and is made up of four members, three independent experts and one community representative. The new community representative will commence in July 2021.

In June the Council was successful in defending a court appeal by development company Vigor Master concerning a boarding house development in Roseville. Following complaints by the public, the Council issued a number of fines and stop work orders concerning safety at the site. The company appealed the matter in the Hornsby Local Court but was ordered to pay fines and court costs totalling \$104,000 over safety breaches at the site.

## Public spaces

Under the Neighbourhood Centres Revitalisation Program, the popular Fox Valley Road shopping strip in Wahroonga is being upgraded with work to be completed later this year. The aim of the program is to make local shopping centres more pedestrian friendly and improve their attractiveness to shoppers through modified layouts, new street furniture and landscaping.

The redesigned shopping area will have new paving and footpaths, bike parking, improved seating and landscaping. Parking will be reconfigured to allow for similar number of car spaces while providing a larger paved area outside the front of cafes and shops for pedestrian access and outdoor eating.

Work is continuing on converting St Johns Avenue and the Henry Street area in Gordon into a pedestrianised area with a focus on outdoor dining. The design has been developed in consultation with business owners and the community. Features include wider footpaths, outdoor dining, new pavements, street furniture and tree planting. Heritage Square will also be revamped so it is more accessible and better integrated into the St Johns Avenue public domain. The work is expected to be completed later this year.

## Playgrounds

A number of new playgrounds were planned during this period and community consultation on proposed designs was completed.

In May the community was asked for a feedback on a new playground proposed for the Phillip Mall in West Pymble. Phillip Mall playground is being upgraded after it was identified by the Council as being in a growth area for young families.

The community was asked last year about what they wanted to see in the new playground and a concept design was prepared from the feedback received. In the design, the picnic shelter in the playground will be upgraded as a joint project between the Council and Rotary. An accessible pathway will be added, leading to the shopping mall and nearby café.

Residents in the vicinity of Orange Green in Allara Avenue, North Turramurra were asked their opinion on a design for a new playground, which includes climbing poles and nets, a play house, improved access and pathways. Additional equipment such as picnic tables, a bubbler, bike parking and a nature play area with a see saw and balance beams were also suggested.

The Kendall Village Green playground in Kendall Street, Pymble is also being upgraded following community consultation last year. The concept plan for the new playground contains a trampoline, swing, carousel and cubby house. Council has received funding through the NSW Government's Everyone Can Play grant program to install an accessible toilet and accessible car parking space as part of the upgrade.

Both these playground designs were on public exhibition for comment until late June.

Following community consultation, a new playground at Robert Pymble Park will be built later this year. The new playground design will be based on a theme based upon the area's former use as a fruit farm by its namesake Robert Pymble. Playground equipment includes a tractor, a farm-inspired climbing frame and fruit shaped rockers. Also included is new seating, picnic areas and cycle parking, plus a circuit track for younger children to ride scooters and bikes. Nearby toilets will be upgraded.



St Johns Avenue in Gordon will become a haven for outdoor dining





## Heritage

Repairs to the heritage features of the Council's administration building at 818 Pacific Highway were completed in May. This involved the removal and reinstallation of the entire heritage tiled roof with new gutters, downpipes and eaves. The building dates back to the early 20th century.

During this period the Ku-ring-gai Heritage Strategy was adopted by Council following public consultation. The strategy is intended to measure, plan and report on heritage management in Ku-ring-gai.

In April the Council voted to seek stronger measures to protect indigenous artefacts and sites in the local area. The Council previously assessed the value of its indigenous cultural heritage in 1994 through a study that identified a number of sites and artefacts in the local area.

The decision means Council staff will make contact with the First Nations department within the Australian Museum for advice on how to manage Ku-ring-gai's indigenous heritage and investigate grant funding for further studies and additional protection measures.

