

## **ADDITIONAL ITEM**

**Item No:** 1.5  
**Title:** Mayoral (Administrator) Minute - End of Term Report  
**Department:** Administrator

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30 August 2017 Ordinary Council Meeting

AUTHOR: Administrator

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

As this is the last formal meeting of the Central Coast Council under Administration, I thought it would be appropriate to present a report outlining the progress made since the Council was formed, and highlight some of what I see as the challenges and opportunities ahead for the newly elected Council.

One of the main priorities of this Administration period of Central Coast Council has been to create a solid foundation for the newly elected Council to build on, and I believe that has been achieved. Our organisation is being transformed, but we have maintained our commitment and focus on ensuring we deliver the services residents of the Coast need, want and value. That is a credit to our dedicated staff, the majority of whom live here, who want to see this area thrive and prosper.

When the Central Coast Council was formed on 12 May 2016 it became the third largest Council in the state and the largest outside of Sydney with a population of 331,000. We are the only Council in NSW that is also a region in its own right and have one of the biggest asset bases in the State at approximately \$9.5 billion. We are a big business and have a fully funded operational plan and budget of \$756 million in place to deliver the essential services and infrastructure which will improve the quality of life for our residents and help create local jobs and opportunities for our growing population. Given our size and significance, we now have a major seat at the table to negotiate with all levels of government to deliver great outcomes for the Central Coast.

The community can have confidence they have a transparent and open local government with initiatives in place such as webcasting council meetings, an Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee to oversee governance, laying bare the state of our finances and putting into place systems and procedures to ensure long-term accountability. Our finances are sound and strong. Council has the plans, policies, people and procedures in place so the newly elected Council can continue to deliver for the community.

### **2. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Most reports like this end with acknowledgements of valuable inputs to success and of support offered to the author. In my view the acknowledgements need to be offered up front as this has been a team effort.

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It has been an honour and a privilege to serve as Administrator of the new Central Coast Council, but it is not a journey that I have taken alone and not one I could have done successfully without the support of a number of people.

Thanks must go to Council's Chief Executive Officer, Mr Rob Noble. Rob is passionate and committed to his job and to the people he leads. The Central Coast Council has been fortunate to have him at the head of the organisation. His insight, experience and wisdom have been invaluable in uniting the two former organisations and fostering new shared culture and values which focus on creating a vibrant and sustainable Central Coast. I thank him for his friendship and support.

I must acknowledge our Executive Leadership Team – Mike Dowling (Group Leader Assets, Infrastructure and Business); Julie Vaughan (Group Leader Connected Communities); Scott Cox (Group Leader Environment and Planning); Brian Glendenning (Executive Manager Governance & Chief Counsel); Vivienne Louie (Acting Chief Financial Officer); Kellie Reeves (Executive Manager People and Culture) and Sally Ingram (Acting Chief Information Officer and Executive Manager Transformation and Business Performance) as well as Stephen Naven and David Kennedy for their professionalism and outstanding commitment to delivering Council's vision and in helping lead this organisation in this major transformation. Council's future is in safe hands with them at the helm of their businesses.

Thanks also must go to my Executive Assistant, Ariella Whitelum, for her support, hard work, sense of history and local knowledge. She is a true professional and a delight to work with. To the over 2000 Council staff, many of whom I met personally, I thank you for your passion, enthusiasm and commitment to delivering for your community each and every day. You have all gone through considerable change since the Council was formed. I believe you have emerged as a stronger and more connected organisation, which bodes well for the future of the Central Coast.

I also wish to express my thanks to Sue Ledingham, Teresa Walters and Alison Ayres, along with the other members of Council's Communications Team, for helping me, one person, to communicate with over 330,000 local residents about the work Council is doing. It is important our residents are kept up to date with significant work, services and events in the community. Council plays a key role in fostering connections across the Coast, facilitating and supporting our residents and businesses as they live, work and play in this magnificent region.

To the many community members I met at the various pop up stalls and at a wide range of functions and meetings, I thank you for your feedback and support of the new Central Coast Council. One of the things I will take away from my time here is just how much you all love living on the Central Coast. It is that deep attachment that will ensure the Central Coast continues to be the very best place it can be.

I would also like to place on record my thanks to the Councillors of the former Gosford City and Wyong Shire Councils for their advice and assistance to me since May last year. Their local knowledge has been invaluable to me in carrying out my duties.

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Finally, I could not have done this role without the unwavering support of my wife, Laurel, and I thank her from the bottom of my heart. I hope to see slightly more of her and my family in the near future.

### **3. MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE NEW CENTRAL COAST COUNCIL**

Rather than setting out a list of projects, programs and initiatives the Central Coast Council has accomplished since May 2016, I have grouped my commentary under a number of themes.

#### **3.1 Business and Organisational Transformation**

It has been a major challenge to create one Central Coast Council as the two former Councils did almost everything in different ways. Thanks to the foresight of the leaders of the two former Councils, transformation began before amalgamation with a specific team set up to put in place a framework of projects to bring the organisations together. There are currently 150 individual transformation projects underway, many of which will continue for some time. There has been a major effort in cultural change too with the adoption of a new vision and values with all Council staff striving to create a vibrant and sustainable Central Coast.

It is not just inward looking. Council is undertaking initiatives to better connect with the community through its recently adopted engagement framework. Regular face-to-face interactions at pop-up stalls, online engagement and information sessions have all been successful in hearing first hand from our community. Engagement for the Community Strategic Plan started earlier this year, helping to inform the new council as they set a delivery program for their term of office and beyond.

New legislative and governance requirements have been established to operate as a single Council; a new brand has been implemented; customer service processes have been aligned so that residents can transact at the Wyong Centre as a former Gosford resident (and vice versa) and key external supplier contracts, including general insurance, financial advice and audit have been rationalised.

Financial benefits of the merger are expected to come from improved efficiency of Council's back office functions and reduced expenditure on external supplies as a result of stronger bargaining power and improved procurement processes.

Council has modelled the expected benefits and costs of the merger and expects to see a net benefit of around \$70M (in present value terms) over a 10-year period. These benefits are anticipated to be ploughed back into service delivery and infrastructure by subsequent Councils.

Council is implementing a new and enhanced technology platform to support future service delivery.

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Council has worked hard to ensure customers do not experience disruption or degradation in service whilst changes are progressing. Once the technology implementation is complete, it is expected customers will experience significant improvements in services, particularly around their ability to transact with Council online, where and when they want to.

The expected non-financial benefits of the merger program will be better, consistent, more responsive service delivery; improved infrastructure planning and maintenance and an improved ability for a single Central Coast Council to advocate for the Central Coast region with all tiers of government and business.

### **3.2 Planning for the Future**

The Central Coast is growing rapidly. According to the latest State Government population projections, by 2036 there will be 75,000 more people living here, taking our population to 415,000.

The Central Coast will need 41,500 more dwellings to house these new residents. Of these new residents, 28% will be over 65 years of age and there is also significant growth in the number of single-person households. We need to be conscious of these statistics as they will inform the type of housing we need to encourage by putting in place appropriate planning frameworks for both developers and the broader community.

As well as housing, many more jobs will be needed — around 25,000 and they need to be local. Currently 23% of our employed residents work outside of our region. We need to provide much more local employment both for the economic future of the region and for the social wellbeing of our community.

The State Government released the latest Regional Plan for the Central Coast in late 2016. The Central Coast Region is the only Region in the State made up of just one Council.

Under the Plan, Council has been given responsibility for implementing the vast majority of the Actions. Council is working closely with State Government Agencies to ensure the aims of the Plan can be realised.

One of the key features of the Plan is the need for appropriate infrastructure to support our growth. Council has taken the lead in preparing an Infrastructure Plan so that everyone can be clear about what is required to ensure growth on the Coast is sustainable.

