

Your council in the community



A snapshot of council activities and services from the Local Government and Shires Associations' Social Policy and Community Services Survey



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- 02. Gosford Council Cultural Awards 2009*
- 03. Rebecca Rhodda, Child Care Trainee Wyong 2009*
- 04. Albury Art Gallery*
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- 06. Coffs Harbour Library*
- 07. Blayney Sustainable Living Expo 2009*
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- 09. Byron Bike Path 2010*
- 10. Bland Shire Council Cultural Awards 2010*
- 11. Bathurst Cultural Awards 2008*
- 12. Batemans Bay Foreshore 2010*
- 13. Boy jumping*
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- 16. Epping Pool*
- 17. Batemans Bay Botanic Gardens 2010*

■ *Introduction*

For many years the Associations have been aware that as councils continue to grow and change, they are becoming ever more sophisticated in the way that they service and interact with communities across NSW. The results in this report are from a Social Policy and Community Services Survey taken in 2009. The survey extended beyond a similar survey undertaken by the Associations in 1999. The scope was broad to allow a holistic reflection of social policy and community services activities in Local Government.

This was strategically timed to provide a solid picture prior to the formal roll out of Integrated Planning and Reporting. The findings of the survey were encouraging. Councils have established quality plans, policies and appointed staff to a cross section of portfolio areas to directly engage with communities and deliver services and activities that address emerging matters. Results from the survey have been extremely valuable. The purpose of this survey is to aid the Associations in effectively targeting their advocacy on behalf of members. It is understood that members are working consistently with communities (within available resources) to enable greater quality of life and wellbeing for residents through the delivery of ever improving social policy initiatives. Information gathered through this survey was anonymous and will be used to provide targeted support, training and assistance for members of the Associations.

It is beneficial that the Associations are able to publish a document that reflects the effective and strategic positioning of councils at the grass roots and the positive contributions that councils offer for communities across the state. Through our analysis of the results below, it is clear that an increasing number of councils are delivering social policy and community services initiatives that reflect a meaningful dialogue with communities and that this is leading to sustainable improvements in local life.



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■ *Whole of community*

Many council services and facilities serve the needs of all the members of the community. These are in addition to the plans that will be found in the individual population or functional areas.

Long-term plans – Councils develop long term (minimum 5 years) strategic or corporate plans and budget allocations:

- 68 Councils out of 110 (or 61.8% of respondents) have developed long-term strategic plans.
- 110 councils reported allocating \$170 million in 2009-10 on initiatives identified in their Social Plans, including:
 - 29 community initiatives (over \$10 million).
 - 29 youth initiatives (\$3.8 million).
 - 21 Cultural Planning and development initiatives (\$6.4 million).
 - 17 Ageing initiatives (\$11.6 million).
 - 17 initiatives towards access for people with disability (\$0.5 million).
 - 16 initiatives for children (\$4.3 million).
 - 12 for crime prevention and community safety (\$0.7 million).
 - 10 library initiatives (\$8.7 million).
 - 9 initiatives for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (\$0.4million).

Plans – Councils provide a range of plans that meet the needs of the whole community, such as:

- 52 councils (47.3%) identified a sport, recreation and leisure plan.
- 51 councils (46.4%) identified a crime prevention plan.
- 48 councils (43.6%) identified an open space plan.
- 46 councils (41.8%) identified a community facilities plan.
- 35 councils (31.8%) identified a swimming pools plan.
- 28 councils (25.5%) identified a safer communities compact.
- 12 councils (10.9%) identified a social inclusion plan.
- 5 councils (4.6%) identified a carers plan.

Policy – Councils have a number of different policy statements that meet the needs of the whole community, such as:

- 34 councils (30.9%) identified a swimming pool policy.
- 33 councils (30%) identified an open space policy.
- 27 councils (24.6%) identified a sport and recreation policy.



