



A SNAPSHOT OF OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT
FEBRUARY 2023 - JULY 2023



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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.

The General Manager's Report is intended to be a high-level summary. The Delivery Program and Operational Plan (DP&OP) outline in detail how the organisation aims to achieve the objectives of the Community Strategic Plan and are a statutory requirement. Council prepares and publishes detailed reports on the progress of the DP&OP; for further information visit krg.nsw.gov.au/council

This issue of the General Manager's Report covers the period from February to July 2023. During this reporting period some key projects were advanced or completed.

Highlights include:

- ◆ The Council's Delivery Program and budget for 2023-2024 were adopted, with \$54 million allocated to capital works.
- ◆ Several playground upgrades were completed and consultation on designs for other playgrounds was completed.
- ◆ The Council was awarded a \$450,000 state government grant for improvements to Gordon Library.
- ◆ The Council approved the installation of the synthetic turf field at Norman Griffiths Oval West Pymble.
- ◆ A series of community events and workshops commenced as part of the adopted Net Zero Strategy.
- ◆ The first stage of community consultation for the St Ives Showground plan of management commenced.

- ◆ The Council won two prestigious engineering awards for the Lindfield Village Green and St Ives Showground.
- ◆ A draft Recreation Needs Study went on public exhibition.
- ◆ Council hosted a highly successful live site for the Women's World Cup at St Ives Village Green.

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





FIFA Women's World Cup live site July 2023



The new playground at Robert Pymble Park

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

A campaign to recruit educators for Family Day Care continued during this period, with Facebook, press advertising and digital billboards. The recruitment handbooks for educators and families were both updated and redesigned.

Thomas Carlyle Children's Centre celebrated indigenous culture during the Gai-mariagal Festival making damper, reading stories and arts and crafts.

Vacation Care centres were at capacity for the April and July school holidays at the St Ives, Pymble and West Lindfield centres. The centres offer children aged 5 to 14 a wide variety of arts, crafts, games, sports during school holidays. A large number of excursions and out-of-centre activities were successfully organised, despite difficulties in attracting short term casual staff.

A new playgroup for young children with additional needs has continued to grow alongside a support service for parents and carers. The playgroup is at 1A Acron Road St Ives and opens on Mondays between 9.30am and 11am during school terms for children aged 0-6 with complex health needs or disability.

Specialist staff and volunteers host the playgroup, while a support group for parents and carers meets informally at the same time so parents and carers can relax, meet others in similar situations and share experiences.

Youth

The St Ives youth hub continues to be very popular with young residents and as a result a free skateboarding & scooter competition and coaching day was held during this period.

Originally scheduled for Youth Week during April, the events were moved to July due to bad weather. Free lessons on skateboarding and scooters were available for ages 12-24 years presented by Brella Skateboards and School of Skate, as well as skateboarding and scooter competitions. There was also live music at the park, featuring the young winners of the Meadowbank and Lane Cove Battle of the Bands finals.

During this year's Gai-Mariagal Festival St Ives youth hub hosted Festival leaders Aunty Susan & Aunty Caroline who led an art and craft session for young people aged 12-18, along with



A skateboarding competition was held at St Ives skatepark in June

free pizza. Throughout the day free food, drinks and games were on offer and the Council's youth team supervised events along with staff from Brella Skateboards and School of Skate.

During the period the Council hosted more free barista training courses for young people, as well as a free job seeking skills session. These were again highly popular and booked out early.

Young residents were invited to take part in the Need a Lift? photo competition between 17 July and 4 September. The competition is open to all young people aged 12 – 24 years living in northern Sydney. Entrants to the competition are invited to take photos of the people, places or things around them that lift their mood, along with a brief description explaining why.

All entries will be judged by a panel of young people, with a selection of photographs professionally printed and publicly exhibited during Mental Health Month between 1 October and 31 October.

A free online forum for parents and carers was held in May on disengagement in young people. The forum was hosted by a panel of experts from Empowering Parents in Crisis, Sydney Drug Education & Counselling Centre and Relationships Australia and discussed common problems experienced by teens such as school refusal, drug & alcohol use and harmful online behaviour. A second forum was held in June dealing with problem gambling in young people.

Aged & Disability

An Aged Care Expo was held in March 2023, co-hosted by Ku-ring-gai, Hornsby, Mosman, Northern Beaches, Ryde and Willoughby Councils and the Your Side organisation. Aimed at people wanting a change of career or seeking more information about working in aged care, the Expo featured over 25 prospective employers who discussed the different roles available and what qualifications are needed. The Expo also



Mayor Jeff Pettett with young barista trainees

featured real life stories from aged care workers discussing their work.

Also in March, the Council participated in the statewide Neighbour Day campaign. In Ku-ring-gai the Hello neighbour card was a way for people to check in on elderly or vulnerable neighbours, build community connections and show others that they care. The card simply asks residents to nominate whether they can help them with things as shopping, their pets or putting the bins out. Residents fill in their name and street number on the card and pop it in a neighbour's mailbox.

The Seniors Festival was held during February 2023 due to the upcoming state election. The Festival highlight was an open day at Turrumurra Seniors Centre to give older residents and their families an overview of local activities and services. Around 40 community organisations, clubs and groups were at the open day to offer information, advice and 'come-and-try' activities such as yoga and dancing, as well as morning tea and lunch.

Other Festival highlights included free lunches and morning teas, a workshop on creating herb and salad gardens in a basket and lessons on how to write your life story. Author Nigel Bartlett gave a talk on how to retire later but still achieve work-life balance and Julie Sursok discussed her new book on the



The Council's Seniors Festival offered numerous free events for older residents

pandemic and the ways older people have adapted to changing times. An outing to Roseville Cinema to watch the movie *Eternity* was well attended. The film tells the story of Arthur Stace who chalked the word *Eternity* over 500,000 times on the pavements and buildings of Sydney between 1932 and 1967.