Council has put in place a range of policies, procedures and strategies to help meet the challenges of our growing population and to make the Central Coast the very best place it can be. These are summarised in **Attachment 1**.

As a result of these changes, we have seen a marked improvement in our development assessment performance. Over 3,500 applications have been determined since amalgamation and the application backlog reduced from over 800 at amalgamation to under 500 at the end of July 2017, coupled with significantly reduced assessment times.

### **3.3 Economic Development and Investment**

The Central Coast has been identified as a key growth centre in NSW. The Coast will need infrastructure, housing and employment to support this growth. We have been working hard to encourage sustainable economic development on the Coast and, through direct investment, are also creating employment opportunities for our growing community.

In support of economic development of the Central Coast, Council has taken a number of initiatives since amalgamation. These are outlined in **Attachment 2**.

Council has significantly upgraded its approach to and investment in Tourism, launched and continues to support our "This is the Life" place marketing campaign for the Central Coast in conjunction with local businesses, conducted business attraction activity and promoted Wi-Fi access across the Gosford CBD.

We have progressed development of a Masterplan for the Central Coast Airport for consideration by the newly elected Council. We are working with the Federal and State Governments to deliver medical research facilities as part of the upgraded Gosford Hospital and we have increased parking at Terrigal in support of its significant regional tourism role.

Local infrastructure is fundamental to economic development on the Coast. Council's record budget for 2017/18 responds directly to community desires to concentrate effort on key areas of roads, transport, drainage, water and sewer and open space, recreation, waste services and waterways.

### **3.4 Community Infrastructure and services**

A key role for any Council is to support its community with infrastructure and services to underpin their daily lives.

During this Administration period there has been a renewed focus on using Council's strong financial position to reduce the infrastructure backlog by providing record expenditure on capital works and maintenance. A number of key infrastructure projects have been completed or are on track to deliver long-term benefits to the Central Coast community.

Fees and key services have been aligned across Central Coast Libraries, helping to ensure delivery of essential educational facilities are streamlined for ease of use, while we have also taken over some northern aquatic and fitness facilities strengthening the number of affordable recreational opportunities for our community and enabling us to plan Coastwide for the future of our network of facilities.

Council is also investing considerable funds to support key organisations in their work on behalf of the Coast. These include Surf Life Saving Central Coast and projects being carried out using merger funds from the State Government's Stronger Community Fund (both smaller community projects under \$50,000 and 10 more major projects totalling \$9 million).

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The opening of The Art House in Wyong, Bato Yard Skate Park, commencement of work on the Regional Sports Complex at Tuggerah and upgrades at Central Coast Stadium are significant milestones for the Coast, both in terms of the new cultural and sporting facilities they offer, but also in terms of the economic contribution they will make to the Coast through increased visitation and tourism.

Responding to consistent community desires for upgraded cultural facilities, decisions were made on sites for two key projects, enabling detailed work to be carried out so the new Council can progress their implementation.

Council has nominated Leagues Club Field, on the Gosford waterfront, as the preferred location for the proposed Regional Performing Arts and Conference Centre (RPACC). Council is now undertaking a detailed assessment of the site and revising business plans for the RPACC. An appropriate business model and venue specification is important for the RPACC's longevity and overall success — ensuring the community see the full value of this cultural facility for generations to come.

The Parkside Building on Donnison Street in Gosford has been selected as the preferred location for a Regional Library and Learning Centre.

Underpinning those major facilities is a large investment in facilities of a more local scale, distributed across the Coast. These smaller facilities are of course critically important to our local communities.

Details of Council's investment in community infrastructure are set out in **Attachment 3**.

### **3.5 Road upgrades**

The need to maintain and upgrade our road network is a theme raised constantly with Council by residents and businesses.

Council has engaged data collection specialists to conduct a comprehensive road condition assessment across its entire sealed road network. Covering more than 2,200 kilometres of sealed road pavement, the project will provide a road condition assessment that will underpin the future allocation of funds and resources to Council's road upgrade program. The data collected will be used to develop future road renewal programs and determine the most effective way to treat and manage Council's road assets.

Our investment in road infrastructure over the 2016/17 financial year has directly addressed some of the key transport issues across a range of suburbs. In all of my interactions with the community, the call for further investment in our roads has been a common thread and Council has been working to ensure these concerns are addressed. As a result, the 2017/18 Capital Works Program features a record \$208 million of investment into key areas with \$55.3 million to be spent on capital road works and a further \$117 million on road and drainage maintenance.

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The improvement of transport infrastructure including roads, shared pathways and cycle ways will remain a priority for Central Coast Council as our community continues to grow. The strong financial position of our new organisation has allowed us to take major steps to support more investment than ever before. Road renewal expenditure has actually increased by 60% from \$16M to \$26M.

Council also has an information tool on our website to help residents keep up to date with road projects happening in their area. It sets out the status of all road and drainage works listed this financial year, allowing the community to be informed of the works being carried out in their neighbourhood. Each road project has a unique pin, outlining its location, description and timeline for the commencement and completion of the project. You can see it at: [centralcoast.nsw.gov.au](http://centralcoast.nsw.gov.au)

### **3.6 Our Environment**

One of the key functions this Council plays in protecting our environment is in its role as the Water and Sewer Authority for the Central Coast.

Central Coast Council provides water and sewer services to approximately 320,000 people across the Central Coast. It is the 13th largest water business in Australia and the 4th largest regional water business.

Our water supply network consists of three main waterways, three water storage dams, three groundwater bore fields, 3 water treatment plants, 36 water pump stations and 2,248 kilometres of water mains — the approximate distance from Sydney to Mission Beach, QLD.

We also maintain and operate 2,599 kilometres of sewer mains, 336 sewer pump stations and eight sewage treatment plants which treat the equivalent of 13,200 Olympic-sized swimming pools of sewage annually.

Our investment in the water supply and sewer services across the Central Coast since amalgamation has been strong. Our staff have completed an \$11 million upgrade of the Wyong South sewage treatment plant that will ensure the plant can cope with the demands of our growing community into the future. Other sewer-related works include the upgrades to sewer pump stations at Wyong, Bateau Bay, Toowoan Bay and Wyoming as well as new receiving stations at Charmhaven and Toukley.

Our water supply also received a boost with a number of reservoir refurbishments, including those at East Gosford and Avoca Heights, more than 4,000 water meters replaced and a \$1.9 million project in Woy Woy that will help secure the water supply for the Peninsula.

We have also invested in the future of our water supply with planning for upgrades at Mardi treatment and Somersby treatment plants well underway.

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The Coast's natural environment is a big drawcard for visitors to the region and is also one of the main reasons so many people want to live here. Council is committed to protecting and enhancing our local environment for the enjoyment of residents and visitors alike.

Since amalgamation, Council has implemented a number of initiatives in order to protect and enhance our environment. These are outlined in **Attachment 4** but highlights include the cancellation of a community land sales program in the former Gosford area and upgraded environmental monitoring of our waterways.

Report cards on our waterways showed improved water quality as a result of works such as gross pollutant traps around our lakes and upgrades to our sewerage reticulation system. Household initiatives such as chemical clean outs and the Garage Sale Trail also contribute to minimising waste disposal impacts on the Coast.

Finalisation of the Gosford Beaches Coastal Zone Management Plan will help focus efforts to address coastal issues, as will the review of Coastal Zone Management issues in the former Wyong area.

Council continues to work closely with other levels of Government to address specific environmental issues such as estuarine dredging.

### **3.7 Connected & Engaged Communities**

Following the merger, a new department was established within Council dedicated to connecting with the community, supporting local community groups and delivering essential services, initiatives and events our community need to thrive. In my view, Councils do some of their best work when they collaborate closely with their community and help community members and groups achieve their aims. In order to promote this collaboration, Council has revamped its Community Grants and Sponsorship program, totalling \$1.4 million this financial year.