Community Engagement – Councils consult and engage with the community in a number of ways, such as:

- 91 councils (82.7%) identified that they engaged with volunteers from the community to work with council on community development programs.
- 80 councils (72.7%) reported having resident advisory groups or committees.
- 78 councils (70.9%) stipulated that they had Community Services advisory groups or committees.

Activities – Councils support a range of activities for the whole community, such as:

- UN International Volunteers Day (56 councils, 50.9%).
- Carer's Week (47 councils, 42.7%).

Councils own facilities that are used by the whole community. Sometimes they are operated by others, sometimes by council. They include:

- 310 Community Centres.
- 90 Neighbourhood centres.
- 644 Public Halls.
- 291 Swimming pools.
- 1,713 sporting grounds.
- 6,582 parks and gardens.
- 2,002 bushland reserves.
- Over 29,000km of dedicated bicycle pathways.
- 95 Leisure facilities.
- 30 Men's Sheds.

Of these, councils themselves run services catering to the needs of the whole community including:

- 155 Swim Centre Services.
- 36 Neighbourhood Centre Services (44.4%, up from 1999, 16.2%).
- 59 Leisure Centre Services.
- 22 Men's Shed Services.

■ *Families & children*

Staff – Councils employ policy and development staff to meet the needs of Families and Children:

- 182.18 FTE staff were engaged as Development Staff addressing the needs of families and children (out of 84 = average of 2.2 FTE per council).
- 17.68 FTE staff were engaged as policy staff focused on policy and planning for families and children (out of 76 councils = average of 0.23 FTE per council).

Plans – Councils have current plans to meet the needs of Families and Children:

- 21 councils (19.1%) had established plans to meet the needs of families and children such as a Families and Children's needs study (down from 1999, 35.7%).
- 11 councils (10%) identified a families and children recreation plan.
- 10 councils (9%) identified separate families and children's plan.

Policy – Councils have policy statements to meet the needs of Families and Children:

- 18 councils (16.4%) identified a policy statement to meet the needs of families and children such as a Children's policy statement (down from 1999, 19.5%).
- 6 councils (5.5%) had a family policy statement (up from 1999, 2.4%).
- 13 councils (11.8%) identified a families and children's road safety policy.
- 12 councils (10.9%) identified a preschool policy statement.

Community Engagement – Councils engage with Families and Children in a number of ways:

- 60 councils (54.6%) identified that they engaged with volunteers from the community to work with council on Families and Children programs.
- 38 councils (34.6%) identified that they have Families and Children advisory groups/committees (up from 1999, 20.3%).

Activities – Councils support the following activities:

- 68 councils (61.8%) support Children's Week.

Council services catering to the needs of Families and Children include:

- 11 councils (15.1%) provide Family support services (up from 1999, 6.5%).
- There are 47 Family Day care Schemes (up from 31 in 1999).
- There are 128 Long Day Care centres (up from 123 in 1999).
- There are 108 OOSH services (up from 72 in 1999).

Examples of council partnerships include:

- Council is working in partnership with NSW Commission for Children and Young People to pilot child friendly indicators.
- DEEWR provides a substantial amount of funding to run our mobile preschool which makes it a fantastic service.
- Council currently works in partnership with all early childhood service providers to deliver a range of programs designed to help parents build their skills and confidence in their parenting.

■ *Young people*

Staff - Councils employ policy and development staff to meet the needs of Young People:

- 94.70 FTE were engaged as Development Staff (out of 91 councils = average of 1.04 FTE per council). This is almost double the number in 1999 of 49.
- 15.15 FTE were engaged as policy staff focused on policy and planning for younger people (out of 70 councils = average of 0.22 FTE per council).

Plans - Councils have current plans to meet the needs of Young People:

- 25 councils (22.7%) incorporate measures to address Young People's use of open space in LEP/DCP.
- 18 councils (16.4%) had a separate plan for young people.

