

A message from your Mayor

It's been a dynamic and productive year across our region, with strong momentum driving progress in both Council projects and community life.

General Manager, Ken Liddell, has played a significant role in building this momentum and setting us on this positive path. You may have seen that he has recently resigned. I sincerely thank him for his dedicated service and leadership over recent years. During his tenure, Council has delivered more for our community than ever before thanks to a significant strengthening of internal capabilities. His legacy includes an impressive record of delivery and notable progress across our capital works program. His forward-thinking approach leaves us well-positioned for the future.

While we transition to new leadership, Council remains committed to maintaining continuity and progress. In the interim, Director of Planning and Environment Peter Chrystal has been appointed as Acting General Manager.

Our expanded food and garden organics service officially

launched late last month. Food scraps that once went to landfill can now go in your green bin. Many have asked about the red bin – rest assured, weekly general waste collections remain unchanged, following strong community feedback. This is a significant achievement that I am glad to see delivered under my leadership.

Looking ahead, I'm excited about the return of Stomp Festival on Saturday 2 August. Cessnock City Council has stepped in to bring back this beloved community tradition, working alongside valued partners from the Hunter Valley Wine and Tourism Association. This year's festival will be held in a new location, on the grounds of TAFE NSW Cessnock. The new larger location offers more space for attractions, activities, and vendors.

There will be live music and entertainment throughout the day, and local producers and artisans will showcase their food, wine, craft beer and spirits, as well as unique crafts, specialty items and festival memorabilia. I'm most looking forward to the signature grape stomping



Cessnock City Mayor Dan Watton

competition, with participants of all ages able to compete in the traditional winemaking process, along with the rolling barrel races that introduce another interactive challenge for festival-goers to enjoy.

The festival promises to be an exciting day of culinary delights, entertainment and community spirit, and I look forward to seeing you there.

Dan Watton, Mayor

Weston Bears Park Sporting Facility Update



Works begin on upgrades for Weston Bears Park

Council has officially begun construction on the long-awaited multi-million-dollar upgrade of Weston Bears Park, with the project set to deliver significant improvements to both the facilities and the community's sporting experience. The \$6.4 million upgrade is made possible through a combined investment, including more than \$3 million from the Australian Government's Growing Regions Program.

Project Overview

The upgrade will see the refurbishment of the park's grandstand, along with the construction of new clubrooms, changerooms, and amenities, enabling the Weston Bears Football Club to better support their growing female base with a welcoming environment for all players. Additionally, the grandstand will be updated to include a new canteen, a modern clubroom, and a wheelchair-accessible seating area. The design of these new facilities aims to improve comfort and safety for players, spectators, and the wider community.

Another major component of the upgrade will be the construction of a new carpark, which will feature upgraded drainage, improved lighting, and landscaping to enhance the overall functionality and appearance of the park.

The project is expected to be completed by early 2026, marking an exciting new chapter for Weston Bears Football Club, one of the country's oldest and most respected football clubs, founded in 1907.

For more information on the Weston Bears Park upgrades, visit www.cessnock.nsw.gov.au/WestonBearsUpgrade

Cessnock wins infrastructure award



Celebrating the win

Cessnock City Council recently won the award for the Best Infrastructure Project over \$1.5 million at the Local Government Professionals Awards, recognising the Kurri Kurri Town Centre Upgrade.

Several teams collaborated on the project and it was great to see what could be achieved by working together.

CFO Update



Last month, Councillors voted to adopt our Community Strategic Plan, which sets out our long-term vision for our region. The CSP paints a picture of optimism for our future, while recognising the challenges we face as a growing

community. We have been upfront for several years about budgetary challenges we are facing as a council.

These budget challenges are largely due to factors such as an ageing and growing asset base, cost shifting by successive state governments, and increases to costs and materials outpacing allowable rate increases set by the state government. These problems are not unique to our Council, and are faced by the vast majority of the local government sector.

We recently completed our 2025 Community Satisfaction Survey. Consistent with previous years, the results show that our community places a high value on the services that we deliver and that they want us to deliver more.

Over the past four years, we have focused on doing just that. We have drawn on reserves to significantly increase our works program and dedicated more funding for important things like road maintenance.