This comes on top of the major engagement program Council has been conducting to underpin the Central Coast Council's first Community Strategic Plan (CSP). It has been my great privilege to oversee the extensive consultation process Council has carried out as part of the Coast's first-ever CSP. It will set out the long-term aspirations of the Central Coast community, where we want to be in 10 years and will be the key reference point for Council decision making over that period.

The Plan will be owned by the community and delivered in partnership with Council, community groups, government, businesses and non-government agencies — anyone who lives, works, plays or stays on the Central Coast. It will be the roadmap to help create our ideal community — 'a vibrant and sustainable Central Coast'.



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The first round of community consultation for the Community Strategic Plan wrapped up at the end of June. Since then, staff have been busy collating and analysing the thousands of responses we received from the community, including over 2,600 face-to-face engagements at pop up stalls, 2,350 responses online and over 700 hard copy surveys.

We have established a Community Reference Group of 20 local residents, to help us with further work on the Plan. Finalisation of the Plan will be a key task of the elected Council, building on the work undertaken to date and charting the course for the next 10 years on the Coast.

In addition to this engagement program, we have held over 60 pop up sessions at shopping centres, events and markets across the region to hear first-hand about issues from our residents. Over 3,300 people took the opportunity to speak with me, Council's Executive and staff during 2016/17. This program is set to continue over the next six months.

An Engagement Framework based on industry best practice was adopted on 24 January 2017. It provides direction to Council staff and representatives in ways to effectively engage and communicate with our community. The Framework is underpinned by the internationally recognised principles of the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) and AA1000 Stakeholder Engagement Standard.

Your Voice Our Coast is Council's online engagement platform designed to engage with the community on a variety of projects from public exhibitions to surveys and forums across a range of topics. It was launched within the first weeks of amalgamation and in the last financial year there were around 34,500 visits across all projects and pages.

Council's Festival and Events Program is one of the largest I have seen in Local Government. **Attachment 5** sets out a number of the festivals and events held since amalgamation.

One of the privileges afforded to Local Government is to host Citizenship Ceremonies, welcoming people from across the globe as new Australian and Central Coast Citizens. Each of the over 1,050 new citizens I have welcomed as a new citizen has my deep respect and admiration for the step they have taken and publicly declared at our ceremonies.

### **3.8 Open Government**

Council under Administration has been keen to improve its accessibility to the community. We have put in place a range of measures to increase the transparency and accountability of our operations in order to improve public confidence in the way Council carries out its business.

For the first time in history, Central Coast Council meetings were broadcast live, utilising new technology including the installation of fixed cameras in both the Gosford and Wyong Chambers. All residents now have the opportunity to witness what is discussed and decided at Council meetings. This widespread access helps to communicate Council processes to the community and offers a transparent, accountable record of proceedings throughout the broader community.

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Council undertook a thorough analysis of the finances of the former Wyong and Gosford Councils. Issues requiring remedial action were addressed. As a result Council's finances are sound and strong and the fully funded Operational Plan for 2017-18 is already rolling out.

An Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee has been established to promote effective and efficient service delivery under a framework of openness, transparency and accountability. The purpose of the committee, which has a majority of external, independent members, is to review Council's operations, including risk and financial management, fraud control, governance, and compliance as well as collection of performance measurement data. It will also assist in the continuous improvement of Council functions.

Council is implementing a new technology platform to underpin service delivery in the united organisation. The ERP aims to improve the way Council interacts with the community through system enhancements and round-the-clock accessibility. The project will enable improved planning and management of Council assets, a better customer experience, and more accurate and effective data collection.

Council adopted a new Code of Meeting Practice and a new Expenses and Facilities Policy to ensure the newly elected Council can operate from day one. A Code of Conduct for staff and Councillors, an Equity, Diversity and Respect Policy as well as a Councillor and Staff Interaction Policy have also now been adopted.

Four policies to provide consistency in the areas of pensioner rebate applications, debt recovery and hardship, debt management and investment management across the Central Coast were adopted in April 2017. The adoption of the policies for investment and debt management is part of Council's approach to ensure it is managing its investment and debt portfolio in a responsible manner. The pensioner concessions and debt recovery and hardship policies are designed to ensure there is a consistent approach to assessing pensioner rebate applications and better engaging with community members going through financial hardship. We need to ensure we are collecting rates and managing these funds from our community in the simplest and most appropriate way and these policies are now on the public record.

Local residents will have the opportunity to vote for the first Central Coast Council to represent the entire region on 9 September 2017. Since April this year, Council has worked alongside the NSW Electoral Commission to deliver a comprehensive education campaign to help residents understand the new ward system that was proclaimed at amalgamation and educate potential candidates for the new Council. In May and June, Council delivered three Candidate Awareness Sessions attended by around 90 potential candidates. As we approach Election Day, Council is continuing to provide education and information to its residents to encourage a strong voter turnout. There are 94 candidates contesting the election across five wards.

### **3.9 Advocacy**

Central Coast Council represents a region in its own right. We are currently home to around 335,000 people with growth forecast to take us over 415,000 in 20 years. As such we now have a significant place at the table in discussions with the State and Federal Governments in seeking funding and support for the infrastructure and services we need.

Council has been vigorous in putting its case to other levels of Government including to the new Berejiklian Government, which held its first Community Cabinet meeting on the Coast in February 2017.

I expect the high level of interest in the Coast will continue presenting significant opportunities to make progress on a large number of needed projects.

### **3.10 Award winning Council**

Central Coast Council is keen to be recognised as a benchmark organisation for the delivery of quality services, governance and creativity. We are well on the way to achieving that with a number of our staff and projects winning awards for their performance. A list of awards won during this Administration period of Council are set out in **Attachment 6**.

The recognition of Council's performance in so many ways is a testament to the creativity and professionalism of our staff, almost all of whom are Coast residents, giving an added incentive to make sure the Coast and its Council are the very best they can be.

## **4. CONCLUSION**

Council has been implementing a robust merger program which is transforming the organisation to provide better services that strengthen and support the Central Coast community.

It is a huge task to bring two organisations together and it is a testament to our staff who have had to pull systems and procedures together quickly while still maintaining essential service delivery to our community.

We have established new legislative and governance requirements so we can operate as a single Council, implemented a new brand and aligned customer service processes so residents and businesses can deal with Council more efficiently.

Council's finances are sound and strong.

As a unified Council we have hugely increased buying power which is already paying off.

These savings are just the tip of the iceberg. We estimate the expected net benefit of the merger will be around \$70 million over a 10-year period. These savings can be put straight into better services and infrastructure for our growing community.

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The priority of this Administration period has been to build a solid foundation for the newly elected Council in September 2017 and I believe that has been achieved.

I look forward with confidence to a bright future for the Central Coast and its Council and again express my gratitude for the opportunity to have served as the Administrator in this formative period.

***I formally move:***

***That Council receive the Mayoral (Administrator) Minute – End of Term Report.***

### **Attachments**

<b>1</b>	Planning for the Future	D12810355
<b>2</b>	Economic Development and Investment	D12810357
<b>3</b>	Community Infrastructure	D12810363
<b>4</b>	Our Environment	D12810366
<b>5</b>	Connected and Engaged Communities	D12810368
<b>6</b>	Award winning Council	D12810373

## **ATTACHMENT 1 – Planning for the Future**

Council has implemented a range of initiatives to improve planning processes on the Central Coast, which is essential to meet the growth challenges ahead.

The first ever **Developers Forum** was held in February 2017. Over 140 industry leaders and development representatives were given an overview of the key growth challenges on the Coast and directly asked how Council could better work with them to deliver the right housing, employment and environmental outcomes for the community. The forum started the conversation about how Council and the sector can work together to deliver the housing, jobs and infrastructure the Coast needs.

