

Council hosts civic reception for The Governor of NSW



ABOVE (L-R): Mayor Councillor Janet Hayes with June Richardson, Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir The Governor of New South Wales, Nola Wallis and Joyce Thurgood at the Civic Reception.

Earlier this month, Council hosted a civic reception at the Council Chambers in honour of Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir, The Governor of New South Wales and her husband, Sir Nicholas Shehadie, who were visiting the area as part of the Macleay Regional Co-operative centenary celebrations.

The reception was attended by about 90 people from our community including representatives from the SES, Civilian Widows Association, the local Aboriginal community, our Australia Day award recipients, and the Macleay Regional Co-operative board of directors to name a few.

To commemorate the visit, Mayor Councillor Janet Hayes presented Her Excellency with a limited edition print, "Postcards of the Macleay" by talented local artist, Gordon Rossiter.

Some of our local Scouts and Girl Guides groups formed a guard of honour for The Governor and Her Excellency took great pleasure in presenting them with special certificates to mark the occasion.

Council evaluates road funding: planning begins for the future

Most ratepayers will be aware of Council's decision to withdraw its application for a special rate increase for the 2005/06 year. This difficult decision was made possible only because Council chose to shift funds from its 2004/05 Roads Capital Works program for Roads to the 2005/06 funding for Specific Road Maintenance.

It is important to note that the temporary solution found for this year's Specific Maintenance funding might not be an option in future years because new Capital Works will be required to meet growth demands.

Council needs to develop a plan to address the issue of funding for improving our roads into the future. It is vital to this process that Council gathers support from its community. This information is designed to keep you up to date with this ongoing issue so that you can make your own decision about its importance to our Shire.

Roads are part of our everyday life - they are an essential transport link between the people in our Shire. However, it is not simply a matter of 'set and forget'. Roads require constant, costly maintenance to keep the links strong. For example gravel roads need new gravel placed every 10 years and sealed roads need major upgrading every 40 years.

Council is responsible for 1163km of dedicated roads of which 565km are sealed and 598km are unsealed. Of this, the RTA assists with funding for only 142kms of Regional Roads. Roads such as Armidale Road, South

West Rocks Road, Smithtown Road, Crescent Head Road, and Stuarts Point Road are classified as Regional Roads. This means that Council must fully fund maintenance of the remaining 1,021kms of roads through general rates revenue and Federal government assistance grants.

Council's road maintenance is split into two main areas:

- General Maintenance, which covers the repair of potholes, the grading of gravel roads and minor maintenance activities including the cutting of road-side grass for sight distance.
- Specific Maintenance, which covers the resealing of existing sealed roads, the rehabilitation/reconstruction of existing sealed roads and gravel re-sheeting of existing gravel roads.

Council's road network (valued at \$174 million) requires around \$5.07 million per year for Specific Maintenance. The budget allocation in 2005/06 for Specific Maintenance is \$2.05 million, leaving a shortfall of just over \$3 million.

The Federal government's extension of the 'Roads to Recovery' program, which has already contributed to Council's road funding over the past 5 years, will contribute \$712,000 in the 2005/06 financial year to Council's road maintenance. Even allowing for this, the Specific Maintenance shortfall still equates to around \$2.3 million.

RIGHT: Council's General Manager, Allan Burgess, on site at Pt Plomer Road discussing progress on the roadworks with Garry Partridge, a team leader within Council's outdoor workforce.

Money is needed for maintenance on arterial roads, School Bus routes, and high traffic volume roads, and for maintaining all weather access on gravel roads and to help prevent some lower priority sealed roads reverting to gravel surface.

The situation with our roads can be likened to buying a car. When you buy a car you can either service it at regular intervals to get the most out of it, or you can ignore the need for regular services and run it, very quickly, into the ground. For every dollar Council spends now on our roads, many dollars can be saved on future road repairs.

Council needs community support on this issue. Over the coming months, we will be placing surveys on our website and in our newsletters to get your feedback. In the meantime, if you want to offer your support to Council on this issue, or you have any constructive, positive ideas to help us plan better please write to us. Address your letters to "Our Roads, Our Future" c/- The General Manager, Kempsey Shire Council, PO Box 78, West Kempsey 2440.



In Brief...

The work on the Macleay Valley Community art gallery is progressing well at Gladstone. The committee is currently seeking volunteers from the community to help staff the gallery when it opens. Artists' packs will also be available soon. More details contact Barbara Huntington on 65 663221.

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The Shire Library is offering savings for regular users of its email and word processing service. Get a library business card and have it stamped each time you use the service. When you have accumulated 4 stamps, you'll be eligible for one free internet booking!

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Council has just acquired a speed trailer with RTA funding to assist in its road safety program. The trailer will be used to help motorists be aware of their speed, especially near vulnerable locations, such as schools or accident blackspots. More details contact Mark Thompson on 65663286.

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Keep an eye out for the two new side-loading garbage trucks, which have just been commissioned by Council's Waste Management section. The trucks will help Council provide a more efficient garbage service to ratepayers.

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Kempsey Regional Saleyards have been upgraded to be fully compliant with the requirements of the National Livestock Identifications System, which came into effect on 1 July 2005. More details contact Bruce Snape on 65663322.

Effluent Reuse Market Research

Macleay Water is currently undertaking market research of effluent reuse options in the Shire. Expressions of interest were called and respondents completed surveys. Additionally, Macleay Water has recently contacted property owners whose land or activities are considered potentially suited to utilising recycled water.

Effluent reuse options being investigated include irrigation of agricultural and horticultural crops; irrigation of open spaces; and dual reticulation of industrial and new residential developments.

For further information please contact Eli Ussher on 65 663317 or email eli.usscher@kempsey.nsw.gov.au.



ABOVE: An Open Space and Recreation crew mulchs the Jerseyville revegetation site which is part of the Nestle Community Environment Program.

RIGHT: Another Council crew at work on McIntyre's Bridge on Nulla Nulla Road. Maintenance work was completed in early May.



Environmental Levy at Work

Kempsey Shire Council in cooperation with Department of Primary Industries (NSW Fisheries) recently completed Stage 1 of the Pola Creek Rehabilitation Project.

Works have included the installation of a lifting device (pictured, in use, right) to allow opening of one of the Pola Creek floodgates during non-flood periods to allow fish passage and improve water quality within the creek.

Two trial openings of one (1) of the Pola Creek floodgates conducted since March last year have produced no adverse impacts on upstream landholders. Consequently one of the floodgates has now been modified and a safe lifting device installed that will allow Council staff to raise the floodgate during non-flood periods or, when there is a pending flood event, to lower the gate and provide flood protection.

As a precaution, three additional Council staff who live in the catchment of Pola Creek are being trained in the floodgate lowering procedures and one of them has also been provided with a spare floodgate lowering device, should the unlikely situation arise where Council's flood mitigation staff cannot lower the gate in a pending flood event.

The Department of Primary Industries (NSW Fisheries) conducted fish surveys within Pola Creek prior to the floodgates being opened. They are planning to resurvey the area at a later date to evaluate how much the Pola Creek ecosystem improves as a fish habitat.

Another part of the project has been the removal of weeds from the banks of Pola Creek near South West Rocks Road and their replacement with native riverbank species. The re-vegetation work (pictured, right) was completed with assistance of the Green Corps youth employment program.

This is just one of the projects funded by the Environmental Levy paid by Kempsey Shire's ratepayers. If you have any queries about the project please contact Tim Morris or Ron Kemsley at Kempsey Shire Council on 6566 3315.



contacting your Council

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