With the support of Ku-ring-gai, Northern Beaches and Hornsby Councils, Meals on Wheels rebranded itself as The Village Chef. From its kitchen in Turramurra The Village Chef cooks fresh and frozen meals for hundreds of aged and vulnerable residents every week, which are then delivered door to door by dedicated volunteers. The Village Chef has an expanded menu, with clients being offered meal choices ranging from Asian, Italian, Indian and vegetarian along with the staples of freshly made sandwiches, salads, soups and desserts.

In July 2023 the Council became a member of the Sunflower Program, meaning that its staff are being trained to assist children and adults with hidden disabilities or chronic health conditions.

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The program works through free lanyards or bracelets showing the sunflower symbol, which residents simply wear to show Council staff that they need extra support, understanding or time. The sunflower lanyards and bracelets are available at the following locations:

- Council's customer service centre, Level 4
818 Pacific Highway Gordon
- All Ku-ring-gai libraries
- Ku-ring-gai Fitness and Aquatic Centre at West Pymble
- The Wildflower Garden at St Ives

- Ku-ring-gai Art Centre at Roseville
- Ku-ring-gai Neighbourhood Centre at St Ives

Events

The second Women's Forum was held in March, featuring Annabelle Daniel OAM, the Chair of Domestic Violence NSW and CEO of Women's Community Shelters who shared her expertise on the topic of violence against women.

A celebration of the Year of the Rabbit took place in February 2023 to celebrate the Lunar New Year. This included market stalls, food trucks, lion dancers and cultural performances at St Ives Village Green, funded by a grant from Multicultural NSW. Other Lunar New Year events included calligraphy demonstrations, storytelling, dancing and an art exhibition.

Between November 2022 and March 2023 Turramurra centre came alive with art installations, community events, a new pedestrian crossing in William Street and edible gardens. The Try Turramurra experience was funded through a \$500,000 grant from the NSW Government's Streets as Shares Spaces scheme, with the aim of bringing life back to local centres following the pandemic. The final event – the Try Turramurra Festival – took place on 18 March between 12 noon and 6pm, featuring live music and entertainment, market stalls, food and drinks and performances by local schools and organisations.

Gai-mariagal Festival events took place between 26 May and 9 July with music and art, children's stories and guided walks. The Festival was founded in 2001 and aims to raise awareness of First Nations people living in the northern Sydney region.

Events included a dot painting workshop at the Ku-ring-gai Art Centre in Roseville with indigenous artist Jude Jarrett; a guided bushwalk with Karen Smith from the Aboriginal Heritage Office discussing the Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden's indigenous heritage and a bushfoods and botanicals tasting experience Ngemba Weilwan woman Sharon Winsor.

One of this year's Festival highlights was a collaboration between First Nations & South Asian artists. The sounds of the Indian stringed instrument called the veena will be intertwined with stories from Sri Lanka, Wiradjuri ways and Aboriginal dance. The Bhoomi experience took place at St Ives Showground.

In April Council's events staff assisted with the ANZAC Day dawn service at Roseville Memorial Park held from 5am. The President of the Roseville RSL Sub-Branch and Mayor Jeff Pettett delivered speeches at the service on behalf of the Ku-ring-gai community.

The Ku-ring-gai Heritage Festival was held between 18 April and 19 May with walks, talks, tours and other events designed to bring local history to life. This year's Festival was supported by community organisations and coincided with the National Trust's Australian Heritage Festival.

The Ku-ring-gai Heritage Festival included photo exhibitions, open homes, historical talks, walking tours, fashion exhibitions and an architectural drawing workshop. New events this year included a Drawing our Built Heritage art workshop at the Woodlands stately home, an open house & garden at the historic Mahratta residence, a guided tour of Harry and Penelope Seidler's home at Killara and an open day hosted by the Ku-ring-gai Historical Society.

Between June and July the Council coordinated the Arts & Cultural Festival celebrating Ku-ring-gai's diverse and thriving arts and cultural community. The festival hosted a variety of events for people of varying ages, interests and abilities. Events included exhibitions, theatre performances, arts and creative workshops and film screenings.

Ku-ring-gai Arts Centre

During April and again in July the Centre offered a variety of classes to children as part of its school holiday program, including pottery, jewellery making, painting, drawing and guitar classes.

The Art Centre hosted the Annual Tutor's show in July 2023, showcasing the creative talents of some of the 60 artists who lead and inspire Ku-ring-gai's artist community. Artist tutors include practicing artists whose work is exhibited regularly in national and international galleries, including the Art Gallery of NSW.

The Art Centre hosted an exhibition to celebrate Lunar New Year by asking the public to depict their interpretations of the Year of the Rabbit. Entries were exhibited in February.

Other exhibitions during the period included Blooms featuring artistic interpretations of the word; Our Surrounds, a body of works inspired by the local environment and Mysterious World exploring the concept of the unknowable and the unknown.

Libraries

All Ku-ring-gai libraries hosted a series of craft and zine making workshops as well as coding workshops, puzzles and Lego challenges for young readers during the April and July school holiday programs.

In February for Lunar New Year Gordon Library hosted a free Chinese calligraphy class and a free workshop on the traditional art of paper folding or origami. Diwali celebrations were held through storytimes, activities, music and dance.



The Lunar New Year festival took place in February 2023

The very popular Library Up Late series of author talks was planned and launched in July 2023, with some interesting and challenging topics to be explored during August and September.