The focus for Council has been on ensuring our planning controls and policies deliver the development we need – sustainable and innovative – and that the market is able to build. Council is currently finalising a consolidated **Local Environmental Plan (LEP)** to guide future development across the Central Coast.

At present, there are four planning instruments applying to the Central Coast, each with different planning controls. The Wyong Local Environmental Plan 2013 is the local planning instrument for the north and the Gosford Local Environmental Plan 2014, Gosford Interim Development Order and Gosford Planning Scheme apply in the southern areas.

The State Government issued *Guidance for Merged Councils on Planning Functions* which recommends council analyse the differences in these current planning controls and take steps to prepare a consistent approach to planning across the region.

Council has been given the green light to consider aligning the zonings and development controls across the Coast. This will result in a consistent approach to rezoning proposals, development assessments and building certification and compliance. The ultimate goal is to find a consistent approach that will help improve our local environment and encourage investment, create new jobs and quality housing for the growing population of the Coast. Finalisation of this new planning framework will be the responsibility of the newly elected Council, building on the work currently underway.

Council has developed new planning controls to promote development to revitalise the Gosford CBD and create a living city. The amendments to the **Gosford Development Control Plan (GDGP)** will provide opportunities for growth of the commercial centre of the CBD, create a distinctive skyline while preserving view lines to the ridge tops and activate streets and public spaces. The controls were publicly exhibited in November 2016 with over 100 submissions received. Council has since reviewed the controls and made further changes to be subject to a further round of community consultation. Council has adopted **Gosford Local Environmental Plan (LEP)** amendments relating to the Gosford CBD but has requested the Department of Planning and Environment and the Minister not finalise their

consideration of the matter until the newly elected Council can consider its position on related new Development Control Plan provisions.

Council has **rationalised development controls** for dwelling houses, secondary dwellings and ancillary structures as part of creating one simplified development process for residents. This will help reduce development application turn-around times, reduce and simplify the information needed as part of applications and cut red tape to make it really clear what residents can and cannot build on their properties.

Council has also modified its **notification processes** to ensure appropriate community input is considered in the assessment of development applications.

Council has finalised 39 **planning proposals** since amalgamation and have reduced outstanding planning proposals from 66 to 39 over the same period.

A combination of increased numbers of development proposals and decreased assessment times has resulted in approval for an overall investment of over \$1.2 billion into the Central Coast region since the new Council was formed. Since the merger announcement, Council has determined over **3500 Development Applications**.

Council has significantly **reduced the DA backlog** – from 810 at amalgamation to under 500 by July 2017 – by putting in place new processes to improve assessment times. This has resulted in a significant improvement in turn-around times. This is a credit to our staff, ably led by Group Leader Environment and Planning, Mr Scott Cox, who have achieved this outcome without compromising on quality and considering community feedback.

Expressions of Interest have been called for the first ever **Urban Design Review Panel** for the Central Coast. The Panel will consist of up to 6 members in the fields of architecture and urban design to provide independent design review of significant projects for both private and public developments across the region. Having this Panel will provide an opportunity to utilise high calibre and relevant expertise that will assist in achieving better design quality of buildings and public domain areas. It sends a clear message to the development industry that what we are interested here on the Coast is not just development for development's sake but quality development for our growing community.

The Central Coast Council has prepared a **biodiversity certification proposal** for land south of Sparks Road, Warnervale (part of the Wyong Employment Zone). The biodiversity certification proposal identifies areas of high value vegetation and habitat for permanent conservation and protection. In addition the proposal will streamline the development approval process and assist with planning for the expansion of development opportunities in the southern portion of the Wyong Employment Zone.

The local built environment will be protected to a greater extent with a planning proposal being prepared to include **136 new items of local heritage** for formal recognition and inclusion in the current Local Environmental Plan. There are currently 221 items of local and state significance listed in the Gosford Local Environmental Plan. In June 2012, the former Gosford City Council resolved to fund a Heritage Study to examine the heritage of its local government area which has identified these new heritage items for inclusion. This was a collaborative effort with community members working alongside the consultant. The new items listed are from a range of built forms – public schools, wharves, cafés, boatsheds, farms and private residences. The Planning Proposal including the 136 new items will be subject to a further round of community consultation under the newly elected Council.

A Central Coast Council is currently preparing a single approach to **development contributions** across the region. The review of existing section 94 and s94A practices will allow Council to implement a new developer contribution framework to meet the development expected in the Central Coast over the next 20 years.

One single approach will make the development process more accessible for applicants and assist them in conducting feasibility assessments for their proposals. The one approach will also streamline Council's management of the important development contribution systems.

## **ATTACHMENT 2 – Economic Development and Investment**

Council plays several roles in promoting the economic development of the Central Coast. It invests funding in supporting businesses which boost the economy as well as carrying out planning and development in its own right.

Council has significantly upgraded its approach to and investment in **tourism**. Tourism is a significant industry on the Coast, employing over 12,500 people and generating \$900 million for the local economy. To ensure tourism continues to be a key economic driver for the Coast we have increased our investment to \$800,000 annually and secured enhanced marketing services from one of the industry leaders, Affinity. In a tick of approval for Council's commitment, **Destination NSW have set up a head office** for the Sydney Surround North Region in Council's own Smart Work Hub in Gosford. A draft **Destination Management Plan** has been exhibited and outlines the vision and goals for the Central Coast as a tourism destination and provides an evidence based business case for investment, strategies and actions. One of the key goals of this Plan is to grow the visitor economy even more, by another \$70 million a year.

In September 2016 we launched the '**This is the Life**' place marketing campaign to change perceptions of the Central Coast and help deliver social and economic outcomes for the region. The 'This is the Life' campaign promotes positive stories about the people and places of the Central Coast via its website [www.thisisthecentralcoast.com.au](http://www.thisisthecentralcoast.com.au), and its social media accounts on Instagram @thisisthecentralcoast and Facebook @thisisthecc. 'This is the Life' has a partner program for local businesses and community groups to join in and support the campaign. After the first nine months of the campaign, there were over 110,000 unique website visits, over 5,000 followers on the Instagram account and perceptions of the Central Coast improved by 12 percentage points amongst those surveyed in out-of-region markets.

Central Coast Council conducted Business Workshops in the 'Back to Business Week' in early March 2017 with funding support from the NSW Government. Both workshops '**Leveraging Social Media**' in Wyong and '**Innovation – Just Do It**' in Gosford received positive feedback from many participants.

Council has set up a series of **Wi-Fi** access points across the Gosford City Centre in key areas including Gosford train station, Kibble Park, William Street Mall, the external perimeter of Central Coast Stadium, and along Mann Street. The initiative is part of economic and social stimulus for the city, with council investigating further opportunities to establish Wi-Fi access points around the region.

Council recently completed an Expression of Interest Campaign (EOI) to gauge interest in general aviation usage of the Central Coast Airport. The outcome of this EOI will be presented to the new Council in a Draft Masterplan. It is scheduled then for public consultation.



The Federal Government pledged \$32.5 million for a world-class medical school and research institute at Gosford Hospital. Modelled on facilities at leading American and English universities, the \$72.5 million **Central Coast Medical School and Research Institute** will become a landmark project, after the University of Newcastle and the NSW Government previously each pledged \$20 million for the facility.

The development is expected to create 750 jobs and provide a \$200 million economic boost to the region. The 9000 square metre state-of-the-art facility will be located in a new health and wellbeing precinct opposite Gosford Hospital and is anticipated to be operating by 2019.

Council welcomed the confirmation of funding for key projects for the region in the **Federal Budget**. Funding has been confirmed for a regional performing arts centre and regional library at Gosford, a skate park for Wamberal, as well as \$7.2 million in local road upgrades.