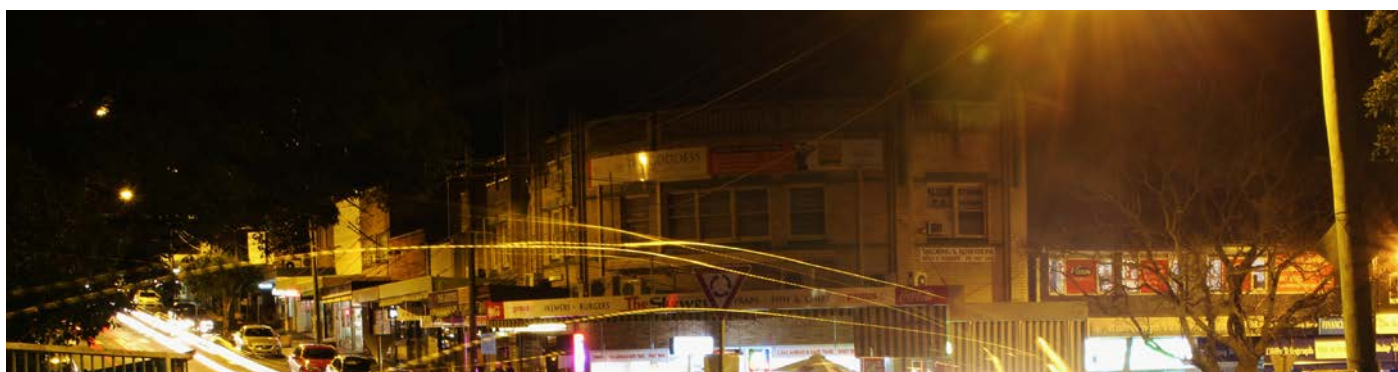




### THEME 4 ACCESS, TRAFFIC & TRANSPORT



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



#### Roads

During this period work on upgrades on the Comenarra Parkway to Fox Valley Road continued.

Council staff are continuing to receive briefings from RMS staff on the pinchpoint program along Pacific Highway between Wahroonga and Turramurra.

A Council resolution during this period expressed concern at the number of trucks now using Pacific Highway and surrounding streets in order to avoid toll payments on NorthConnex and because of the closure of Pennant Hills Road to heavy vehicles. The Council voted to write to the Premier and Minister for Transport to seek a review of traffic movements on the Pacific Highway and other local streets between Village Green Parade and Killeaton Street.

#### Pedestrians

Works on increasing pedestrian safety are progressing along Wade Lane up to Park Avenue and over to Werona Avenue in Gordon. This will make the Gordon station precinct more pedestrian-friendly, safer and attractive. Improvements include widened footpaths for terraced outdoor dining with landscaping in the terraced areas. Landings, handrails and seating will assist those with reduced mobility. The work also includes raised pedestrian crossings at Clipsham Lane, Henry Street

and Wade Lane and improvements to the park, lighting and kiss and ride areas.

During this period the Council and TfNSW introduced 40km speed limits in areas of high pedestrian activity in St Ives. Streets affected include Cowan Road between Kanoona Avenue and Mona Vale Road; Memorial Avenue between Killeaton Street and Mona Vale Road and Village Green Parade.

#### Railway stations

TfNSW are continuing a large scale program of improvements to various railway stations in Ku-ring-gai with the goal of increasing accessibility. Stations where work is taking place include Wahroonga, Roseville, Pymble and Warrawee. Some station closures are taking place on weekends to allow work to take place, as well as at night.

Council staff are liaising with TfNSW to ensure the public are kept informed on the progress of upgrades and any closures affecting stations.





