



# Community Newsletter

The Macleay Valley Coast  
*...Lifestyle - second to none*

March 2009

## 2009 Australia Day Awardees set fine example!

Kempsey Shire held its Australia Day celebrations for 2009 at the Kempsey Macleay RSL Club on Monday, 26 January.

This year's Australia Day awardees were:

- **Citizen of the Year** - Harold 'Uncle Blue' Smith  
*(left top)*
- **Young Citizen of the Year** - Adam Worthy  
*(left middle with Mum, Gillian)*
- **Sportsperson of the Year** - Peter Needs  
*(left bottom with wife, Trudy)*
- **Community Arts and Entertainment** - Wednesday Day Morning Group  
*(below top)*
- **Community Service** - Macleay Home Hospice  
*(below bottom)*



## Changes to Complying & Exempt Development

From 27 February 2009, the NSW State Government introduced the NSW Housing Code. Under this new code development applications for new single and two storey detached dwellings in residential areas, and home alterations in both residential and rural areas, are permitted where they meet pre-determined criteria and complying development approval can be received in 10 days.

The NSW Housing Code expands on councils DCP30- Exempt and Complying Development, under which the building of minor structures such as cabanas and carports and some of minor building improvements can proceed without going through the formal development application process provided they meet the exempt approval criteria.

During the next 12 months, owners can elect to submit their development application using either the NSW Housing Code or Councils DCP 30- Exempt and Complying. At the end of 12 months the NSW Housing Code supersedes Councils DCP30.

Whilst the NSW Housing Code is designed to speed up the approval process it is also intended to preserve the visual amenity of existing streetscapes and to allow for local variations so that development is appropriate to the communities in which it occurs.

The NSW Housing Code will protect neighbours rights through both building and privacy controls and will be subject to regular review during its first year to take into account local feedback, including the creation of local variations and exclusions.

For enquiries about the NSW Housing Code please contact Council's Customer First Centre on 65663200.

**See Page 4 for information on Council's Special Rate Variation & Opinion poll**

**Achieving our Vision**

Council provides high quality services and facilities through strong leadership which considers the needs of our community, the environment and future generations

## **Please pick up after your pet!**

### **Keep Our Environment Safe**

Dog faeces left on our parks and footpath areas can be washed into waterways in which our children and visitors swim. Elevated bacteria numbers can cause serious illness.

Dog mess is unsightly, it smells and those that don't clean up after their dog are inconsiderate as it detracts from everybody's entitlement to enjoy a Park, reserve or Council footpath area.

### **Public Health Issues**

Dog faeces left on our parks provide an ideal harbourage for flies and cockroaches. These nasties can transfer pathogenic bacteria onto barbeque or picnic foods which may lead to serious illness.

### **The Law & Your Responsibilities**

Section 20 of the Companion Animal Act 1998, require that the owner of a dog to immediately remove the dog faeces and properly dispose of them.

Failure to comply with this Regulation will result in an on the spot penalty notice of \$275.



When exercising your pet in public REMEMBER use dog tidy bags and pick up after your pet.

### **Council's Role**

The issue of dog faeces in public areas has been raised as an unacceptable nuisance and the majority of the community would like Council to actively pursue compliance.

Rangers will be undertaking additional patrols early morning/late evening to ensure that dog owners simply do the right thing. Those that don't can expect to be issued with a penalty notice and fine.

## **Don't miss the Heritage Festival (4-19 April 2009)**

Kempsey Shire Council & Port Macquarie Hastings Council invite you to get involved in the 2009 National Trust Heritage Festival...

**"Our place in space**

**Under the Southern Cross"**

Festival booklets are available from the Tourist Information Centre or Customer First Centre.

## **Medical Scholarship presentations**

Sponsors of the Macleay Medical Scholarships presented the 2009 awardees, Nadine McElwaine and Alana-Jean Curry, with their scholarship cheques at luncheon held at the Council Chambers on 11 February 2009.



*Pictured here are the Medical scholarships sponsors with this year's awardees (l to r): Susan Ramke (Macleay Regional Co-op), Mayor John Bowell Nadine McElwaine, Alana-Jean Curren, Brian Calford (Rotary), and Dr Keith Bullock (representing General Practice Network).*

## **South West Rocks Water Recycling Update**

As the sewage treatment plant upgrade continues, work is now commencing on the new water recycling plant. The work is being completed by ODIS Ltd and its main subcontractor Lucas Stuart Pty Ltd. The final design is near completion and preliminary excavation has begun on site.

The construction of the process building and its associated items is expected to be completed in the latter part of the year. Following construction, an intensive testing period is to be undertaken prior to the final product being supplied to Macleay Water customers.

## **Grant opportunity for Business Chambers**

The NSW State Government under its "Building the Country Fund" is calling for applications for grant funding of between \$2000 and \$5000, from Business Chambers in country communities with a population of less than 5000 people.