The inaugural Ku-ring-gai World Chess Day tournament was held in July, with games taking place in three age groups of 7 to 11 years, 12 to 15 years and 16 years and older. The day was a great success with plans to hold other chess tournaments in the future.

Another new event hosted at Gordon Library in July was the first Creative Showcase, a day of activities profiling Ku-ring-gai's artistic and creative community.

Gordon Library was awarded a \$450,000 grant as part of the State Library's annual round of funding for capital projects in local libraries. The funding will allow the library to improve its service delivery and increase the accessibility of public spaces. In addition, Council approved the funding for an upgrade to the library's roof. Gordon Library was previously refurbished in 2014

An extra 76 seats will be added along with tables, increasing the library's capability for events and study space. The public internet room will be repurposed into a quiet zone for people wishing to undertake work or study, with access to power and USB connections. The internet access area will be relocated with 5 PCs and three hot desking terminals, with improved WiFi throughout the library.

Existing collection shelves will be replaced with flexible mobile shelving to free up space for events and workshops. Work began during this period on installing new furniture for the additional study spaces at Gordon Library.



School holiday activities at Gordon Library

Recreation

Consultation continued during this period on the Recreation Needs Study, following its adoption by Council for public exhibition until 1 September 2023. The study will help the Council assess the community's recreational needs over the next decade and how to manage future demand.

Previous consultation took place between October 2022 and June 2023 with activities such as surveys of schools club/associations, personal trainers, coaches, casual hirers and permanent hirers of Council facilities, an independent telephone survey with Ku-ring-gai households and focus group discussions with residents.



The popular Library Up Late author talks are returning

The upgrade to Norman Griffiths Oval was approved to proceed by Council in March 2023 with the installation of an all-weather surface. In addition to the all-weather synthetic surface, the Oval will receive new lighting and pathways, an electronic scoreboard and an improved drainage system.

Landscape masterplans for The Glade, Wahroonga, and Queen Elizabeth Reserve in West Lindfield were developed and placed on public exhibition during this period. The masterplans will allow future redesigns and upgrades of these parks, guiding improvements while ensuring their natural and cultural heritage values are maintained. Consultation with residents in the Glade is continuing due to concerns about aspects of the proposed masterplan.

Lindfield Soldiers Memorial Park No. 1 Oval reopened in May for training and games, after an 18-month closure for resurfacing and grading of the field and cricket wicket.

A new water recycling system was added to Samuel King Oval during this period to harvest rainwater for irrigation.

At Allan Small Oval in Saiala Road East Killara two new tennis courts were installed during this period, with two others to follow at the Oval later this year. At Killara Oval, another two new tennis courts were constructed and opened to the public for bookings in June.

A funding agreement between Council and the Department of Sport was signed in June 2023 for a grant of \$419,085 under the Female Friendly Community Sport Facilities program. The grant will enable Council to design and construct fully accessible amenities and changing facilities at Bannockburn Oval, Pymble.

The annual Sports Forum was held in July to provide updates on projects and other issues affecting sporting groups. Nearly 50 sports representatives attended on behalf of the four football codes, netball, cricket, baseball, basketball, Oztag, archery and school sports. Guest speaker Helen Armson from Football NSW discussed the Women's Legacy Program and Council staff presented on Ku-ring-gai's Recreation Needs Study and plans of management for sportsfields.

In July the 50 metre outdoor pool at the Ku-ring-gai Fitness & Aquatic Centre West Pymble was closed for essential maintenance. The pool will reopen in October 2023. All other facilities at the centre are unaffected by the closure.

In July Ku-ring-gai residents were treated to live screenings of the Matildas round games in July at the Council's free live site at St Ives Village Green. Food and drinks were on sale at the live site and local sporting clubs invited the public to take part in clinics and competitions before each game.

The fixtures shown in July were

Round 1 Thursday 20 July Australia v Ireland

Round 2 Thursday 27 July Australia v Nigeria

Round 3 Monday 31 July Australia v Canada



Two additional free live sites were organised in August for the Matildas knockout game against Canada and their quarter final against France, with the latter held at Wahroonga Park. At the time of writing a free screening of the semi final against England will also be held at Wahroonga Park.



THEME 2 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

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



The Sculpture Trail will form part of this September's Eco Festival

Environmental Levy

Advertising for artists submissions got underway during this period for this year's Sculpture Trail, funded by the environmental levy. The Sculpture Trail gives artists the opportunity to exhibit works made from recycled materials in the Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden at St Ives. They will be displayed between September and October 2023 as part of the Council's Eco-Festival.

In March the Council offered \$100,000 in grants for community-based projects tackling conservation and helping to reach zero emissions. The grants are funded by Ku-ring-gai's environmental levy.

This year the grants had a Net Zero category, with additional funds for projects which help the community address energy use, waste reduction and efficient transport. Grants of up to \$5,000 for conservation projects and up to \$30,000 for innovative Net Zero projects were offered and successful applications were announced in July.

The matched community investment associated with environmental rebates for this period was \$635,282.

Net Zero

As part of the Net Zero Strategy adopted by the Council a new website was launched during this period to help residents reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. The new website at www.netzero.krg.nsw.gov.au went live on 22 May 2023.

The new website is full of practical steps aimed at renters, homeowners, young families, retired couples and those in apartments. Steps include installing energy efficient heating and cooling, tips on buying electric cars and bikes, how to replace old appliances with electric options or installing solar panels and batteries. The Council is adopting a proactive approach towards electrifying local homes, reducing waste and offering free home assessments and rebates for a range of items. Through the Net Zero website residents will be encouraged to gradually convert appliances and transport to renewable electric power.