Ms Lee Shearer has been appointed to the important role of **Coordinator-General for the Central Coast**. Ms Shearer will drive the delivery of the Central Coast Regional Plan and oversee a Community Consultative Committee, of which Central Coast Council is a key member. This appointment was a clear recognition that the State Government is serious about the promises in the Central Coast Regional Plan, including the delivery of more jobs, more housing, more infrastructure and more opportunities for our growing community.

Council adopted its first ever integrated Operational Plan in June 2017, with **\$551 million in essential services spending and a record \$207.9 million on capital works rolling out across the Central Coast from 1 July**.

75% of the record capital works spend will be in the key areas identified by the community — roads, transport and drainage, water and sewer, open space and recreation, waste services and waterways.

\$55.3 million will be spent on regionally significant projects to benefit the whole community. These include:

- \$16.5 million to complete Stage 1 of the Tuggerah Regional Sports Complex
- \$3.8 million to start construction of the Mardi to Warnervale Trunk Water pipeline
- \$2 million for the Adcock Park upgrade
- \$1.5 million to progress the Gosford Performing Arts and Conference Centre
- \$600,000 to progress the Regional Library in Gosford

Key items include:

- \$552.9 million operating income
- \$551 million operating expenditure
- \$1.9 million surplus
- \$28.2 million capital grants and contributions
- \$207.9 million capital works program

A new partnership has been established with leading waste industry expert, Cleanaway, to deliver **essential waste services** to the Central Coast community from 1 February 2018. Residents can expect a streamlined service due to the economies of scale and efficiencies we have gained in this new arrangement from being now one large regional Council. Local jobs have been protected with the continuation of employment for local garbage drivers. Domestic waste collected from residents' red lid bins is disposed of in Council's Buttonderry Waste Management Facility and Woy Woy landfill with environmental management at the forefront and that arrangement will continue with the new provider.

## **ATTACHMENT 3 – Community Infrastructure**

Council used its strong financial position to fund a range of community services and infrastructure that it directly provides and also supports service provision by important organisations in the community.

**Surf Life Saving Central Coast (SLSCC)** and Central Coast Council have developed a new funding program which will allow for the development and growth of Surf Life Saving on the Central Coast and continue to support the 15 surf clubs based in the region. The Clubs will receive \$210,000 in funding from Council each year for the next three years. This will ensure they can continue to provide this vital service to the community including beach safety patrols and educational programs to the Coast's many residents and visitors.

Ten major projects to improve community services, facilities and deliver new infrastructure have received their share in the \$9 million awarded to Council through the NSW Government's **Stronger Communities Fund**, following the amalgamation. Community members were asked to vote on what they wanted to see funded from thirty eligible projects and Council formally endorsed ten projects to get the green light. These are:

- Disability Matters – improved accessibility to natural spaces across the Coast: \$800,000
- Access and inclusion upgrades to community facilities across the Coast: \$580,000
- San Remo BMX facility – new amenities: \$640,000
- Peninsula Leisure Centre, Woy Woy – starting blocks and electronic timing system: \$135,000
- Foreshore stabilisation – Brisbane Water Foreshore, adjacent to Elfin Hill Road Reserve, Green Point: \$470,000
- Playground renovation/upgrade – Niagara Park Children's Centre and Umina Child Care Centre: \$122,500
- Alan Davidson Oval, Wyoming – drainage and irrigation system installation: \$349,000
- Austin Butler Oval and Woy Woy Tennis Courts – shared amenities redevelopment: \$900,000
- Avoca Beach Foreshore protection works (Stage 1): \$2.8 million
- Terrigal CBD – traffic flow and pedestrian movement Improvements: \$2.2 million

Of the ten projects selected, three are scheduled for completion before the end of this financial year — the new amenities building for the San Remo BMX facility, the Peninsula Leisure Centre and Alan Davidson Oval in Wyoming. The remaining projects are to be completed by the end of 2019.

One of my very first official duties as Administrator was to open the \$12.7 million state of the art **The Art House** in May. The premier arts venue was made possible by the commitment and funding provided by the former Wyong Shire Council. The arts venue includes a 500 seat theatre, 130 seat set studio space, meeting room, exhibition space and café/bar, and is able to accommodate a wide range of performing arts groups as well as business events, functions and festivals.

Council's northern-most residents benefited from a \$300,000 investment in new multi-purpose courts at **Tunkuwallin Oval, Gwandalan**. The need for the new courts was identified in the Tunkuwallin draft masterplan to cater for basketball, netball and handball, as well as offering an overflow carpark. I had the opportunity to meet the many local sporting clubs who championed and embraced the facilities at the opening in July 2016.

Narara Valley residents celebrated the opening of the \$370,000 **Narara Valley Precinct Park** with a community BBQ in July 2016. Located on Willari Avenue, Narara, the park was funded from the sale of the area's old community hall and is a great example of how a Council can reinvest funds into vital community services and facilities.

A \$500,000 playground for children of all ages opened at **The Entrance** in December 2016, as part of Council's \$3.5 million investment in improvements to public amenity in the area. The playground features multiple climbing stations, tunnels, a seated merry-go-round, an in-ground trampoline and the classic old favourite, hopscotch. It also has synthetic grass mounds, a rock climbing wall and slide, all surrounded by spongy soft fall, shade cloths and premium seating for parents and carers.

**Play spaces upgrades** were also completed at Cheero Point Road, Cheero Point; Trafalgar Avenue, Woy Woy; Mulloway Road Reserve, Chain Valley Bay North; Tuesday Street Reserve, Tuggerawong and Gwandalan Lioness Park. New fitness equipment was installed at Broadwater Park, Kincumber and Ross Park, Avoca Beach.

**Bato Yard** was officially opened in August and attracts hundreds of riders and spectators every day. Representing an investment of \$2.25 million, the park has the deepest bowl in Australia at 3.6 metres and was designed to cater for a range of disciplines such as skate, scooter, BMX and blades. Promotion of the opening recently won a Local Government Week RH Dougherty Award for Excellence in Communications. The new facility has already hosted three major skating events in 2017 and is realising its potential to bring tourism and jobs to the Central Coast region.

Council has also invested \$330,000 to construct 400 metres of shared pathway to connect locals with this popular recreational facility. With more than 12 months of community consultation, Bato Yard is a prime example of Council and the community coming together to deliver a major attraction for the Central Coast.

Animal welfare on the Central Coast was given a boost with Council investing \$100,000 to upgrade its **animal care facility in Charmhaven**. The Council-owned building is operated by The Society of Companion Animal Rescuers, a not-for profit organisation that connects Australian rescue groups with potential adopters in the community.

Resident boaters celebrated the completion of the \$1.1 million boat ramp and carpark upgrade at **Saltwater Creek Reserve, Long Jetty**. The overhaul involved significant improvements to the boat ramp, main car park and trailer parking facilities, as well as the provision of ten designated trailer parking spaces to enable plenty of manoeuvring room for cars and boat trailers, ensuring safer access to the water.

In addition, residents can now enjoy the many facilities in the Saltwater Creek Reserve, including an open space reserve, barbecues, a BMX track and play spaces for children. The main carpark was also significantly upgraded to provide 83 designated car spaces.

The **Terrigal Haven boat ramp** also received a \$1 million makeover, thanks to a \$750,000 grant from the NSW Boating Now program and Council funding. Officially opened by NSW Premier The Hon. Mike Baird MP in September 2016, this popular recreational facility provides a safe and accessible entry point into the ocean for boaters and other aquatic enthusiasts. At the opening event, Premier Baird also announced a \$20,000 grant to Terrigal Marine Rescue, which operates adjacent to the newly upgraded ramp.

The first stage of the **Magenta shared pathway** stretching 1.5 kilometres from Evans Road, Noraville, to the Red Gum Forest car park was completed in July 2016. Once completed, the Magenta path will provide a key missing link in the Central Coast's shared pathway network and will stretch for 5.5 kilometres from The Entrance North to Evans Road, Noraville.

