



*living spaces*

# Infrastructure

This year Warringah Council introduced an infrastructure levy as an additional portion of rates to be used solely for the renewal and replacement of Council owned assets and infrastructure. The new levy is part of our long-term financial strategy for the community's assets and infrastructure for the next ten years.

The 6.5% infrastructure levy raised \$3.7million in 2006/07 for renewing and replacing assets that are in poor condition or have reached the end of their lifecycle including roads and transport, stormwater drainage, parks and recreation, buildings and foreshore assets.

Infrastructure levy funds contributed to the renewal of the Dee Why beachfront reserve with \$285,000 towards the \$1.3million project. About \$560,000 in Section 94 funds from developers also helped expand this community facility.

The beachfront now boasts a timber viewing platform and a new promenade with entry paths from Howard and Oakes Avenues plus a footpath leading onto the foreshore from the playground areas. The works included access stairs, retaining walls, pathways, fencing, handrails, seating, landscaping, shade planting, raised grassed areas and restored heritage items.

Almost \$4million of road re-sheeting has been carried out this year as part of Council's Capital Works Program along with over \$350,000 in footpath renewals and \$155,000 for carpark resurfacing. More than \$500,000 was spent on traffic calming devices including roundabouts, wombat and pedestrian crossings or refuges.

The sea wall was replaced at South Curl Curl and planning commenced for the remediation of a sandstone wall at Ocean Street Narrabeen. The Narrabeen wall built in 1920 has heritage significance and collapsed during a storm. A number of options were explored to renew the wall and reinstate the original sandstone blocks with the project to be completed in late 2007.

Some \$350,000 of works on the coastal walkways project at sites in South and North Curl Curl, Long Reef and Collaroy were undertaken this year. The project has been underway for a number of years to provide a continuous walkway between Manly and Pittwater. The coastal walkway between Dee Why headland and North Curl Curl was enhanced with renewed pathways and fencing for 'Fisherman's Walk'.

The safety of equipment in 179 playgrounds across Warringah was assessed as part of the development of a new Playground Strategy. The strategy identified sites for new playgrounds and a handful of sites where unsafe equipment needs to be removed. Next year more than \$500,000 will be spent on new playgrounds and upgrading existing facilities.

Three playgrounds were upgraded this year – Griffith Park in Collaroy, Tramore Place in Killarney Heights and Lindsay Park in Forestville – and a new playground built at Mooramba Road in Dee Why. More than 60 local primary school students and 200 residents were involved in public art workshops to create ceramic tiles with an Indigenous theme for the new playground.

A new skate park was also completed this year at Miller Reserve, Manly Vale. The skate park meets a growing need for a place for young people to skate safely. The Manly Vale facility features a street and bowl style course including a small skate bowl. The design incorporates extensive new landscaping at Miller Reserve including the planting of 1,000 new native trees and shrubs.



# Parks and Sportsfields

Council manages more than 600 parks and reserves for a range of recreational uses. This includes providing and maintaining infrastructure to support open spaces such as shade structures, seating, barbecues, picnic tables, car parking, pathways, playing surfaces, lighting, fencing and toilets.

Council collects contributions from developers to provide new or expanded community facilities and uses these funds to improve open space and recreational facilities for the local community. Examples of projects funded by developer contributions this year include the upgrade of Dee Why beachfront, The Gardens beachfront reserve in Ocean Street, Narrabeen, and Manly Vale Skate Park. The funds were also used to purchase a number of properties throughout Warringah for demolition and the creation of additional open space and parks. The estimated replacement cost of Council's parks and recreation assets is \$32 million.

Sydney Water gave Council permission to use sprinklers on sportsfields and other Council sites during level 3 water restrictions over summer. Council alternates between the use of sprinklers and irrigation systems with bore water at a number of sites to help save water and assist in maintenance.

Warringah is home to 80% of the sportsfields in the SHOROC area (Warringah, Mosman, Manly and Pittwater) and Council maintains 54 sportsground sites containing 127 sportsfields and over 70 netball and basketball courts. Current maintenance costs are over \$1.2million per year.

This year an additional \$80,000 was spent on sportsfield renewal including 50 hectares of sportsfield decompaction to improve playing surfaces and reduce the risk of injury to users, refurbishment including weed spraying, fertilising and turf replacement program, general maintenance and mowing for 420 reserves sites. Council also continued to cover the costs of maintaining Brookvale Oval and related facilities, the home of the Manly Sea Eagles Rugby League team, at the 5.2 hectare Brookvale Park.