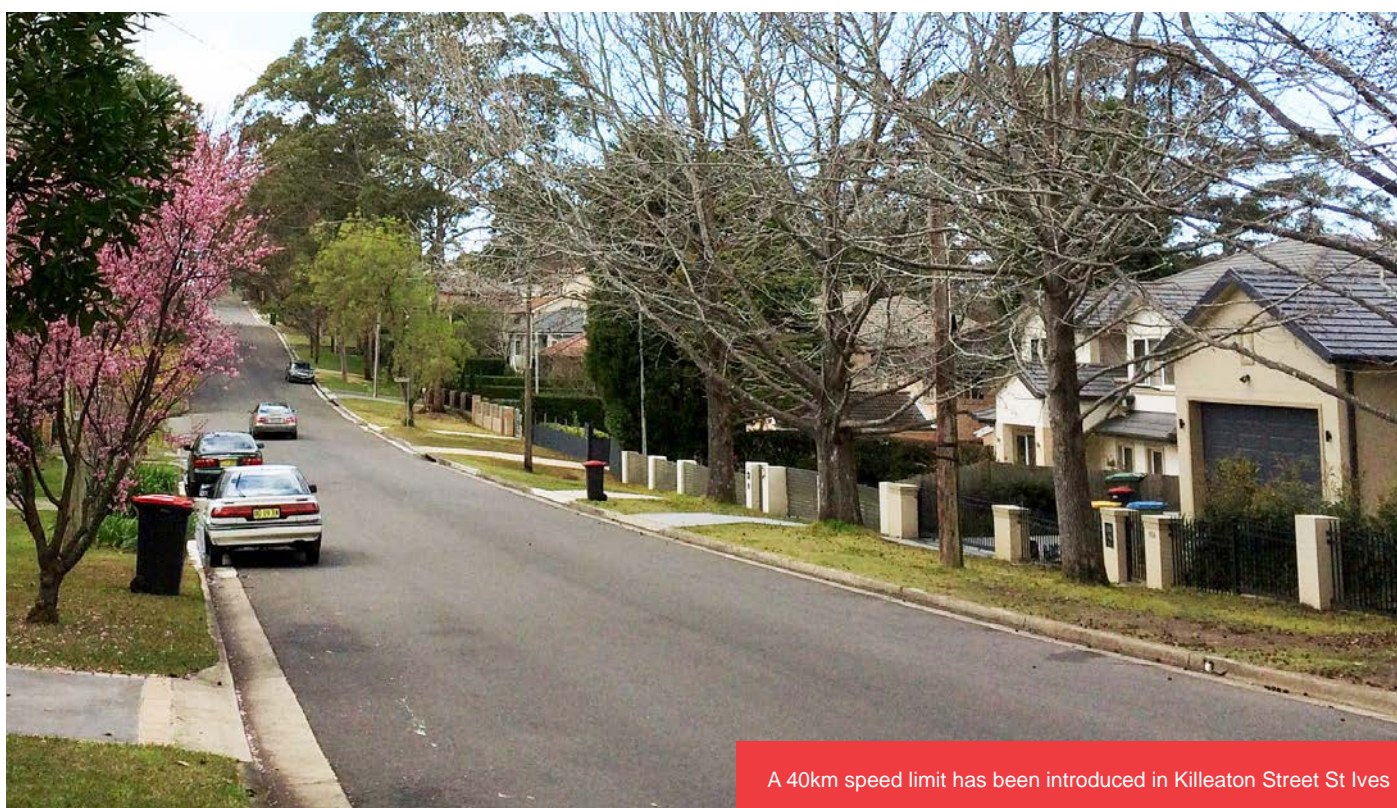
The NSW Government is progressively upgrading several Ku-ring-gai train stations

## Cycling

The Council was awarded \$398,000 from the NSW Government's Streets as Shared Spaces grant program for a separated cycleway to be installed in Gilroy Road Turramurra. The \$15 million Streets as Shared Spaces grant program was created as a result of the pandemic and aims 'to transform streets across NSW into creative, vibrant and healthy public spaces'.

The cycleway in Gilroy Road connects Karuah Park with the Turramurra local centre. Safer crossings have also been installed at Brentwood Avenue and Gilroy Road for both

pedestrians and cyclists to improve links with Karuah Park. The Council is assessing community feedback on the trial cycleway before deciding whether to make it a permanent fixture.



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





## A SNAPSHOT OF OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

### THEME 5 LOCAL ECONOMY & EMPLOYMENT

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



## Business

Council's business engagement events program was broadened and expanded at the start of this year to include short online events, face to face sessions, half day workshops and peer to peer mentoring.

In February and March a three session mentoring program was presented in partnership with City of Ryde Council. This program delivered by the Mentoring Advisory Panels (MAPS) Institute saw 35 Ku-ring-gai based businesses go through a peer-to-peer mentoring process over 3 weeks that culminated in a networking event held at Macquarie University.

A half-day workshop titled Beyond COVID Business Planning was run in April with 31 local businesses attending. The session helped business focus on planning for the next 12 months and had a wide range of industry sectors represented.

In May, 20 businesses attended a demographics webinar where

demographics consultancy ID outlined how the data available through the Council website can be used by local companies to plan, by identifying target markets, specific demographic groups and mapping population trends.

In June Council delivered a webinar focusing on digital marketing, with 46 local business people attending. Topics included search engine optimisation, Google My Business and website functionality.

In addition to the business events program Council has continued its work relating to home based businesses. A research project is being undertaken in partnership with Regional Development Australia (Sydney) and supported by the NSW Small Business Commission. This has included a workshop to discuss the research outcomes and map out future actions. The workshop was attended by five northern Sydney Councils, RDA (Sydney), NSW Small Business Commission,



Service NSW and local business representatives. Work on the project continues with a view to building collaborative arrangements with other local councils to further support local home based businesses.

Between May and June the Council offered two food retailing opportunities to suitable businesses under licence at the Lindfield Village Green and St Ives Showground.