The funding is available to support promotional activities such as websites, signage for town entrances, business development seminars, local marketing campaigns, business directories and business networking activities.

This is a great opportunity for small Chambers of Commerce in the region to attract additional promotional funding.

For further information please contact Council's Economic Development Manager, Douglas Hunt on 6566 3100, or 0428 412 797."

## **Garden of Memories**

Kempsey Shire Council offers three garden memorial options at the following cemeteries - Frederickton, Arakoon and East Kempsey. Ashes may be stored in the garden beneath bronze memorial plaques. The plaques are ordered through funeral directors.

Where memorialisation alone is required (i.e. if ashes are scattered elsewhere or burial has taken place elsewhere) memorial plaques may be placed in the gardens.

If a double site is required, the second position must be purchased at the same time as the first inurnment.

Purchase of a position is \$510 each at Council. The ordering of a bronze plaque and placement of ashes is organised by a funeral director.





## ***Council tackles Climate Change & works towards greater energy efficiency***

### ***Climate protection program***

Since joining the 'Cities for Climate Protection Australia' Program (CCP) Council has progressed through the first two milestones of the program, by successfully completing an inventory and forecast for key sources of greenhouse emissions and more recently setting emission reduction goals. At its December 2008 meeting Council agreed to endorse the setting of medium and longer term emission reduction goals as follows:

- Medium Term Goals: reduce per capita Council greenhouse gas emissions from 2005 levels by 10% by 2014 and per capita community greenhouse gas emissions from 2006 levels by 5% by 2016.
- Long Term Goals: reduce per capita Council greenhouse gas emissions from 2005 levels by 20% by 2020 and per capita community greenhouse gas emissions from 2006 levels by 15% by 2020.

The next step in the Program will be to develop a Local Greenhouse Action Plan designed to coordinate activities to help Council and the Community to achieve the adopted emission reduction goals.

As this preliminary work is being undertaken, Council is always looking at options to reduce electricity use and thus greenhouse gas emissions, by improving efficiencies, or switching to renewable forms of electricity generation. For example, low wattage lighting, solar walkway lighting and water saving shower heads have been installed at a number of Council owned caravan parks.

At the main office building in West Kempsey, the air conditioning has been upgraded to a more efficient system and investigations are underway to upgrade the lighting in the library to more efficient models. The kerbside recycling program has now been in operation for over 2 years, and along with further waste separation activities conducted at the main landfill site, has significantly reduced greenhouse gas emissions from this source. The new green waste service, commencing on 6 April will further enhance this process.

To help reduce emissions from the vehicle fleet Council have introduced a number of smaller, more fuel efficient vehicles into the general fleet, including one running on LPG and we are currently benchmarking the greenhouse performance of the entire fleet against other NSW Councils.

### ***World Wetlands Day 2009***

In partnership with the Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority and Macleay Landcare Network, Council co-hosted a community environmental education event at Boyters Lane Wetlands to celebrate World Wetlands Day on 2 February 2009. Titled 'Breakfast with the Birds', the event kicked off at 6am with an early morning bird watching session utilising the newly constructed 'Bird Hide' to base bird observations from. A variety of shy waterbirds were identified, including the Lesser Yellowlegs (*Tringa flavipes*), a rare migratory wader from the Americas.



Attendees then enjoyed a free BBQ breakfast and listened to a few talks on local wildlife and native plant gardening.

The event wrapped up with a number of water-watch activities, such as water quality testing, identification of water bugs, and a stormwater wetland walk and talk, all to help raise awareness about the importance of wetlands.

World Wetlands Day is celebrated internationally each year on 2 February. It marks the anniversary of the signing of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Convention) in Ramsar, Iran, on 2 February 1971. Based on the success of the day, further community based activities are planned ahead – stay posted!

## **Waste Service Changes**

On April 6 2009 a new era in waste collection will begin across the Kempsey Shire.

The New South Wales Government Waste Avoidance & Resource Recovery Strategy 2007 requires the minimisation of environmental harm from waste management and states that NSW councils must recover 66% of the waste stream by 2014. Further, in 2006 the Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC) identified that councils should separately collect waste for recyclables, garden organics and residual waste. The changes are also being driven by the impending "Waste Levy" that starts on 1 July 2009 and the "Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme" (CPRS), which takes effect on 1 July 2010.

The new services are designed to meet the regulatory requirements, and to provide the best possible service whilst minimising costs to Kempsey Shire ratepayers.

Briefly, the new services will be:

1. All general domestic waste will be weekly, this includes the rural services currently on a fortnightly service, and collected in a new 140 litre Red lidded bin. A larger 240 litre bin is available by request (an additional charge will apply).
2. All recycling will be collected in a 240 litre yellow lidded bin, as is the current service, on a fortnightly pickup.
3. A new organics or "green waste" service will operate in designated urban towns and villages. This bin, a 240 litre bin, will be identified by a bright green lid. Green waste bins will be picked up on the opposite week to the recycling bins.