Policy – Councils have policy statements to meet the needs of Young People:

- 25 councils (22.7%) identified a youth policy statement (around the same as in 1999, 21.9%).

Community Engagement – Councils engage with Young People in a number of ways:

- 73 councils (66.4%) identified that they had young people's advisory committees (up from 1999, 37.3%).
- 85 councils (77.3%) engaged with volunteers from the community to work with council on youth programs.

Activities – Councils support the following activities:

- 100 councils (90.9%) deliver a Youth Week program.
- 23 councils (20.9%) facilitated celebrations for International Youth Day.

Council services catering to the needs of Young People include:

- 56 Youth Centre Services (65.1%) were operated by councils up from 29.2% in 1999, however 121 youth centres were owned by councils.
- 20 Youth Safety Program Services (29%).

Examples of council partnerships include:

- Partnership with Barnardos Australia to deliver the Reconnect Program. This is an early intervention program that aims to provide support for young people aged 12-18 years (and their families) who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- Delivery of digital storytelling projects for young people.
- Gherkin youth website – Partnership with Department of Juvenile Justice, Department of Education, Nungera Cooperative Society Ltd, North Coast Area Health Service Community Health to promote participation in the youth arts website and provide workshops and activities to support young people to share their stories.

■ *Older people*

Staff - Councils employ policy and development staff to meet the needs of Older People:

- 70 FTE staff were engaged as Development Staff (out of 86 = average of 0.81 FTE per council). This is an increase from 1999 (58 FTE).

Plans- Councils have current plans to meet the needs of Older People:

- 18 councils had an Ageing Strategy or Plan.
- 46 responding councils had incorporated access and mobility that would be helpful for older people in their LEP/DCP (41.82% of councils who responded).

Policy – Councils have policy statements to meet the needs of Older People:

- 59 councils (53.64%) identified an access policy.
- 20 councils (18.18%) identified a Walkability and Wheelability Policy for footpath safety.

Community Engagement – Councils engage with Older People in a number of ways:

- 57 councils identified that they had older persons advisory committees or groups, an increase from 1999 (42 councils).
- 82 councils (74.55%) engaged volunteers from the community to work with council on programs for older people.

Activities – Councils support the following activities:

- 97 councils (88.18%) deliver a Seniors Week program.

Council services catering to the needs of older people include:

- 45 councils (53.5%) provide Meals on Wheels services – same as in 1999.
- 21 councils (27.27%) provide Home Modifications and Maintenance services, almost double the number in 1999 (12).
- There are 70 HACCC centres, up from 47 in 1999.
- There are 125 seniors centres in the 85 council areas who responded (an average of 1.47 per LGA), this is almost 3 times the number in 1999 (48).

Examples of council partnerships include:

- Work with Vision Australia and Guide Dogs to run leisure and art programs for vision impaired people (many of whom are older people).
- Delivery of social support programs for community groups from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Such as, regular activities for seniors from a Tamil background in partnership with Auburn Tamil Society and Sri Om.

■ *People with Disability*

Staff- Councils employ policy and development staff to meet the needs of People with Disability:

- 99.75 FTE staff were engaged as Development Staff (an average of 1.22 per council).

Plans- Councils have current plans to meet the needs of People with Disability:

- 49 councils (44.55%) identified that they had established a Disability Action Plan, up from 38 in 1999.
- 47 councils (42.73%) identified that they had developed a mobility or pedestrian access map.

Policy – Councils have policy statements to meet the needs of People with Disability:

- 36 councils (32.73%) identified a policy on employment of people with disability.
- 17 councils (15.45%) had lighting and visibility policies for open space.

Community Engagement – Councils engage with People with Disability in a number of ways:

- 70 councils (63.64%) identified advisory groups made up of people with disability.
- 70 councils (63.64%) also identified that volunteers in the community were engaged to work with people with disability.