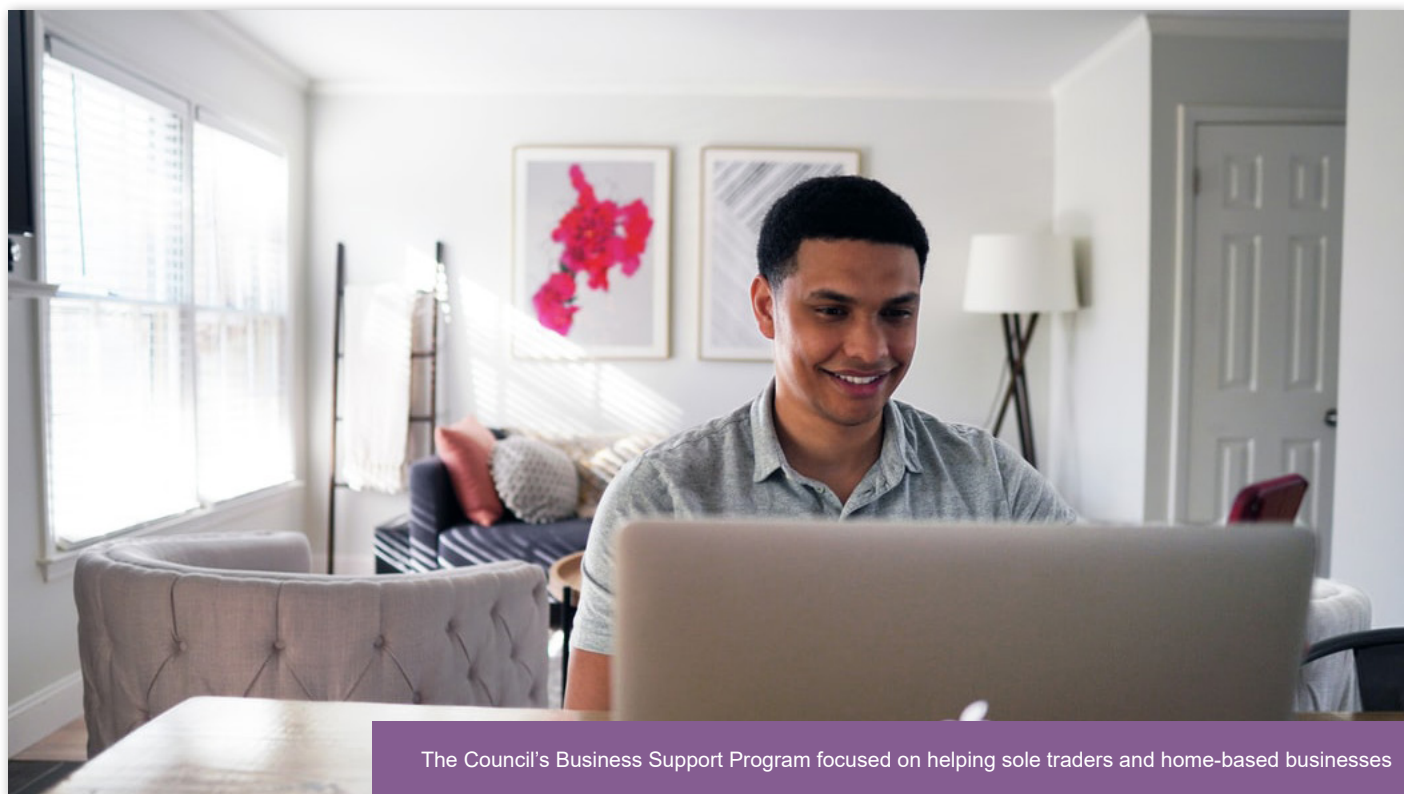
The Lindfield Village Green project is due to be completed later this year, with the current Tryon Road car park being transformed into a large green space with underground parking. As part of the Village Green, a new café/restaurant will be located in its centre to complement other outdoor dining opportunities created by the project. Another new café/kiosk will be located at the entrance of the St Ives Showground, as part of a multi-million dollar refurbishment of the Showground funded by the Council and the NSW Government.

Tenders for both retailing outlets closed at the end of June and the results will be reported to Council.

## Technology

The new Council website that was launched late last year has continued to receive positive feedback from the public and internal users. Council staff are continuing to refine the content of web pages and each page has a function whereby the public can give feedback. Work is continuing on improving integration of other Council systems such as the booking system with the new website. Planning is also underway to implement a new intranet for internal users of Council systems.

The information management team are working on large scale projects that will be implemented later this year to improve integration of Council IT systems and ensure connectivity and improved reporting systems for staff working remotely or in the field.



The Council's Business Support Program focused on helping sole traders and home-based businesses



### 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

Council meetings were held via Zoom until March, with the livestream allowing members of the public to observe the meetings. The monthly Public Forums were also reinstated in March. A decision will be made as to whether the July 2021 Council meeting can be held in the Chambers after the lockdown restrictions currently in place end.