We have a record of careful budget management. The financial situation facing Cessnock City Council is a result of structural challenges baked into how the local government sector operates across NSW. No single decision of our Council has led to this.

Amid these challenges, our Council has remained an efficient organisation when it comes to its people. An independent financial review has found that Cessnock City Council had the absolute lowest staff expenditure when assessed against other comparable councils in each of the past four years.

Cessnock LGA also has the lowest average rate charges in the Hunter relative to land value, and among the lowest rates of comparable councils across the state. If our Council is to continue providing the exceptional services and infrastructure to cater for our rapidly-growing region – and which our community has told us it expects – the structural challenges mentioned above need to be resolved. It's critical that we take steps toward achieving financial sustainability.

It's evident that we don't have a spending problem, but an income one. We will have to address issues on the income side while continuing to review our spending. When we know what that looks like we will have an open and honest conversation with you, as ratepayers, about it.

Matt Plumridge
Chief Financial Officer

Works Update

RECENTLY COMPLETED

- **Cessnock Hockey Facility:** Surface replacement
- **Avery's Rise Park, Heddons Greta:** Playground upgrade
- **Booth Park, Kurri Kurri:** Public amenity building upgrade
- **Macquarie Avenue Playground, Cessnock:** Playground upgrade
- **Cessnock Netball Courts:** Playing surface replacement
- **Deakin Street, Kurri Kurri:** Road rehabilitation
- **East Esplanade, Weston:** Pathway construction
- **George Downes Drive, Bucketty:** Road safety improvements
- **Orange Street, Abermain:** Road renewal
- **McGrane Street & Mount View Road:** Pedestrian refuge
- **Bridges Hill Park to Wine Country Drive:** Shared pathway and pedestrian refuges
- **Various Bus Shelters and Boarding Platforms across the LGA**
- **Campbell Street, Ellalong:** Road rehabilitation

CURRENTLY UNDERWAY

- **Booth Park, Kurri Kurri:** Construction of new netball facility
- **Kurri Kurri Sportsground:** Lighting and field improvements
- **Weston Bears Park:** Upgrade to the amenity building
- **Sawyers Gully Road, Sawyers Gully:** Road rehabilitation
- **Anderson Avenue, Paxton:** Pathway construction
- **Betterment of Wollombi Walking Trail to Shared Pathway**
- **Averys Lane to Clift Street, Heddons Greta:** Drainage and roadworks
- **Thomas Street, North Rothbury:** Stage 2 drainage and road upgrade

UPCOMING PROJECTS

- **Cessnock Pool, Cessnock:** Installation of shade sail
- **Heddons Street, Heddons Greta:** Drainage and Roadworks
- **Kurri Kurri to Testers Hollow:** Stage 1 pathway construction
- **Wollombi Intersection:** Traffic facilities upgrade
- **Bathurst Street Bridge, Sawyers Gully:** Bridge replacement
- **Branxton Town Centre:** CBD upgrade stage 1
- **West Street, Greta:** Pathway construction
- **Sandy Creek Road, Mount Vincent:** Road safety improvements



You can keep up-to-date with Council's works at www.cessnock.nsw.gov.au/works



Highlights of Cessnock City's 2024/25 Budget

The Cessnock Operational Plan 2025-26 is a one-year plan developed to implement the operational activities that will achieve the long-term strategic directions outlined in the Cessnock Delivery Program 2025-29, that will provide far reaching social, economic and environmental benefits to our community.

A snapshot of some of our key projects for 2025-26 include:



Shared pathway linking Kurri Kurri, Testers Hollow to Cliftleigh



Stormwater upgrade at Portland Street Millfield



Wollombi Road upgrades



New landfill development at Cessnock City Council Waste Facility



Kurri Kurri Netball Facilities



Lead structure plan development for Anambah to Branxton corridor

Launch your career at Cessnock City Council

Cessnock City Council's Launch Program offers a diverse range of Apprentice, Trainee, and Undergraduate positions annually, designed to propel individuals into fulfilling careers both within Council and beyond. This initiative provides robust support and mentoring, equipping participants with essential skills and academic qualifications.

Council currently employs 30 dedicated staff across various Apprentice, Trainee, and Undergraduate roles spanning fields such as Sports Turf Management, Mobile Plant Technology, Carpentry, Business Support, Landscape Construction, Engineering, People and Culture, Building Surveying, Customer Relations, Parks and Gardens, Construction, Strategic Planning, Plumbing, and Tourism. These positions offer a dynamic work environment, continuous professional growth, hands-on learning experiences, and formal certifications.