Information booklets will be delivered with your new bins. If you have any questions please contact JR Richards & Sons Waste hotline on freecall 1300-787-223.

### ***What's on at the Gallery!***

- **International Women's Day Exhibition** - until Sunday 5 April
- **Raku Dreaming 'A magical mystery tour'** by ceramic artists Deb Farrell and Julie Bower - 16-19 April.

#### **MACLEAY VALLEY ART GALLERY**

5 Kinchela Street Gladstone  
Open 10.30am - 4pm  
Thursday to Sunday

## **SPECIAL RATE VARIATION - AN OPEN LETTER TO RESIDENTS OF KEMPSEY SHIRE**

We all want good roads, neat and tidy roadsides, mowed sporting fields and parks, clean public toilets, and reliable water and sewerage services, amongst other things.

But nobody likes increasing costs...

Every single service provided by Council, including those listed above, comes at a cost to ratepayers. Over the last few years Council has tried to find alternate sources of revenue, through grant funding and investments, to ease the burden on ratepayers. Its operations are also constantly reviewed for cost-saving opportunities.

Council has not received a special variation, other than the Environmental levy, to bolster its general rate income in the 12 years since 1997, unlike other Councils on the Mid North Coast.

Every year at Budget time it has become increasingly difficult to make the dollars available stretch to cover the maintenance costs of our existing services, let alone, to introduce new ones, no matter how much they are needed, and requested by, the community.

The situation this year has been made even more difficult by the

global financial crisis, which has seen Council's income from investments reduce by \$455,000. The knock-on effect is also evident in the reduced income Council will receive from the lack of new subdivisions, development applications and building applications which are expected to be down by at least \$270,000. Added to this the Superannuation scheme governing all Councils in NSW has increased its employer contribution rates costing Kempsey Shire Council an additional \$578,000 in 2009/10.

Council's 2009/10 Budget papers revealed that the activities and service levels Council had hoped to deliver in 2009/10 will place Council \$4.1m in deficit.

During its 3 days of budget workshops held in late February and early March, Councillors and Council staff worked closely to consider ways to reduce this deficit. They were able, through some extremely tough decision-making, to reduce this figure by \$3million. Even with this drastic action, there is still a budget shortfall of \$1.1million.

As a result, Council's options are limited to...

- More cuts in service levels

to what the community sees as essential services, particularly roads; resulting in complaints from an unhappy community;

- A deficit budget;  
OR
- Gain community support to go to the Minister for Local Government to seek a special rate variation.

Council has chosen to have a deficit budget and to ask its community for support.

The total average increase in rates and charges will be around \$3.46 per week to ratepayers living in an average urban dwelling. Some people will pay a little less than this and some a little more, depending on the value of their property.

Please consider that, even if you disagree with Council applying for this special variation, your rates will still increase in 2009/10 by about \$2.69 per week. This increase is made up of the Minister for Local Government's annual allowable percentage increase, marginal water and sewerage increases and the new green waste garbage service that needs to be charged separately in 2009/10.

Rural ratepayers will experience increases but if they do not have access to services such as water, sewerage and the new green waste garbage service, they will not incur increases in these areas.

For the average urban dwelling council is seeking your approval for an additional increase of 77 cents per week (\$3.46 less \$2.69). Do you believe your shire is worth this?

Council respectfully asks you to consider this and seeks your support for this special rate variation.

The Minister can only determine the level of community support for this proposal if you get involved, so please tell us how you feel.

Do not leave others in the community to be your voice ... if you want to maintain current service levels please tell us so!

---

### ***Have your say in Council's rate variation poll...***

Simply tick one of the Boxes below and fill in your name and address and forward to the General Manager, Kempsey Shire Council, PO Box 78, West Kempsey. NSW. 2440; or hand in to Council's Customer First Centre, 22 Tozer Street, West Kempsey.

Yes! I do support seeking a special rate variation so that Council can maintain current levels of road maintenance and rehabilitation by raising an additional \$800,000.

No! I do not support seeking a special rate variation and accept that this will mean a decrease in Council's service level to the community on the road network.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

If you prefer you can submit your vote online <http://www.kempsey.nsw.gov.au/special-rate-variation-letter.html>.

Please note, the poll **closes at 4.30pm on Monday 6 April 2009.**

Each poll submitted will be included for the Minister's consideration of Council's application for Special rate variation.

*How can we help you?*

*Please contact us*



22 Tozer Street, Kempsey  
PO Box 78, West Kempsey NSW 2440  
Phone: 6566 3200 Fax: 6566 3205  
Email: [ksc@kempsey.nsw.gov.au](mailto:ksc@kempsey.nsw.gov.au)  
Website: [www.kempsey.nsw.gov.au](http://www.kempsey.nsw.gov.au)