Over 300 local residents have signed up since the beginning of the period to become 'Net Zero Champions', spreading the word in the community about ways to cut greenhouse gas emissions. Net Zero champions were invited to a networking event during this period and were at the Try Turramurra festival in March. They have also set up a private Facebook page and WhatsApp groups to exchange ideas and discuss issues. Residents were invited to an online discussion on ways to achieve net zero emissions in Ku-ring-gai. The Net Zero Action Collective group is one of three volunteer groups looking at programs and events to encourage local uptake of renewables and electrifying homes and transport. The online discussion took place on Thursday 27 July.

In June Net Zero Champions were at train stations throughout Ku-ring-gai chatting to residents about how to successfully cut their energy costs and greenhouse gas emissions. The Champions were at Killara, Pymble, Roseville and Warrawee, Gordon, Lindfield, Turramurra and Wahroonga stations. On



Work continued on engaging Ku-ring-gai to become a Net Zero Community

both days commuters were treated to delicious 'Net Zero' doughnuts while they chatted.both days commuters were treated to delicious 'Net Zero' doughnuts while they chatted.

During this period proposals were sought for the installation of solar panels on the roof of Council's commercial building at 828 Pacific Highway Gordon. Also at 828 Pacific Highway, three electric vehicle charging stations were installed.

Three rooftop solar systems were installed at Council Chambers in Gordon, Council's Depot at 31 Bridge Street and the West Lindfield Community Centre.

Total greenhouse gas emissions from Council operations during this period were 71% lower than the 2000 baseline and 50% lower than 2021-2022 emissions. This is largely due to Council transitioning to 100% renewable energy for its electricity supply with ZEN Energy. This outcome puts Council ahead of its 2030 target to reduce total greenhouse gas emissions by 50%, and on track towards reaching its 2040 target of achieving net zero emissions by 2040 or earlier.

Community education

With the help of Ku-ring-gai Council, West Pymble Public students transformed plastic waste into rulers for their classmates. It follows a workshop in May where Year 3 and 4 students were shown how plastic waste could be changed into school rulers.

Ku-ring-gai Council partnered with the industrial design company Defy Design to purchase a special mould whereby plastics collected by students can be melted down into rulers for the classroom. In what is hoped to be the first of many workshops, the Council is educating students about the importance of a circular economy and reducing the amount of plastic ending up in landfill.

Local businesses with power bills exceeding \$32,000 a year were invited to a free webinar in March 2023 to get advice on how to cut their costs. Ku-ring-gai and Northern Beaches Councils co-hosted the webinar, which came as a result of a survey conducted among local businesses about their energy use.

The webinar discussed the use of renewable energy power purchase agreements – or PPAs as they are also known - to manage electricity price volatility and improve greenhouse emissions.

The Council promoted Plastic Free July by asking residents to come up with their most creative ways of reducing plastic. Every entry had the chance to win one of two sustainable prize packs valued at \$150 each. Winners will be notified in August.

The Council offered workshops on sustainable living and cutting household costs during June and July 2023. The workshops are part of the Council's community education campaign to help residents reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and save money on household bills.

Each workshop covered a range of cost-saving and sustainable ideas including soap making, renewable energy solutions for homes and making your own skincare products.

A free webinar was hosted by energy expert Adam Corrigan, looking at how to get started with renewable energy options such as solar panels and batteries.

During this period over 1000 residents attended extreme weather presentations online and in person through the Climate Wise Communities program.

Waste

The Council actively promoted this year's Clean Up Australia Day held in early March 2023.

A second free drop off collection service for unwanted clothing and linen was held in March at St Ives Showground. St Vincent De Paul was allocated good quality clothing collected for sale through its chain of op shops. The remainder will be converted into cleaning products sold by the charity. The textile recovery business BlockTexx also collected clothing and linen for repurposing into packaging and building materials. Between 27 and 28 May a free drop-off collection for unwanted household chemicals was hosted at St Ives Showground.

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



Lindfield Village Green received a prestigious award in March 2023

Lindfield Village Hub

Council voted at its meeting in February 2023 to progress negotiations with a preferred development partner, whose identity will remain confidential until the negotiations are concluded.

This decision has followed an extensive bid process to find a suitable development partner for the project.

The Lindfield Village Hub is the largest civic project undertaken by Ku-ring-gai Council, comprising community facilities, commercial and retail space and new housing. When built, the Hub will occupy the site of the current Woodford Lane public car park on the western side of Lindfield centre.

The community assets of the project will include a new library, community centre and childcare facility along with a park, playground and civic plaza with outdoor dining. On the Hub's

lower level will be a supermarket, specialty retail and additional car parking.

During this period negotiations were further progressed and a report is intended to be presented to Council before the end of this year.

Lindfield Village Green

Metered ticket parking in the general parking area was activated by Council in February 2023. Transport for NSW have delayed activation of the commuter parking app and Opal card system until the end of 2023.

Work on planned upgrades to Lindfield Avenue and Tryon Road alongside the Village Green is expected to start later this year after consultation with the local community



The new Youth Environmentalists program starts in August

The upgrades include wider footpaths for outdoor dining and improved pedestrian access; new LED street lighting; raised pedestrian crossings; new paving and street trees and additional street furniture. New traffic signals will also be installed at the intersection of Tryon Road and Lindfield Avenue.

Lindfield Village Green received a prestigious award in March 2023 from the Institute for Public Works Engineering Australasia (IPWEA). The IPWEA is the peak body for public sector engineers across Australia and New Zealand. Ku-ring-gai Council was awarded the 2023 IPWEA Engineering Excellence Award for the Lindfield Village Green project in the Multi-Disciplinary Project Management category.

Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden

The Wildflower Garden presented a full program of activities for the April and July school holidays, plus regular educational programs for young children and primary age students. Environmental education programs include Nature Play, Junior Rangers, Seniors in Nature and Wild Birthdays as well as school excursions during term time. School holiday programs included bush survival skills, cook over a campfire and meet live native animals.

During this period two new programs were developed by Garden staff to attract residents aged 11-18 years. The Youth Environmentalists program will be launched in August and aims to mentor young leaders in environmental knowledge and skills that they can then pass on to their peers. The Campfire Conversations program which will also launch in August is designed to for young residents to discuss environmental issues and solutions in an informal setting around a fire.

In June the Wildflower Garden hosted the NSW Climate Council's annual conference field day, with presentations from Council staff, displays by the local RFS and SES brigades and the Metropolitan Aboriginal Land Council. Around 50 delegates

attended and expressed their appreciation for the field day.

During the Gai-mariagal Festival in May guided walks on the Garden's Aboriginal heritage were conducted by indigenous staff from the Aboriginal Heritage Office.

St Ives Showground

Preliminary work on the draft masterplan for St Ives Showground and precinct began during this period. The Showground precinct also takes in the Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden, the Council's community nursery and the St Ives Road Safety Centre on the opposite side of Mona Vale Road

The public were invited to complete an online survey as a first step in preparing a long-term plan to guide the future use of the Showground precinct. Further consultation is taking place with users and other stakeholders.

Survey results will be incorporated into the St Ives Showground Masterplan, which will aim to integrate sustainable principles into future improvements. The masterplan will also consider the area's natural biodiversity and cultural heritage values when recommending any future upgrades

A draft report by independent consultants on the heritage of the St Ives Showground and surroundings was also prepared during this period. This will provide input into the masterplan when it is developed.

In March 2023 the regional playground at St Ives Showground received a highly commended award in the \$500,000 to \$5 million projects category in the Institute for Public Works Engineering Australasia (IPWEA) annual awards.

The playground was designed with accessibility as a priority and to reflect the rich history and environment of the Showground. Play equipment in distinct areas offers a range of

challenges for different ages and abilities. The equipment was also themed to reflect the Showground's agricultural history and includes tractors, windmills and timber animal sculptures.

Since opening in 2020, the playground has attracted thousands of visitors from across Sydney.

St Ives Village Green

St Ives youth hub reopened to young people in February 2023 and is now open during weekdays after school. The youth hub is located next to the skate park opposite the St Ives Shopping Centre. The hub underwent an upgrade last year, with new floors, furniture and equipment added.

The St Ives youth hub is open Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays between 3pm and 6pm and on Fridays between 3pm and 8pm. Young people can drop in after school or TAFE to play pool, table tennis, foosball and board games. They also have access to Netflix, video games and other pop-up activities such as art workshops, BBQs and music events.

A successful open day originally planned for Youth Week but postponed due to bad weather went ahead in June 2023. It featured a 'battle of the bands' music concert and competitions at the skate park.

St Ives Village Green was also the venue for the FIFA Women's World Cup live site in July and August, with hundreds of local residents attending each match featuring the Matildas.

Planning

In February 2023 Council adopted a revised Ku-ring-gai Public Domain Plan that includes Turramurra, Pymble, Gordon, St Ives, Lindfield and Roseville.

The Ku-ring-gai Public Domain Plan guides the design of streets and public spaces. It aims to support the revitalisation of Ku-ring-gai's local centres so that they become more walkable, user friendly and attractive places and any upgrades are carried out in a coherent and planned way. The Public Domain Plan was prepared to correlate with the other policies including the Ku-ring-gai Development Control Plan, the Community Strategic Plan, the Ku-ring-gai Local Strategic Planning Statement and state level policy such as Greater Sydney Commission's North District Plan.

During the period, Council successfully completed the sale of a surplus parcel of operational land at 97 Babbage Road, Roseville Chase for \$1,650,000. Council also acquired two properties for future open space purposes.

Works at 261 Mona Vale Road St Ives for a new commercial childcare centre were nearing completion. Once refurbished the premises will be under a lease agreement, which will return a

market rent to Council as well as improved childcare facilities.

The Council placed its revised Development Control Plan (DCP) on public exhibition in June and July. The DCP was revised to bring it into line with other Council planning policies. The results of the public exhibition will be reported to Council later this year.

During this period a series of briefings hosted by the NSW Department of Planning & Infrastructure on future housing supply were held with Council planning staff.

Heritage

In February 2023 grants were announced for local homeowners for heritage property projects to be carried out in the 2023-2024 financial year. Successful grant applications were announced in July, with 17 applications receiving funding. The funding was divided into \$39,161 for high priority projects, \$19,428 for medium priority projects and \$5,000 for low priority projects totalling \$63,589.

Examples of projects funded through the heritage home grants include tuckpointing of brick facades in Pymble and Roseville; timber cladding repair in St Ives; roof repairs and tiling in Pymble and Lindfield; restoration of distinctive curved windows at a Killara home and repairs to a decorative ceiling in a Gordon property.

Between May and June the Ku-ring-gai Heritage Festival took place. Highlights included:

- A guided walk through the Wildflower Garden at St Ives exploring Ku-ring-gai's connections to its indigenous heritage.
- A special Mother's Day afternoon tea amid the gardens of one of the most beautiful stately homes, Eryldene at Gordon.
- An exhibition of 1970s fashion by the Calvacade of History and Fashion at Roseville, plus a talk on the 'little black dress' through the decades.
- A children's art workshop illustrating Ethel Turner's classic *Seven Little Australians*
- A talk by author Eliza Reilly on some pioneering women from Ku-ring-gai's past
- Classes at Killara Croquet Club learning one of Australia's oldest games
- A guided tour of Swains Gardens at Killara.