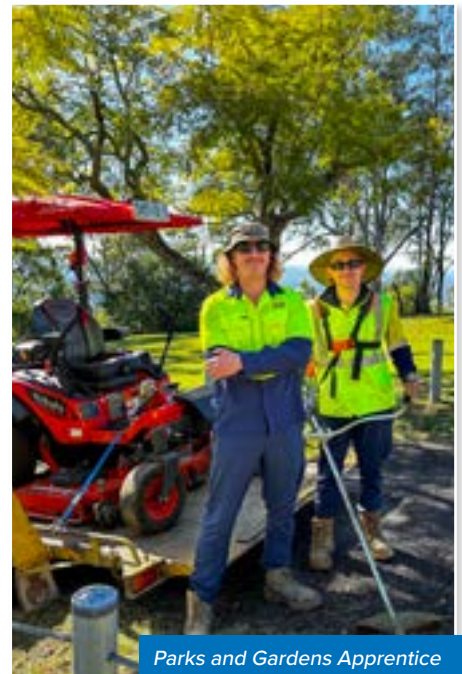
Throughout the year, our enthusiastic team engages with local young people via Career Days at High Schools, TAFE, and Universities, to actively promote these exciting opportunities. We guide them through the application process, address their enquiries, and showcase the benefits of joining our vibrant team.

We are now preparing for our 2026 intake, with recruitment commencing this August. Our adverts will be promoted via our careers page at cessnock.nsw.gov.au/Council/Careers/Current-vacancies where you'll be able to explore a variety of roles across different departments. For any questions, our friendly Talent Acquisition team is ready to assist you; contact us at recruitment@cessnock.nsw.gov.au.

Join our team and launch your career at Cessnock City Council!



Civil Construction Apprentice Lara



Parks and Gardens Apprentice Jack and Supervisor Bryce

Have you downloaded the Cessnock Waste App yet?

We've had a great response to our Cessnock Waste App since it launched last year, and with a new round of waste vouchers set to be released at the end of the month, we wanted to remind residents that the app is the easiest, and most convenient way to get your vouchers. Simply download the free Cessnock Waste App from your preferred app store, go to the Waste Vouchers section on the menu, and add your details. Your voucher will then appear, and you can present it to our friendly staff at the Cessnock Waste Management Centre.

The app also allows residents to set reminders for bin collection days, learn about our three-bin system, submit a form to request a new bin, and report a broken or missed bin service.

To find out more, visit:

www.cessnock.nsw.gov.au/CessnockWasteApp

Upcoming Council meetings

- 20 August, 2025
- 17 September, 2025
- 15 October, 2025
- 19 November, 2025
- 10 December, 2025



Can't make it to a meeting in person? Watch the meetings live online, as well as view past meetings on <https://www.youtube.com/@CessnockCityCouncil>

Join your local library



Join Cessnock City Library today for unlimited access to free books, magazines, audiobooks, eBooks, eMusic, eFilms, eMags, WiFi, computers, tech help, exhibitions, school holiday activities, and a range of events for all ages.

Membership is FREE and there are no overdue fines or reservation fees. It's also never been easier to join – simply sign up online at www.cessnock.nsw.gov.au/libraries.

Have Your Say at Together Cessnock



Together Cessnock is a space for residents to have their say on important topics, share ideas, and offer feedback on policies, projects and plans.

Join today to play an active role in the development of our area.



WHAT'S ON IN 2025



MATTRESS DROP-OFF

Drop off your old mattresses and ensembles for FREE

SAT 18 OCT
8am - 12pm

Basin Carpark Cessnock

For more info, search "mattress drop off" at cessnock.nsw.gov.au



CESSNOCK CITY COUNCIL SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES



SCAN THE QR CODE ABOVE FOR MORE INFORMATION



STAY IN TOUCH



CessnockCityCouncil

CessnockCityCouncil

02 4993 4100



www.cessnock.nsw.gov.au

council@cessnock.nsw.gov.au

62-78 Vincent Street, Cessnock

Please note that this is **STRICTLY** an alcohol-free event