The completion of three new sections of pedestrian and cyclist shared pathways on **The Peninsula** added to the almost 160 kilometres of shared off-road path currently in operation across the Central Coast. The three new shared paths add half a kilometre to the existing network and are located along parts of Memorial Avenue, Barrenjoey Road and Uligandi Street in Ettalong and Blackwall.

Work is well advanced on a key piece of sporting infrastructure for the Central Coast – **Tuggerah Regional Sporting Complex**. The facility will deliver nine playing fields, including a premier field, and amenities comprising change rooms, canteen, toilets and store rooms. There will be public car and bus parking, as well as a shared pathway within the site. The project was made possible with the support of the Australian Government's \$10 million National Stronger Regions Fund and a \$13.71 million Council contribution. This project is due for completion in 2018 and will deliver enhanced sporting opportunities for the Central Coast and attract major sporting events bringing with it valuable visitor and tourism dollars to our region.

The long-awaited **BMX track at San Remo** was officially opened on 19 February 2017, with some of Australia's best riders demonstrating their skills and testing the track. Council has given the extreme sports park a makeover, working together with the San Remo Neighbourhood Centre to reactivate the area and gain valuable input to make this a high quality facility. The track has been reshaped to BMX Australian competition standards to enable hosting of major events and competitions, and Council has also upgraded the on-site skate area with an increased plaza-style area and quarter pipe. Construction is now underway for a new amenities building at the track. The funding of \$640,000 was secured following input from local residents as part of the State Government's Stronger Communities Fund. Works are expected to be completed in June 2018. With the completion of this upgrade and Bato Yard up and running, the Central Coast is now set to become the extreme sports destination in NSW.

A \$240,000 upgrade to significantly improve accessibility on the popular **Ettalong Ferry Wharf** located on Ferry Road at Ettalong Beach is also complete. The project included alterations and additions to the existing wharf walkway, as well as the installation of a new gangway and pontoon. The upgrade is designed to support commercial maritime services that utilise this destination, and better cater for recreational fishers and boaters.

A section of the **Budgewoi foreshore** has been transformed, with a \$600,000 boardwalk set to activate the lakeside town. A key initiative of the Budgewoi Masterplan, the new infrastructure runs along the waterfront, with works also including a new floating pontoon with concrete decking and gangway, as well as a fixed timber jetty.

Upgrades totalling \$385,000 were completed at **Berkeley Vale**, with a run-down play area getting a makeover into a natural play space and improvements made to the local skate park. Skate park improvements include a shade structure and the provision of extra elements including ramps for greater diversity, with the improvements partly funded by the NSW Department of Family and Community Services' Social & Community Housing Improvement Fund. To complement these upgrades, a district play space is also being built at nearby **Kurraba Oval**.

Council has resumed management of **the Lake Haven Recreation Centre, the Toukley Aquatic Centre and the Wyong Olympic Pool** from the YMCA from this financial year. The Centres have been added to Council's extensive network of recreational facilities including the Entrance Ocean Baths, Gosford Olympic Pool, the Peninsula Leisure Centre and Niagara Park Stadium. The move will facilitate Council investment in each of these centres to ensure our entire network of facilities is the best it can be. Council is looking to improve the facilities, services and programs for the current users and the wider community.

Council is committed to the redevelopment of **Central Coast Stadium** as part of our 2017/18 Capital Works Program, with a range of upgrade works earmarked for completion this financial year. Works include the development of two new change rooms, the upgrade of public amenities, food outlet upgrades, a new sound system and the purchase of a new big screen.

The Stadium venue is a valuable community asset and Council is committed to activating the stadium following an extensive review of operations and the development of a long-term strategy.

It's an exciting time for Central Coast Stadium, with the announcement of Lionel Ritchie's performance in October, the recent sell-out NRL fixture and the upcoming 2017/18 A-League season.

## **ATTACHMENT 4 – Our Environment**

The environment on the Central Coast is one of the key attractions bringing a growing population to live. The beaches, lakes and hinterland are a magnificent setting which needs to be protected and enhanced to achieve long term sustainability.

**Long Jetty foreshore** was restored as a popular swimming and boating destination, with a new sandy area open for community enjoyment. Council completed the stormwater consolidation and foreshore enhancement works with \$360,500 in funding from the Federal Government's *National Landcare Programme*. Physical works on site included re-profiling a 60 metre section of foreshore, sand nourishment and construction of a sandstone rock wall which will result in a more natural shoreline profile and provide protection from future erosion. Also included in the works were infrastructure improvements that will allow stormwater to be better collected and diverted away from the newly enhanced foreshore site, resulting in improved water quality along the lake foreshore.

Council embraced **Bluetooth technology** to help monitor and protect the health of our waterways. The technology enables downloads of vital water quality measurements without needing to enter the water. Compared to former methods, the technology provides a much safer and more cost-effective way of monitoring water quality. It also allows identification of any problems and quicker and more thorough investigation than with manual processes.

**The \$11 million Cockle Bay Towns Sewerage Project** became a reality for more than 200 property owners in Empire Bay, Bensville and Kincumber South, when the project was commissioned in November. Unsewered areas in the Cockle Bay catchment were deemed high priority for improved sewerage services, due to the sensitivity of local waterways and ecology, and potential public health risks posed by unsustainable on-site sewage systems.

An annual report card (2016) for **Tuggerah Lakes** — Lake Munmorah, Tuggerah Lake North and Tuggerah Lake Central — showed improvements in water quality. \$700,000 was spent in the 2015-16 financial year on gross pollutant traps to help stop pollutants from entering the lakes.

Council welcomed \$3 million in funding for the **Tuggerah Lakes Estuary and Catchment Improvement**, as part of the Federal Government's Improving Your Local Parks and Environment Program. These funds will add to Council's investment in Tuggerah Lakes — resulting in significant improvements in water quality across the lakes system. The Federal funds will be dedicated to whole-of-catchment issues in an effort to reduce the effects of pollutants, litter and environmental vandalism making its way into the lakes.



Three beach swimming areas — **Copacabana Beach, Pearl Beach Rockpool and Ocean Beach** — experienced water quality improvements as a result of Council's management works, according to a BeachWatch report. These results were helped by a \$36 million Council investment to improve the performance, reliability and capacity of the sewerage reticulation system, sewerage pumping stations and sewerage treatment plants throughout the former Gosford local government area.

Central Coast residents turned out in droves to clear their homes of unwanted chemical products, at two **Household Chemical CleanOut** events hosted by Council. CleanOut drop-off locations were set up at the Gosford Showground and the Long Jetty Council Depot during the first two weekends in March 2017. In total, 2,486 residents disposed of almost 100 tonnes of chemicals over the four days at both locations. The free collections are part of the NSW Environment Protection Authority's Waste Less, Recycle More initiative, funded by the waste levy. Resident support of these events is crucial to ensure the correct disposal of these hazardous chemicals that may otherwise end up in our waterways and doing untold damage to our local environment.

In conjunction with the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS), Council completed the final stage of its \$50,000 upgrade to the **Jiliby South Fire Trail** and surrounding area.

Council celebrated taking out second place in Australia for the most registered sales in the 2016 **Garage Sale Trail**. Local residents took on the challenge of increasing the sustainability of our community by recording 201 individual and 116 group sales and 8000 coastal shoppers supported the event. The Garage Sale Trail was born in 2010 as an idea to create awareness around illegal dumping in NSW and is another way for people to sell their goods instead of dumping it into landfill and has grown into a national event with over 150 local councils involved.

Council's plan for managing the impacts of storms and coastal erosion on its southern beaches has been formally certified by the NSW Government. The **Gosford Beaches Coastal Zone Management Plan** will now guide Council's approach to the protection of public and private property from future coastal erosion. Certification of the Plan is the start of the process of Council, the community, landowners and the State Government working together to protect the Coast's unique coastline for generations to come.