During this period the Council gained a full heritage listing for Headfort House on the site of the Lourdes Retirement Village in Killara. Dating from 1917-1921, Headfort House was constructed as part of a boys school complex attended by former Prime Minister John Gorton. The building was then adapted to be the state's first training site for the Australian Women's Army Service during World War II. Following the war, the building and site was converted to a tuberculosis hospital by the Missionary Sisters of the Society of Mary

Public spaces

Work on the Fox Valley Road shopping strip in Wahroonga was completed during this period. The upgrade included making the shopping centre more pedestrian friendly through widened footpaths, new street furniture and landscaping. Other work includes new paving and bike parking and reconfiguration of parking to allow for more outdoor dining. Some adjustments have been made to the parking area following feedback from local businesses.

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 and expected to be complete by the end of August. Features include wider footpaths, outdoor dining, new pavements, street furniture and tree planting. Heritage Square is being made more accessible and better integrated into the St Johns Avenue area.

In March 2023 Ku-ring-gai residents were invited to take part in a survey assessing how liveable their suburbs are. The Liveability Census was commissioned by the NSW Government and conducted by the consultants Place Score. The survey invited residents to share what is important to them and how local neighbourhoods are performing. According to Place Score, the survey's objective was 'to understand liveability from the perspective of Sydney's diverse population and provide decision makers with evidence to enhance the lives of local communities'.

During this period Council adopted and Crown Lands approved the Generic Plan of Management for Parks and Generic Plan of Management for Sportsgrounds.

Parks

During this period Council developed a landscape masterplan for The Glade at Wahroonga to guide its future use. Further community consultation was conducted with more information provided regarding the possible installation of field lighting

Between February and March the public were asked their views on a plan to upgrade Queen Elizabeth Reserve in Lindfield. The reserve is one of Lindfield's largest public parks, with an off-leash dog exercise area, soccer field, tennis courts, a multi-use sports court and picnic areas.

Under the proposed plan, Queen Elizabeth Reserve would have a network of pedestrian pathways linking surrounding streets with the park, as well as new picnic shelters, BBQs and seating. Three options for basketball facilities, along with other suggested locations to relocate the dog exercise area are included in the plan. The plan also proposes more spectator seating for the sportsfield and the children's playground would be upgraded. Comments received during the public exhibition are now being analysed for a further report to Council.

Preparation for construction of the new Bedes Park in St Ives is underway with detailed drawings for the tender being developed during this period. Completion of the park is planned for early 2025.

Playgrounds

Work has begun on upgrading Lorraine Taylor Reserve in St Ives with a new playground after consultation on the design concluded last year.

Robert Pymble Park in Pymble reopened to the public in February 2023 following completion of a major upgrade. The work included a new playground, accessible toilets, new landscaping and drainage, seating, picnic areas, cycle parking and a circuit track for younger children to ride scooters and bikes. The new playground design was themed around 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.

The upgrade to Dukes Green playground in Lindfield was completed in March 2023. Improvements include a nature play area, new play equipment, drinking fountain and seating and an accessible path between nearby shops and the playground.

In West Pymble, an upgrade to the playground next to the Philip Mall shops was completed in May. The new playground has a slide with climbing tower attached and other new equipment, plus a nature play area. The upgrade also includes new seating, accessible pathways and landscaping, litter bins and a bubbler.

Consultation was completed and a design finalised during this period for the new playground planned for Sequoia Close Reserve in Pymble. Work is expected to begin by November this year.



The upgraded Dukes Green playground

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

Work began on the following projects:

- Werona Avenue and Stanhope Road, Killara: upgrade traffic signals with pedestrian crossing facilities (multi-year project)
- Telegraph Road, Pymble: upgrading of the road surface and other improvements at the curve west of Ganmain Road
- Warrimoo Avenue and Dalton Road, St Ives Chase: construction of a single lane roundabout, traffic calming, line marking, lighting and signage.

Upgrade works were completed at the intersection of Burns Road and Ellalong Road using TfNSW's Black Spot funding.

During this period Council adopted the Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure on Public Land policy to support the development of public electric vehicle chargers within Ku-ring-gai.

Parking

Metered ticket parking commenced in February 2023 at the Lindfield Village Green underground car park. Two-hour car parking in the general parking area is available free of charge and then charges apply. Extra signage was installed to advise customers of the charges.

Transport for NSW has delayed the commencement of commuter parking charged to customers Opal cards until the end of 2023.

Parking improvements to increase pedestrian access to the Fox Valley Road shopping centre in Wahroonga were completed during this period. The work included additional parking in the rear car park, changes to the vehicle barriers in car spaces and adjusted parking times.

Pedestrians

Works are continuing 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.

Other work is due to start this year in north Gordon, with wider footpaths planned in Fitzsimons Lane, Ridge Street, between Fitzsimons Lane and Ryde Road, Merriwa Street, between Fitzsimons Lane and Pacific Highway and the western side of Pacific Highway between Ryde Road and Merriwa Street.

Following community consultation last year work began on widening footpaths along Lindfield Avenue and Tryon Road in Lindfield. The wider footpaths will also accommodate more outdoor dining opportunities in the area.

During this period Council secured \$2.25M in funding from TfNSW for the construction of footpaths and pedestrian facilities from 2023 to 2025. Asset management plans for drainage, footpaths and roads were also completed.