Council services catering to the needs of People with Disability include:

- Almost 50% of councils responding provide respite services for people with a disability.
- 21% of councils provide carers information services for people with a disability.
- Councils from agricultural areas identified more (18) respite care services on average (0.62) than councils in metropolitan (10 with an average of 0.53) and regional (7 with an average of 0.33) areas.

Examples of council partnerships include:

- Council has worked in partnership with a local employment agency to employ a person with a disability in the community services branch.
- Blue Fringe Arts worked together to deliver a forum to raise awareness around mental health issues.

■ *Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Peoples*

Staff - Councils employ policy and development staff to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples:

- 56.95 FTE staff were engaged as Development Staff (compared with 17 in 1999).
- 12.15 FTE staff were engaged as policy staff.

Plans- Councils have current plans to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples:

- 74 councils had included the interests and needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in their Social Plan (compared with 62 in 1999).
- 12 councils identified that they had plans to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples such as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Plan.
- 12 councils also identified that they had a Reconciliation Action Plan(compared with 37 in 1999).
- 4 councils had progressed to adopt an Aboriginal Keeping Places Plan.

Policy – Councils have policy statements to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples:

- 33 councils identified that they had established a cross cultural awareness training policy for Councillors, Management and staff (compared with 28 in 1999).
- 21 councils identified an employment policy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.
- 20 councils identified that they had policy statements to meet needs such as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Policy Statement (compared with 29 in 1999).
- 18 councils identified that they had established an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Policy, (compared with 38 in 1999).

Community Engagement – Councils engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in a number of ways:

- 75 councils have knowledge of Traditional custodians and group naming.
- 61 councils engage with volunteers from the community to work with council on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples programs.
- 48 councils have Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Advisory Groups/Committees.
- 35 councils utilise an Aboriginal Police Liaison Officer.
- 18 councils identified Aboriginal Heritage Advisory Committees/Groups.
- 15 councils have Local Service Agreements, (compared with 4 in 1999).

Activities – Councils support the following activities:

- 82 councils identified that they supported NAIDOC Week celebrations, (compared with 78 in 1999).
- 79 councils identified that they fly the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flags.
- 53 councils participate in National Reconciliation Week, (compared with 73 in 1999).
- 46 councils practice Welcome to Country or have implemented co-name signage entering their towns.

Examples of council partnerships include:

- Partnership with Aboriginal Corporation to deliver the Greenwaste Recycling Compost Program.
- Council has worked closely with the community working party and the Aboriginal advisory board on increasing the engagement of the Indigenous community on issues which have an affect or impact on them. Council now acknowledges the local elders at the commencement of all formal meetings and at public events. Council was recently successful in their application for external funding for a position that will become part of the annual wage structure. The Indigenous Liaison Officer position will be integral to increasing the employment opportunities of local Indigenous people not only at council but throughout the wider community.

■ *Culturally & Linguistically Diverse Communities*

Staff - Councils employ policy and development staff to meet the needs of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities:

- 24.5 FTE Development or Policy Staff addressing the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities (out of 67 councils = average 0.37 per council).

Plans - Councils have current plans to meet the needs of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities:

- 10% of councils responding have Local Ethnic Affairs Priorities Statement (LEAPS) and 5.7% had Cultural Diversity and Multicultural Action Plans.

Policy – Councils have policy statements to meet the needs of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities:

Few councils had separate policies for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities. The needs of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities were included in a range of policies such as:

- LEAPS policy, multicultural policy, access and equity policy, cultural diversity policy, ethnic policy, migrant services policy and cultural competence criteria.

Community Engagement – Councils engage with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities in a number of ways:

- 54.5% of councils responding identified that they had Multicultural Advisory groups or committees (up from 13.8% in 1999).
- 50% of councils engaged with volunteers from the community to work with council on programs for people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities.

Activities – Councils support the following activities:

- 63.6% of councils participate in Harmony Day.