A **Coastal Zone Management Plan for the northern coastal areas** is being finalised, for consideration by the new Council, following a period of public exhibition. Council worked with the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage to review the Wyong Coastal Zone Management Plan (WCZMP 2017), in response to legislative changes and improved information about coastal hazards. The draft plan aims to address risks from coastal hazards and outlines actions to improve environmental and community benefits for the Coast.

Council welcomed the State Government's commitment of \$150,000 for an emergency dredge of the **Ettalong Channel**. Council raised the issue of the need for State Government funding for dredging of the Channel at the Community Cabinet Meeting in February, and was involved in a roundtable discussion with all stakeholders on the issue. While the emergency funding is welcomed, Council continues to advocate for a long-term solution to ensure the channel remains navigable.

Council is leading the way for the next generation to be involved in protecting the Coast's waterways by launching its first ever free **Multi-Touch iBooks**. Two digital books have been developed for pre-schoolers, primary school students and educators that highlight the importance of wetlands, what lives in them, and how everyone can play a role in looking after them. These interactive resources have been developed and delivered in response to a need expressed by the education sector and contain songs, photos and videos, as well as practical activities for the classroom and out in the field.

The former Gosford Council had commenced a programme to consider the possible sale of a number of Council properties, including reserves, in order to assist funding to overcome infrastructure backlogs. Following amalgamation, with the greater financial capacity provided under the new Council, Council was able to review and cancel the programme, providing certainty for the future public use of the identified properties.

## **ATTACHMENT 5 – Connected & Engaged Communities**

One of the priorities for the new Council has been to improve its engagement with the Central Coast community to better understand their needs and better service those needs.

Council developed a new **Disability Inclusion Action Plan** to help remove the barriers for people living with disability in our community. Close to 230 respondents participated in a range of community engagement activities including community forums, online surveys and informal events to inform the development of the plan. The Plan was officially launched on 18 July 2017 and sets out actions in the four key areas of:

1. Developing positive community attitudes and behaviours
2. Creating liveable communities
3. Supporting access to meaningful employment
4. Improving access to services through better systems and processes

A copy of the Plan has been submitted to the NSW Disability Council and the Human Rights Commission and is available on Council's website.

Council adopted a **new community grants and sponsorship funding program** for the Coast, giving the community more opportunities to apply for funding to support their community projects, events, programs and initiatives. The two previous Council grant programs have been aligned delivering \$1.4 million in opportunities this financial year. Council has run a series of information sessions to help bring community groups up to speed on the new arrangements and assist with their applications.

The formation of Central Coast Council has delivered a **unified library service** for the entire Central Coast, with residents now able to access all 11 Council libraries. Fees have been aligned across the library service. The move to one Library Management System residents will enable residents to check the catalogue, borrow, reserve and return at any of the 11 Council libraries and access a greater range of e-resources, using one card. Since amalgamation, 14,039 members have joined libraries across the Coast – an increase of 41 per cent. Council's libraries held a number of events that proved popular with the community including the Penguin Bloom author talk at The Art House in June and hundreds once again entered the annual Short Story Competition.

Council's **Laycock Street Community Theatre** continues to deliver quality arts to the Coast with a number of sold out performances. Highlights include the 16 performances of Wicked which ran during October and November 2016, 12 of which were completely sold out – achieving 95.77% overall. Australian singer, Lior, performed on 12 February 2017 to a sold out audience. Laycock Street Community Theatre's first drag queen show, Prada's Priscillas,

held on 17 February 2017 sold out and Youth In Performing Arts, which showcases some of the best youth performers on the Central Coast, held from 24 until 27 May also sold out.

**The Art House** in Wyong has proven its value to the community since opening in May 2016 with a wide range of events, performances and exhibitions providing a cultural offering for the people of the Central Coast.

Council hosted a **Civic Reception** in honour the Olympians and Paralympians from the Central Coast who represented Australia at the 2016 Rio Games. Ten local athletes were acknowledged for their skill, determination and achievements both in the lead up to and during the Olympic and Paralympic events.

For the first time in its 35-year history, the **Central Coast Council Lifeguard Challenge** was conducted with both former local government service areas competing together as one. Focusing on collaboration and camaraderie among all athletes, participants competed individually in the Howard Jones Memorial and in teams for the coveted Cook Cup.

Council held a number of **Australia Day** events in celebration of community and country at various locations including Gosford, Canton Beach, Wagstaffe, The Entrance and Woy Woy.

The community celebrations featured local resident and **White Ribbon Ambassador, Mr John Dooley**, as the 2017 Australia Day Ambassador, as well as a range of entertainment and activities. **Mr Lester Pearson** of Fountaindale was announced as the inaugural Central Coast **Citizen of the Year** at the annual Australia Day Awards Ceremony, recognising his work to help youth in crisis – both at home and overseas. One hundred and sixty residents from 40 different countries chose to officially call Australia home, becoming Australian citizens at a Citizenship Ceremony on the day. One of the roles I have enjoyed most as Administrator is conferring citizenship on our Central Coast residents. Including the Australia Day ceremony, I have presided over 19 ceremonies where 1050 residents have become Australian Citizens adding to the diversity and multiculturalism of our growing region.

More than 4,500 people attended the inaugural **Gallery Precinct 2259 Love Lanes Festival** — a unique event coordinated by Council, in partnership with local businesses and community organisations. The festival was designed to drive economic development, while showcasing how the revitalisation of the Wyong CBD is changing perceptions of the area.

Central Coast senior citizens took part in a range of events and activities as part of the **2017 NSW Seniors Festival**. Highlights included the Grandma Moses Art Exhibition, Central Coast Seniors Short Film Session and an Alison Homestead Buffet Breakfast. For 59 years, the NSW Seniors Festival has been the largest festival for seniors in the Southern Hemisphere. Previously known as NSW Seniors Week, the festival presents an ideal opportunity for seniors to celebrate their age and share their wisdom and experience.

**Harmony Day**, celebrated every year on March 21, is a national celebration and a time to reflect on the importance of inclusiveness, respect and a sense of belonging. It encourages people to participate in their community and to respect different cultures and religions. In a first for local Harmony Day celebrations, Council hosted its annual event from dusk — bringing the Harmonic Forest to life.

More than 10,000 people attended the inaugural **Harvest Festival** on the June long weekend – a unique event promoting the hidden gems in the valleys and mountains of the Central Coast region. The Festival celebrated local produce and focused on the region, its people and culture — comprising 23 events over two days in Calga, Somersby, Peats Ridge, Mangrove Mountain, Kulnura and Yarramalong areas. An Expression of Interest has been launched for local producers to be a part of the 2018 Festival.

Two **NAIDOC Week** flag raising ceremonies were held at Wyong followed by performances from local schools at The Art House with hundreds in attendance. This year also marked the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of **Ngura** – a program which focuses on Aboriginal health issues. The Ngura program focuses on Aboriginal health issues, nutrition, leadership, self-image, and goal setting, as well as maintaining participants pride in their Indigenous culture and heritage. In 2009, Ngura was honoured by the United Nations in the Kinnie Chase Awards for Health and Education – leading to first nation’s communities in America and Canada running a similar version of the program for their students. Because of this international recognition, Council’s Indigenous Community Development Worker, Matt Sonter, has become the first Council Officer to present at an International Conference. Matt presented Ngura at the **World Indigenous Peoples Conference on Education** (WIPCE) in Toronto, Ontario, from 24-28 July - the session booked out in less than 15 minutes and had seven of the nine WIPCE Council of Elders and two Mohawk Chiefs in attendance. Matt’s contribution is recognised and acknowledged in the local Indigenous community and Council is pleased to have him on staff.