Cycling

Ku-ring-gai's primary schools were offered free boxes of fruit by the Council in return for encouraging students to ride to school on Ride2School Day at the end of March 2023. The fruit was offered through the Council's Smart Schools and road safety programs. National Ride2School Day is an annual event aimed at getting primary and high school students out of cars and using alternative ways to travel to and from school. Several local primary schools took part in Ride2School and distributed fruit to their students.

Expressions of interest for the Council's Active Transport committee were readvertised during this period to ensure greater diversity among community members of the committee

The new committee aims to promote cycling, walking and other forms of active transport in the Ku-ring-gai area. The



National Ride2School day took place in 2023

committee will advise the Council on active transport issues including planning and design of infrastructure, behavioural change strategies and community education, among others. The committee will meet quarterly starting later this year

The Council has given preliminary support to design a separated two-way cycleway on Bobbin Head Road North Turrumurra between Burns Road and Milton Road. The state government will provide \$135,000 to the project from its Get NSW Active grant program, with the balance of \$50,000 funded through the Ku-ring-gai environmental levy

The cycleway would run alongside Bobbin Head Road between Burns and Milton Roads and aimed at less experienced riders interested in cycling but concerned about being in traffic

The cycleway would be designed for use by school students at the nearby North Turrumurra Public and Ku-ring-gai High, as well as residents on mobility scooters. It would give people riding bikes access to the recently upgraded Samuel King Oval, the North Turrumurra shopping strip and the North Turrumurra Recreation Area. Community consultation will commence on the project later this year.

Public transport

TfNSW are continuing a major 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.

THEME 5 LOCAL ECONOMY & EMPLOYMENT



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



Business

In February 2023 around 30 businesses attended a workshop on brand positioning. Rashid Kotwal of Revealed Resources outlined simple steps for business to stand out from the crowd and be a supplier of choice.

In March 15 local businesspeople attended Council to hear about adapting work practices to enable a 4 day working week. Local executive business coach Ivan Ang outlined the tips and traps faced by small business when attempting to reduce working days.

In May 2023 the Council hosted a free workshop for local businesspeople on the opportunities and challenges of AI. The workshop was held at Gordon Library. Ben Barin of TBST Digital shared his expertise on artificial intelligence tools such as ChatGPT to a fully booked audience.

Also in May another free session was conducted on cybercrime. Presented by Ian Ward from the CyberPro consultancy, the workshop outlined the main threats to businesses and suggested low-cost practical solutions to reduce risk. The session also examined ways to protect customer data

In June the Council launched a three-part program on business development and sales for local small business. The free course was aimed at these businesses which don't have the resources to devote large amounts of time to sales or business development. It also aimed to help local businesspeople achieve increased growth without resorting to pushy sales tactics. The course was fully booked and held during July and August

Council's business engagement events are promoted through the monthly Business Connections e-news. With approximately 1700 subscribers this is also used to promote other business support programs, as well as government and other initiatives relevant to the local business community.

Early in the period Council was also hosting the Service NSW Business Concierge at Chambers for face-to-face consultations. Ku-ring-gai was the only metro Sydney council to do this. Unfortunately, due to policy changes at Service NSW this free service ceased in March 2023.

In June the Better Business Partnership Awards were presented to local business demonstrating a commitment to sustainability in their operations. The Better Business Partnership is sponsored by Ku-ring-gai, Willoughby and North Sydney councils to encourage local businesses to adopt sustainable processes for their energy, waste, staff training and packaging among others.

This year 34 local small businesses were finalists in eight categories and nine Ku-ring-gai businesses took out awards or were highly commended in their categories.

In the childcare category KU West Pymble Preschool won the award and Lady Game Community Kindergarten was highly commended. The St Ives based Shed Eleven company which upcycles old furniture was highly commended in the retail services category. Winner of the office and professional services category was Risk Edge from Killara, which specialises in water cycle management. A high commendation in the social enterprise category was awarded to the Ku-ring-gai franchise of TOMBag which seeks to repurpose plastic into reusable bags for the home and office.

The winner of the purpose and impact category and the People's Choice Award voted by the public was Laurie Green from Grow Gather Graze. Laurie is a well-known local permaculture design consultant who started the popular CropSwap movement and co-founded the Edible Garden Trail. Grow Gather Graze was also runner up for the title of Better Business of the Year, which was won by North Sydney tourism business Sydney by Kayak.

The Better Business Partnership program received a Highly Commended at the Local Government Professionals Excellence awards in June 2023 in the Partnerships and Collaboration in Supporting Local Enterprise category.



The Service NSW business concierge service was hosted at the Council Chambers until March 2023

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



Operations staff working with RFS volunteers and the aviation wing of Fire & Rescue NSW to complete a hazard reduction burn

Leadership

A In March 2023 a team of Council staff with leadership potential won the Local Government Management Challenge for a second year in a row. The team was drawn from business units across the organisation, along with three senior managers as mentors

The Local Government Management Challenge is held over a day and involves each team in a series of fast paced tasks designed to test their decision-making and teamwork skills. Each task is based on real life problems and scenarios that could occur in a council.

As was the case in 2022, the Ku-ring-gai Council team will represent NSW in the national finals of the Management Challenge later in the year.

Emergency management

A new plan to manage bushfire risk in Ku-ring-gai and Hornsby was placed on public exhibition for comment until 30 June. The plan was prepared by the Rural Fire Service in consultation with Hornsby and Ku-ring-gai Councils and other stakeholders. The draft plan maps the level of bushfire risk across Hornsby and Ku-ring-gai over the next five years and proposed actions to minimise and manage the risk. It identifies which agencies are involved in managing bushfire incidents and what homeowners

can do to prepare their family and property. The final version of the plan will be publicly available later this year.