The Council provided funding from its community grants program during this period for the Ku-ring-gai Connect service, including a food bank grocery service and food hampers for needy residents. Ku-ring-gai Meals on Wheels provided a meals service to frontline workers, disadvantaged and homeless people during this period.

Council facilities reopened for bookings in October last year with strict COVID-safe protocols in place, but were closed again in June due to the Sydney-wide lockdown.

NSW Health continued its COVID-19 testing clinic at St Ives Showground during this period which at the time of writing is open daily between 8am and 8pm. Council has assisted in the promotion of this service through electronic signage and regular e-news. The temporary clinic at the Turramurra community

centre was discontinued at the end of January 2021.

Libraries, the Council Chambers and the Council's customer service centre at 818 Pacific Highway Gordon were all closed at the end of June during the lockdown. Council staff able to perform their duties remotely are working from home. Customer service functions have moved online until a decision is made by the NSW Government on ending the lockdown.

The Council's Crisis Management Team is currently meeting daily to plan and assess the organisation's response to the latest COVID-19 restrictions, the reopening of public facilities and a staged approach to staff returning to the workplace.

#### Community

During this period the Council's consultation practices were reviewed so residents' views are captured through a range of ways in the future. The review comes as residents are increasingly going online to express their view on new services and projects.



The consultation review was carried out through information gathering via surveys, workshops and face-to-face interviews. There was a 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 has been incorporated into a revised community consultation policy which is now on public exhibition until the end of July.

In April community groups and organisations were invited to apply for \$100,000 in grants to help the Ku-ring-gai community.

The grants were in three categories: equipment, community development programs and arts & cultural programs. Grants of up to \$2000 were available for equipment and up to \$5000 for community development services and arts and cultural activities. Successful grant applicants will be notified in July.

## Finances

Council adopted the Delivery Program and Operational Plan for 2020-2021 in June 2021, following community consultation between April and May.

The report highlighted an anticipated reduction in general income due to the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Overall, the Council's balance sheet is in positive territory with an operating surplus predicted of \$4.4 million excluding contributions and grant income. The surplus will be returned to the ongoing capital works program.

The report highlighted the need to consider sales of under utilised assets as a means of financing some larger projects. These include the new library and community centre for the Lindfield Village Hub, the Marian Street Theatre upgrade and the new indoor sports centre at St Ives.

Key projects planned for 2021-2022 are:

- ◆ Lindfield Village Green – completion and public opening
  - ◆ St Johns Avenue, Gordon – creation of a pedestrianised 'eat street' and streetscape improvements
  - ◆ St Ives Village Green Youth Precinct – new skate park and playground
  - ◆ Marian Street Theatre – determination of the development application and detailed design
  - ◆ Indoor Sports Centre, St Ives High School – determination of the development application and detailed design
- Funding allocated to other key capital works programs in

the draft budget includes:

- ◆ \$19 million for sports courts
- ◆ \$14.4 million for road renewal and footpaths
- ◆ \$8.4 million for new and upgraded parks
- ◆ \$5.6 million for streetscape improvements to local and neighbourhood centres
- ◆ \$4.2 million to upgrade sportsfields
- ◆ \$5.9m incl Op Projects for the natural environment and sustainability initiatives
- ◆ \$1.6 million for drainage and stormwater upgrades
- ◆ \$921,000 for traffic management
- ◆ \$606,000 for playground upgrades and new equipment
- ◆ \$525,600 for public toilets and facilities

## Community

In preparation for the local government elections to be held in September 2021, the Council hosted two information sessions for potential candidates seeking to be elected. NSW voters are due to go to the polls in local government elections on Saturday 4 September, after their postponement last year because of the pandemic.

In May the Australian Local Government Women's Association and the Council held a free forum for women considering standing as Councillors in the September elections. The forum provided a practical first-hand information about life as a female councillor and outlined how local women can represent their community in decision-making.

Currently 90% of NSW councils have less than half female councillors, with at least four councils having no women councillors at all.

Mayor Jennifer Anderson discussed her experience as the longest serving Mayor of Ku-ring-gai. Also speaking at the Forum was Penrith Mayor Karen McKeowan, Fairfield Councillor Sera Yilmaz and Ku-ring-gai Councillor Christine Kay.

Registrations for candidates close in July and an online information session was hosted by the Council on 10 June. The information session covered the roles and responsibilities of elected councillors, meeting procedure, an overview of what councils do and how councillors interact with Council staff.