Council services catering to the needs of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities include:

- Migrant support and CALD liaison officers, CALD centre based meals, food and respite programs, language programs, living in harmony programs, library services for CALD communities, refugee welcome zone.
- Other activities and services included: migrant interagency, community expo for newly arrived migrants, emerging community action plan partnership, community centre available for refugees to worship, driver training lessons for new migrants and refugees support.

Examples of council partnerships include:

- Partnership with the Indonesian Arts Alliance and financial assistance for Harmony Day celebrations.
- Migrant Mentor Program which links volunteers with newly arrived families to 'orient' them to area, the local community and services.
- "Refugee Welcome Zone" officially recognised by the Refugee Council of Australia including Refugee Photographic Exhibition "Freedom From Fear."

■ Women

Staff- Councils employ policy and development staff to meet the needs of Women:

- 9.35 FTE were engaged as Development or Policy Staff addressing the needs of women (an average of 1.6 FTE per council).

Plans - Councils have current plans to meet the needs of Women:

- 52.4% of councils addressed women's needs in either social plans or in community or integrated plans.

Policy – Councils have policy statements to meet the needs of Women:

- Policies to address the needs of women include equal employment opportunities and harassment prevention policy.

Community Engagement - Councils engage with Women in a number of ways:

- 47.3% of responding councils identified that they engaged with volunteers from the community to work with council on women's programs.
- 13.6% of councils had women's advisory groups or committees.

Activities – Councils support the following activities:

- 76.4% of councils deliver a program for International Women's Day.

Council services catering to the needs of Women include:

- Exclusive refuge and rest centres, women only swimming groups, career workshops, regular meetings with Aboriginal Women.
- Responding councils identified the following facilities catering to the needs of women: women rest centre and refuge, women health centre and a Country Women's Association space.

An example of council partnership:

- Council's Sexual Assault Prevention Committee has members from schools, sexual assault services, police and health professionals who developed a Safety of Women in licensed premises training video for Liquor Accord as a poster campaign.

■ *Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual & Transgender Communities*

Staff- Councils employ policy and development staff to meet the needs of Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender Communities:

- 3.30 FTE were engaged as Development or Policy Staff addressing the needs of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender communities.

Plans- Councils have current plans to meet the needs of Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender Communities:

- 30.9% of councils address the needs of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people in social plans and social equity plans or in community or integrated plans.

Community Engagement - Councils engage with Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender Communities in a number of ways:

- 27.2% of councils identified that they engaged with volunteers from the community to work with council on programs catering towards to the needs of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender communities.
- Youth Services run a program called Gay and Lesbian at Manly (GLAM) which is a support and social group for young gay and lesbian and transgender, bisexual young people.
- Gay/Lesbian staff within Council have recently facilitated the addition of a page on Council's website providing information and reference material for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex residents.

Activities – Councils support the following activities:

- Out of responding councils, four identified that they were involved in facilitating activities relating to the Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras.

Council services catering to the needs of Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender Communities include:

- Councils offered the following services targeting the needs of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people across NSW: street based sex work research project including transgender workers including an identity based prejudice and violence program, support for AIDS Council of NSW anti-violence program and a community education project encouraging 'tolerance' for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender community members.

An example of council partnership:

- Two councils identified that they worked together in partnership with other councils to deliver programs for young Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people. Another council identified that they worked in partnership with the AIDS Council on an anti-violence program.

■ *People on Low Incomes*

The needs of people on low incomes, people who are homeless or experiencing poverty are mostly addressed within the broad community plans of councils. In a small number of councils, there are some specific plans and policies.

Staff - Councils employ policy and development staff to meet the needs of People on Low Incomes:

- 7.30 FTE were engaged as Development or Policy Staff addressing the needs of people on low incomes.

Plans - Councils have current plans to meet the needs of People on Low Incomes:

- Affordable housing strategy.