In July the Council placed revised mapping for bushfire prone land on public exhibition for comment. Under state legislation the Council is required to update the maps every five years. The amended mapping identifies 3,128 hectares of bushfire prone land in Ku-ring-gai, resulting in 11,298 bushfire prone properties. The public exhibition of the mapping closes in August after which a report will be prepared for the Council to further consider.

Council was awarded a grant of \$9,670 under the Sydney North Health Network Extreme Weather Community Resilience program to run workshops for people with a disability or chronic health concerns to be more resilient and self-sufficient in emergency situations.

A multi-agency emergency management exercise involving Council staff was conducted by the NSW Police Command Development Unit to test the capability of the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai local emergency management committee. This exercise was completed in May.

An emergency management desktop exercise facilitated by the NSW Police Command Development Unit was also conducted during this period. Identified improvements will be reflected in the guides following a post exercise review later this year. The scenario was a train derailment.

Community

During this period the Council awarded nearly \$250,000 in funding to organisations and individuals helping the local community. In all \$243,644 will be awarded in the 2023-2024 financial year for a range of environmental projects, conservation of heritage properties, community events and the arts. Just over \$100,000 in funding was awarded to various community environmental and Net Zero projects through the Council's Environmental Levy grants. It is the 25th round of funding through the levy for projects designed to protect and restore the natural environment and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Between April and May residents were invited to comment on the Council's draft Resourcing Strategy, Delivery Program and Operational Plan and draft fees and charges for the use of Council facilities and services.

Some of the key highlights for the 2023-24 year include investing \$14.3 million in the upgrade and renewal of local roads, \$5.3 million for local centre improvements, \$3.9 million for drainage and stormwater upgrades and \$3.4 million to improve local sporting fields and playgrounds. Following consultation the 2023-2024 delivery program, budget and fees and charges were adopted by Council in June.

In April Ku-ring-gai Council was awarded a \$50,000 grant to support and encourage volunteering in the local area. The grant is from the NSW Government's Social Cohesion funding program for local councils.

Under the funding agreement, Ku-ring-gai Council will spearhead the establishment of an online 'Upper North Shore Volunteer Hub' to assist in increasing volunteer numbers in the local area. The pandemic has seen a significant drop in the number of volunteers participating in community organisations, particularly those in older age groups. As a result some organisations say they are struggling to maintain services to the community, including those to vulnerable residents.

Expressions of interest were distributed to organisations to participate in the volunteer hub between May and July. Other activities planned include a volunteer information day, volunteer forums and events to show appreciation to volunteers, including those of multicultural backgrounds.

Council staff in frontline positions have received training under the Sunflower Program, which the Council joined in July. Under the program staff have been taught to assist children and adults with hidden disabilities or chronic health conditions. The program works through free lanyards or bracelets showing the sunflower symbol, which residents simply wear to show Council staff that they need extra support, understanding or time.

A review of Council's Privacy Management Plan was completed and a new plan was adopted by Council in June 2023.

Community engagement

During this period the Council maintained the frequency of the Ku-ring-gai e-news as a fortnightly edition and issued 76 media releases. Over 16,000 residents now subscribe to the Ku-ring-gai e-news. Council's community engagement e-news Yoursay was distributed nine times during the period with subscriber numbers increasing by 32% to nearly 1000. This is in addition to subscribers to nine other Council e-news.

The Council's social media sites continued to steadily increase followers during this period. Ku-ring-gai Council's Facebook page currently has over 15,000 followers. The Council's community engagement hub had 32,000 individual users, with nearly 7000 visiting the hub in this period.

The following consultation projects were undertaken:

- A third iteration of The Glade masterplan was on public exhibition until April 2023.
- A draft landscape masterplan for Queen Elizabeth Reserve in West Lindfield to guide future upgrades and use of the reserve. On public exhibition between February and March 2023.
- A user survey on St Ives Showground and surrounding areas between July and August as a first step in creating a masterplan
- Public exhibition of a draft social media policy for Councillors and staff between July and August.
- Concept designs for a playground upgrade at Lorraine Taylor Reserve, Ibbitson Park and Sequoia Close.
- Public exhibition of the draft Recreation Needs Study between July and September 2023.
- Revised draft bushfire prone land maps for Ku-ring-gai on exhibition between July and August 2023.
- The draft Delivery Program, 2023-2024 budget and fees and charges on exhibition between April and May.
- A draft Privacy Management Plan on exhibition between April and May.
- A car share policy for Ku-ring-gai on exhibition between February and March.

From early July, Mayor Jeff Pettett and councillors for each Ku-ring-gai ward began hosting informal drop-in sessions for residents every month, which are scheduled until the end of 2023. The sessions are intended to be an informal way for residents to approach the Mayor and their ward councillors to discuss any issues or concerns they may have. It is also a chance for councillors to discuss projects coming up and what is happening at Council. The first session was held in the Gordon ward with the Mayor, Deputy Mayor Ward and Cr Lennon, with the next session scheduled for Comenarra residents in August.

In May Council staff addressed the Multicultural Advisory Committee regarding opportunities for engaging CALD communities in Council projects and initiatives. As a result a pilot project to educate CALD groups about Australian government and specifically their involvement in local government will be rolled out in late 2023.

During May an email and phone survey was conducted with customers who had interacted with the Council in the previous three months. The survey was conducted by independent consultants CSBA and is part of the Council's ongoing commitment of continuous improvement to services.







818 Pacific Highway, Gordon NSW 2072 | Locked Bag 1006, Gordon NSW 2072

P 02 9424 0000 | **E** krq@krq.nsw.gov.au | **www.krq.nsw.gov.au**