The annual art exhibitions as part of **National Reconciliation Week** were held at Gosford Regional Gallery, The Entrance Gallery and The Art House Wyong. The art showcases the talented Indigenous artists we have here on the Central Coast. Maliga (meaning shine in Darkinjung) is a school-based art and culture program that encourages students to show their connection to the Coast through any form of art.

**The Lakes Festival** made its annual splash across the Coast in November 2016 attracting more than 40,000 people to events and activities across the nine days – a 20 per cent increase in numbers from the inaugural award winning event in 2015. The events that attracted the biggest crowds were Light up the Lake with headline act Thirsty Merc, the Lighthouse Folk Festival and the Long Jetty Street Festival. We are about to launch our 2017 program which is bigger again this year encompassing more event hubs across the Coast, increasing the Festival to 10 days.

Memorial Park at The Entrance continues to host a number of free events attracting thousands of people to the region. In October 2016 **ChromeFest** saw the Park and streets of The Entrance filled with classic American Autos and Hot Rods as well as rock'n' roll, fashion parades, retro stalls and much more. The **Winter Blues and Jazz Fest** was popular again and had a fantastic line up artists performing across two stages. The popular **Country Music Festival** returned with headline act Adam Harvey and Beccy Cole stopping off at The Entrance as part of the national tour of their latest album. The Festival was complemented with a number of licensed venues across the Coast who hosted country music acts for their patrons from 11-13 August 2017. The free **school holiday activities** are also becoming a popular attraction to keep children entertained throughout the holidays.

Kibble Park in Gosford is also becoming an event hub for the Central Coast and transformed into a winter wonderland for the July school holidays in 2016 and 2017. **Ice skating in Kibble Park** proved popular with visitors and saw an increase in numbers this year. Ice skating was available from 10am-8pm each day for a week and also offered visitors to the park a range of free activities. There was face painting, discos, outdoor cinemas and Disney themed days.

**Experience, Explore, Be More** is a free open day aimed at showing residents all the creative possibilities available on the Coast to help manage stress and anxiety in all its forms. The first one was held in June and was aimed at getting seniors to become more active in their community. The popularity of the June open day saw more creative classes, activities and workshops added to the August agenda and open up to anyone who experiences stress or anxiety. More than 16 events were held across 22 venues on the Coast, and is looking at expanding for the next one.

Two presentations for the annual **Exposure Photographic Prize** really showcased the talent from amateur and emerging photographers. Entries are open nationally and attracts entries from all over the country, with more and more entries being received each year. Once again, the local talent we have on the Coast was in the spotlight as a number of local photographers took out the major awards. In the past, entrants under the age of 24 years have represented 10 per cent of finalists. To recognise this, in 2017 a new category was introduced to showcase and develop young photographers, Emerging Young Talent Award. In 2017, the Exposure exhibition was also moved from The Entrance Gallery to The Art House Wyong to celebrate and complement the expansion of the competition.

Hundreds of people went to Kooindah Waters Resort at Wyong for **Food Revolution Day** to get healthy cooking and eating tips from celebrity chefs and local organisations, The Day is all about creating awareness about food, health and the power of cooking. The day was jam packed with cooking demonstrations, stalls, interactive activities, tips on how to reduce your food waste as well as the benefits of eating healthy and much more.

A bumper calendar of events and activities were organised for **Youth Week 2017**. Young people across the Coast came to together to share ideas, show off their talents, join in local events and celebrate their contribution to the community – and most of all have fun!

The annual **Lighting of the Christmas Trees** in the town centres across the Coast kicked off the festive season. Hundreds of visitors watched as the large tree were switched on and lit up the parks. The evening also had free activities and entertainment.

## **ATTACHMENT 6 – Award winning Council**

Winning an award is not an end in itself but recognition of outstanding work. Council and its staff have been honoured across a broad spectrum of our activities, highlighting the talent and expertise the Coast has to work on the many challenges and opportunities ahead.

**Laycock Street Community Theatre** took out the *Best Technical Support Award* at the Australian Entertainment 'MO' Awards — known world-wide as one of the most respected trophies in Australian show business. Council had previously invested \$150,000 on a new state-of-the-art sound system to provide the highest standard of technical support in lighting and sound at the venue, which hosts more than 250 performances every year.

Three Central Coast Council projects were recognised as the best in New South Wales for engineering excellence, awarded at the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australia (IPWEA) state conference. **The Wyong CBD drainage upgrade** received top honours, taking out the award for *Design and/or Construction of a Local Government/Public Works Project*. In the same category, Council received a 'Highly Commended' for the upgrade of high voltage assets at **Mooney Mooney Water Pump Station** and also took out the *Excellence in Road Safety Engineering* award for its proactive work in making our local roads safer.

**The Wyong CBD drainage upgrade** also took out top honours at the 2017 Institute of Public Works Engineering Australia (IPWEA) Australasia Excellence Awards. Held as part of the International Public Works Conference, the IPWEA Awards celebrate the best of the best in engineering excellence across Australia and New Zealand. With delegates from around the world, the conference aims to share unique local projects and knowledge with the international public works community.

**Misbah Khan** was crowned the Newcastle Professional Engineer of the Year in the September 2016 Engineering Excellence Awards. Misbah was recognised for his research in improving road assets allowing Council to improve the sustainability of Council roads.

The inaugural Wyong Lakes Festival was recognised with the *Innovation in Special Events Award* at the prestigious **RH Dougherty Awards**. The first Wyong Lakes Festival, held in November 2015, featured a nine day program comprising sporting, family, cultural, educational and live music events on and surrounding the Tuggerah Lakes Catchment area. The Festival was recognised as an outstanding, innovative event that had a great partnership approach to activating places and spaces, as well as and generating significant economic returns for the region.

In the lead up to International Women's Day, Council's Group Leader of Connected Communities, Ms Julie Vaughan won the **NSW Local Government Minister's Award** for Women in Local Government. The Awards celebrate the contribution of women to local government and aim to encourage more women to take on leadership roles in this sector.



Two Central Coast Council projects were honoured with Highly Commended Awards at the **NSW Local Government Professionals Australia Awards**. The Awards recognise the excellent contributions and outstanding achievements and innovations being implemented to advance and improve the local government sector in NSW. The Tuggerah Lakes Estuary Education Program was recognised in the Excellence in Environmental Leadership and Sustainability category, while The Art House was honoured as a Special Project Initiative that presents an aspiration model for NSW Local Government.

Council's own Town Crier of 26 years, Stephen Clarke was the star of the **2016 National Town Crier Championships** held in Redland in Queensland on 2 September. Stephen came away from the Championship with three awards - for Best Dressed Crier; Best Cry and Champion of Champions.

Council's Indigenous Community Development Worker, Matt Sonter, presented Ngura (meaning place) at the **World Indigenous People's Conference** in Toronto in July 2018. This is the first time a Council officer has presented at an international conference. The Ngura program focuses on Aboriginal health issues, nutrition, leadership, self-image, and goal setting, as well as maintaining participants pride in their Indigenous culture and heritage and has been running for ten years.

Council was recognised for Excellence in Communications at the **2017 Annual RH Dougherty Awards** held during Local Government Week, earlier this month. The Excellence in Communications Award, a state-wide category, sponsored by News Corp Australia, recognises a communication campaign or event that shifted community attitudes and behaviour to achieve special outcomes during the 2016 calendar year. Council was awarded for their work on the successful opening of Bato Yard in August 2016. RH Dougherty Award judges were quoted as saying: "The opening of Bato Yard, the newest skate place on the Central Coast, was innovative, exciting, engaging and impressive."

Bato Yard is also a Finalist in the **IAP2 Australasia Core Values Awards**. These awards recognise outstanding projects and organisations that are at the forefront of public participation and community engagement. They were created to encourage excellence and innovation in this field. Successful applicants demonstrate leading practice and evidence that IAP2's seven Core Values are clearly embedded within their organisations. The awards will be announced on 19 October 2017.