Policy – Councils have policy statements to meet the needs of People on Low Incomes:

- From the total number of survey respondents, councils identified the following policies to address the needs of people on low incomes and people who are unemployed: rates assistance policy, affordable housing policy, donations policy, welfare program running at community centre, policy for personal hardship, homeless persons MOU, Mobile Free Food Services Policy and Accord.

Community Engagement - Councils engage with People on Low Incomes in a number of ways:

- 20.9% of survey respondents identified that they engaged with volunteers from the community to work with council on programs catering towards the needs for people with low incomes.

Activities – Councils support the following activities:

- 9.1% of responding councils supported Anti-Poverty Week.

Council services catering to the needs of People on Low Incomes include:

- Councils offered the following services targeting the needs of people on low incomes or people who are unemployed across NSW: housing affordability services and programs, job clubs and employment working group, assistance for homeless people.
- Kitchen available to groups, a building for a food bank and a housing task force.

Examples of council partnerships include:

- The community centre runs a welfare program for low-income and homeless people which provides food and travel vouchers, regular barbeques, showers and toilets.
- Social Inclusion: the city promotes social inclusivity for the homeless through a range of small targeted projects such as: TAFE outreach courses, voluntary and employment opportunities through the City, art and recreational projects and regular consultation with people who are or who have experienced homelessness.
- Mobile Free Food Services Policy and Accord aims to bring all of the different services that provide free food to the homeless together to share information and resources. This helps to strengthen the level of skill and engagement of volunteers in responding assertively to homeless community.
- Homeless Persons Information Centre (HPIC) and Homelessness Brokerage Program (HBP).
- Public Space Liaison Officer (PSLO): The PSLO liaises between homeless people, city units, community services, local residents and businesses brokering solutions that are acceptable to a range of stakeholders. Number of FTE staff is 1
Clients - 2,500.

■ *Cultural Development*

Councils are increasingly active in Cultural Development.

Plans - Councils have current plans for cultural development:

- 55% of councils had a Cultural Development Plan, compared with 19% in 1999.
- 19 councils (17%) had a separate Public Art Master Plan.
- 50% of councils had cultural facilities in their Community Facilities Contribution Plans (s94), compared with 40% in 1999.
- 55 councils (half of respondents) had Cultural Development included in their Social Plans, unchanged from 1999.

Policy – Councils have policy statements for cultural development:

- 25% of councils had a Cultural Development policy, an increase from 19% in 1999.
- 30% of councils had Public Art Policy, up from 14% in 1999.
- 39% had a Library Policy, down from 52% in 1999.

Community Engagement - Councils engage with the community on cultural development through:

- 43 councils (39%) had a cultural reference group or community arts committee.

Activities – Councils support the following activities:

- 37% of councils provided for Community Arts activities, up significantly from 14% in 1999.
- 20 councils (32% of respondents) commissioned 81 public art works, compared with 21 (17%) commissioning 52 works in 1999.

Council services for cultural development include:

- 36% of councils run Community Arts Centres, up from 11% in 1999.
- 57% of councils have Theatre/Music/Performing Arts Centres, up from 16% in 1999.
- 62% of councils run Museums, up from 35% in 1999.
- 64% of councils run Art Galleries, up from 27% in 1999.
- 57% of councils run a Cultural grant/donation program, up from 33% in 1999.

Examples of council partnerships:

- 55 councils participated in the development of a regional arts strategy.
- The Festival is a partnership with 10 councils in the northern beaches/northern Sydney/north shore area. The festival is an annual celebration for Aboriginal history, heritage and culture, with activities and events for the Aboriginal and non-indigenous community. The events are spread over 2 months and incorporating NAIDOC Week, Sorry Day and Reconciliation Week.
- Living Streets Program - community cultural development program which engages the local community in various arts based or community garden projects.
- Minto Arts Strategy in Partnership with Housing NSW and ARTS NSW. Publications (My Father/My brother/Tell me my Mother) partnership Campbelltown City Council, and DADHC. NSW Indigenous Art Award and partners NSW Parliament and MGNSW and Campbelltown City Council.
- Internal: With Recreation & Open Space Unit and with Environmentally Sustainable Groups to develop major public artworks as part of Town Centre improvement and Georges River Recreational Trail Crosscurrents project. External: With Bankstown Youth Development Service to develop and showcase young emerging artists. Assistance in planning and organising events including NAIDOC , Bankstown Bites Food Festival and Bestfest.
- Museum development partnership with Arts Northern Rivers, Crankfest youth festival partnerships with Mid Richmond Neighborhood Centre and Community Connections, Performing art workshops (Hip Hop) for youth, partnership with Beyond Empathy.
- A partnership between the Southern Cross University Office of Regional Engagement & Council has involved the development of a Cultural Plan, Creative Industries Plan and local Cultural Trails Project. A partnership between the Coffs Harbour Library and Museum has created “Picture Coffs Harbour” an online catalogue of historical photos and data on the Coffs Harbour LGA. A partnership between Bananacoast Credit Union, Griffith University and Council has created the “Your Tutor” program which provides online free tutoring to secondary school students and is accessed through Council’s libraries.
- 5 Lands Walk - A community walk along part of the Gosford City Coastline that encourages community participation in the natural and cultural environment of the Coast. Community art and performances are showcased, and the Aboriginal heritage and significance of the area is celebrated.
- Library partnerships with schools and children’s services to bring about increased awareness about literacy and early reading programs, including events held at library and in other locations such as schools and child care facilities including National Simultaneous Story time, visiting authors and school holiday programs.

■ *Other Groups in the Community*

While councils are responsible for planning for all members of the community, they may develop specific policies for some groups depending on local need. Other groups in the community who have seen the benefit of council plans include men, people living in isolated communities and drug users.

Staff - Councils employ policy and development staff to meet the needs of other groups in the community:

- 26.2 FTE were engaged as Development or Policy Staff addressing the needs of other groups in the community.

Plans - Councils have current plans to meet the needs of other groups in the community:

- Other groups in the community who are addressed in councils plans include: men, street drinking strategy, villages in outlying areas and people who are isolated or live in rural areas.

Policy – Councils have policy statements to meet the needs of other groups in the community:

- Equal employment opportunity, human resources, workforce and staff diversity policies, financial assistance and grants for community groups, safe injecting rooms for drug users policy, community subsidies for hall hire.

Activities – Councils support the following activities:

- International Volunteers Day activities.

Examples of council partnerships include:

- Council builds capacity within community organisations by providing training and support to build skills, knowledge and experience. This enables the individual to build leadership capacity with community professionals through the development of strong leadership and governance within community groups.
- Provide community management training courses for Board Members of community organisations. Also providing support for funding applications and for compliance issues.

■ *Health*

Staff - Councils employ policy and development staff to meet the public Health needs of the community:

- 36.45 FTE Health Protection and Promotion Development staff.

Plans- Councils have current plans for public Health:

- 40% had Health Services included in Social Plan.
- 19.1% had a pandemic plan.
- 40.1% had a business continuity plan.

Policy – Councils have policy statements for public Health:

- 17.3% of councils had an Immunisation Services Policy.
- 42.7% of councils had a Tobacco, Alcohol and Other Drugs Policy.
- 47.3% of councils had a Sun Protection Policy– the highest prevalence for any health –related policy.
- Over 50% of councils had smoke-free policies, resolutions and/or regulations for outdoor areas.
- 28% of councils had employee health policies.

Community Engagement - Councils engage with the community on Health through:

- 24.6% of councils engage with volunteers regarding health protection and promotion issues.
- 18.2% of councils have health service advisory groups/committees.

Activities – Councils support the following activities:

- 70% of respondents run physical activity programs with over 25 FTE council staff. However, they are all based in metropolitan areas and only 8 councils have allied physical activity policies.
- 58% of councils took part in Walk and Ride to work days – the highest prevalence for any health-related one-off, annual event.