Our Capital Assistance Program for Sporting Clubs continued with \$205,000 this year going to local tennis, rugby league, pony, football and surf life saving clubs. The program is designed to assist sporting clubs and other groups within Warringah to develop community oriented local sporting and recreation facilities.

# Planning and Development

A new Local Environmental Plan (LEP) has been in development this year in accordance with the Standard Instrument (LEP) Order 2006 released by the Minister for Planning in March 2006. The new LEP is expected to go on public exhibition in early 2008.

Council has been reformatting the current place-based Warringah Local Environmental Plan 2000 (WLEP 2000) to the new zone-based format. A number of maps have been prepared to support the standard instrument and Council reviewed its existing hazard maps. Work has also progressed to develop a Warringah Development Control Plan which will incorporate the general principles of WLEP 2000, Council's design guidelines and changes in state planning legislation.

Warringah has more than 140 listed conservation areas or items with local heritage significance. Council has translated these into the standard instrument format and our Heritage Inventory is being converted into an electronic format, complete with colour photos, in line with the NSW Heritage Office's database requirements. Warringah's Heritage Panel continued to provide expertise and advice on development applications and various heritage listings.

Warringah Council received 1,576 development applications this year with 1,459 determined by June 30, 2007. In comparison, 1,702 applications were received in the previous year and 1,586 determined. The number of development applications awaiting determination reached a record low during 2006/07 with 399 applications outstanding. The average number of DAs on hand for 2006/07 was 448.

The mean processing time of development applications was 31 days, with 61% of all development applications being assessed in under 40 days and 86% within 80 days. A number of system improvements were implemented this year to assist Council achieve faster and more efficient determinations and improved customer service.

Council provides a comprehensive support service to applicants to assist them in the pre-DA process. Additional staff were appointed to the Planning and Assessment Enquiries Counter and continued improvements were made to Council's DAs Online service which allows both applicants and objectors to track where the DA process is up to.

Warringah Council established an Independent Hearing and Assessment Panel (IHAP) in 2003 to ensure independence and transparency in the assessment of contentious development applications. This year 72 reports were presented to IHAP for review. In June Council hosted a forum of IHAP members to draw on their experience and expertise with the application of the Warringah Local Environmental Plan (LEP) and to discuss the format of the new LEP template.

Following the streamlining of Council's mediation program in 2005/06, applications are now assessed by Development Assessment Officers for appropriateness to mediate. As a result the numbers of mediations reaching a successful conclusion remain static and have resulted in better quality outcomes for both participants and Council.

This year a total of 31 applications were received for mediation. Five mediations were completed compared to four the previous year. Two applications were partially through the program at June 30 and awaiting completion. All other applications received did not proceed as they were either rejected by applicants or deemed inappropriate by staff.



# Internal Ombudsman

Warringah Council appointed an Internal Ombudsman in 2003 to ensure Council's administration is transparent, accountable and fair in its dealings with the community. The Office of the Internal Ombudsman manages complaints about maladministration, misconduct, alleged corruption or otherwise unlawful behaviour by Council's management and staff.

The Office of the Internal Ombudsman ensures public complaints about Council are effectively and efficiently managed and investigated where appropriate. This is done through a comprehensive complaints management system investigating complaints from both the public and Council employees.

The Internal Ombudsman received fewer complaints about Council this year. Statistics for the reporting period show a slight reduction to 78 complaints compared to 88 in the previous year. Some 41 complaints were finalised as preliminary enquiries and 16 complaints were declined. There were 16 formal inquiries reported to the General Manager during this year compared to 21 reports last year.

The Internal Ombudsman's Office had an increased level of involvement in proactive probity issues during 2006/7. This included advice to Council regarding policy development, acting as probity advisor for significant contracts and the delivery of staff training.

Council's Internal Auditor is located within the Office of the Internal Ombudsman and delivers a comprehensive internal audit program for Warringah Council. This program includes audits conducted in-house as well as audits contracted by the Internal Ombudsman's Office to external audit companies. These contracted audits usually relate to areas of particular sensitivity where there is seen to be a high need for an independent assessment and report.

During the year nine internal audits were undertaken into areas as diverse as environmental planning, staff usage of resources, information management, project management and telecommunications.

Annual Reports for the Internal Ombudsman and the Internal Auditor are available at [www.warringah.nsw.gov.au](http://www.warringah.nsw.gov.au)