Services catering to the needs of Families and Children (operated not necessarily owned by councils):

- 46% of councils provide immunisation clinics (up from 32.5% in 1999).
- 26.4% of councils provide 79 Early Childhood Health Centres for Area Health Services to use (compared to 28.4% in 1999).
- Councils provide 41 venues for Primary Care medical centres and surgeries (compared with 45 centres in 1999).
- Councils provide housing for 43 GPs and Nurses (compared with 53 in 1999).

Examples of council partnerships are:

Councils identified a large number of partnerships that had been established to deliver a broad range of health protection and promotion as well as health services in communities across NSW. Some examples included (but were not limited to):

- CHEERS (Cheerful Healthy Eating for Elderly Residents and Seniors) program and Carers Cooking program was developed with NSW Health/Area Health Service.
- Community Development Team and NSW Breastscreen and SSW Area Health Service for Women.
- Worked with Men's Shed and various health and community providers on Men's Health Pit Stop program screening up to 80 men for a health check.

■ *Other Initiatives*

Councils also highlight other initiatives that they believed to be important at the time that survey was undertaken. Specific examples that are interesting to highlight include:

- The Gwydir Learning Region was developed as a strategic policy response to the relatively poor educational and economic circumstances of the residents in the Gwydir Shire. The Gwydir Shire is located on the boundary between the North West and Western Plains Regions of NSW and surrounded by Tamworth, Inverell, Moree and Armidale. Even with its location the Shire is lacking in training agencies locally. This relative remoteness creates challenges for the delivery of the diverse range of courses that we endeavour to promote. The current structure is built upon the vocational education program being delivered by Warialda High School. The strategic partners in this endeavour are the Department of Education and Training (local Schools and TAFE), Adult and Community Education, University of New England and Gwydir Shire Council. Other learning institutions (e.g. Southern Cross University) are co-opted as required to deliver courses. The overriding aim of the Region is to tailor an individual learning experience to any member of our community, irrespective of age, who has a particular desire to learn.
- The Watershed is a sustainable resource centre in the heart of Newtown. The Watershed is dedicated to growing a culture of environmental sustainability within the urban community. The Watershed is free and open to the public and offers a variety of services such as a library, free workshops, practical ideas for everyday sustainable living, education and business programs. The Watershed is a joint initiative of City of Sydney and Marrickville Councils, part of an ongoing commitment to supporting sustainable environments.
- Safer Community Compack is an alternative transport program titled 'Gunny Gets You Home.' The grant was used to implement the 'Safe Home' project that will deliver a late night alternative transport service that will run between 10.30pm and 2.30am (approximately) on Friday and Saturday nights, 52 weeks per year. While the project will target patrons of all licensed premises in Gunnedah and aims to reduce alcohol related assaults and malicious damage in the CBD, the broader impact of the project is aimed at reducing harm through improving the safety of patrons either when driving or walking after drinking. As such, the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) has also contributed towards promotion of the 'Safe Home' project.
- Community Engagement Framework and Policy: The rationale for the development of a Community Engagement Framework and Policy came directly from the recognition of the need to better include our community in the decision-making processes of council and the need to gather evidence to advocate for our community. Community engagement is a major function of Local Government, required by Legislation and relevant for all functions within council. Training on the implementation of the engagement framework was undertaken by all council staff and an Engagement Officer established to drive the implementation and compliance with the policy and framework. Much like the management of risk and financial matters, community engagement is an activity that all officers within the organisation have responsibility for and it is therefore important an agreed approach to engagement was endorsed by council to inform how core council business is delivered.
- The Coledale Community Gardens is a project aimed at: 1. Increasing cohesiveness and understanding in the community by providing a social meeting place, breaking stereotypes and decreasing anti social behaviour. 2. Assisting with education of the community, through organisations such as TAFE NSW. 3. Providing a connection to the land for Indigenous community members.



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