

The International Awards for  
Liveable Communities 2012

## **Whole City Awards - Category B**

**The City of Kogarah, Australia:**  
*'Our Local Stories create Our Global Identity'*

Submitted on behalf of the citizens of the City of Kogarah

## INTRODUCTION

The City of Kogarah is an Australian Local Government Area located 15 kilometres south of Sydney, Australia, in the state of New South Wales. Covering almost 20 square kilometres with a population of approximately 53,000, it is at the heart of the St George region and includes 17 smaller suburbs. The City is a thriving and progressive community known for its beautiful areas of open space along the Georges River and award winning sustainable developments. The City is a growing hub for health, finance and education within the region.



**Figure I:** Map of Kogarah City Council

## OUR VISION:

*'A viable and sustainable future in partnership with our community'*

## OUR MISSION

To build on the diversity of our community.

To improve our natural and built environment.

To respond to changing community needs and expectations.

Kogarah City Council adopts the **United Nations Environment Program's (UNEP) 'Melbourne Principles for Sustainable Cities'** to help guide our journey towards sustainability (UNEP 2002).

### OUR INTERNATIONAL AWARDS FOR LIVEABLE COMMUNITIES 2012 SUBMISSION



**Diagram 1:** Illustration showing the connections and inter-dependence of the LivCom Award Criteria

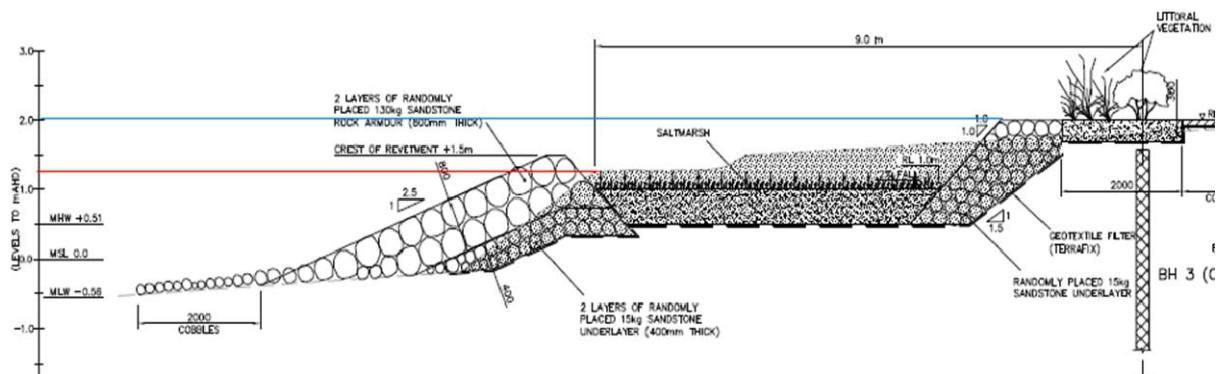
We believe that all of the LivCom Award's criteria are inter-related and inter-dependant as shown in the diagram above. "Community participation and empowerment" and "Strategic Planning" are shown centrally as they are crucial for the successful implementation of all of the other criteria. Project examples that have been provided for one Award criteria may also be relevant for other Award criteria, as is the nature of community projects which often have multiple outcomes.

# ENHANCEMENT OF THE NATURAL AND BUILT LANDSCAPES

*“Sustainability issues arise at the intersection of natural and human systems.”*

The City of Kogarah lies along the northern shoreline of the lower reaches of the Georges River, a river which shapes the landscape of the City. The City is approximately 1,460 hectares with 184 hectares of open spaces. Bushland areas contain more than 140 different species of plants. The native vegetation in the parklands supports a number of native animals such as echidnas, ring-tail and brush-tail possums, birds, reptiles and insects.

The City’s key natural features interweave around the predominantly urban landscape comprised of residential housing, commercial centres, roads and transport routes, and to a lesser degree, industrial development. As with all urban Cities this development has historically often occurred at the expense of the natural landscapes. However, Kogarah’s community has risen to the challenge of managing the impacts of urban environment in order to preserve the City’s ecological surroundings.



**Figure 2:** Existing sterile concrete seawalls have been replaced with **Environmentally Friendly Seawalls** to incorporate salt marshes create inter-tidal natural habitats and minimise scouring and erosion of the foreshore. (2010)

## Restoring and Enhancing the Natural Landscapes

The following projects are evidence of a renewed focus on restoring and enhancing the natural landscapes:

- **Establishing wetlands for stormwater treatment.** Sites where stormwater enters the Georges River in Kogarah have been converted into constructed wetlands to improve stormwater quality and increase biodiversity. These wetlands treat catchment stormwater while providing new aquatic habitats which support large areas of native aquatic vegetation, birds and animal species.
- **Naturalisation of stormwater channel** at Carss Park to convert concrete drains into ecologically vibrant streams that mimic natural aquatic environments.
- In partnership with Oatley Flora and Fauna Conservation Society, the **Birds in Backyards Program** is bringing birds and native animals back into residential backyards.

## Landscapes that Generate Civic Pride and Improve Quality of Life

There is a strong commitment within the Kogarah community to maintain a balance between the natural and built environment. The river, foreshore, parks and reserves are highly valued by the community. To enable the community to enjoy accessing natural environments within the City, a number of landscapes which were once severely eroded have been restored and improved including:

- The **banks of the Georges River have been revegetated and stabilised** to improve community access to the river. Sections of the Oatley Bay foreshore are now tiered and planted with native species, chosen for their ability to stabilise soil.
- **Neverfail Bay Oyster Heritage Restoration project** was undertaken by the community to stabilise the site with a rock revetment and to maintain local heritage with a crushed oyster shell pavement. therefore preserving features of historical significance relating to **previous oyster farming industry** .
- **Kogarah Greenway** provides pedestrian and bicycle access to existing remnant bushland, open space and streetscapes, and creates a habitat corridor to enable wildlife to coexist and flourish. This project has resulted in the **first sighting of a wild native echnida** within the City.



**Figure 3:** The City has numerous boardwalks and walking trails including the Oatley Bay boardwalk, the Poulton Park walking track and the Carss Park walking track. These provide further green corridors for local fauna and flora allowing physical and genetic movement of existing biodiversity. (August 2011)

## A Sense of Place within Kogarah's Built Environment

Kogarah's residents and visitors wish for a connected and liveable city, with modern infrastructure in place. Examples of the City's exemplary infrastructure and assets include:

- Under the State Government Strategy Kogarah is a growing hub for **health, finance and education**. The City is home to outstanding medical facilities including **St George Public and Private Hospitals** as well as other day surgery and healthcare providers. **St George Bank**, a subsidiary of Australia's largest bank, has its Australian and Asia-Pacific headquarters in Kogarah. St George Bank supports various charities, the arts, sporting clubs, business programs and disaster relief initiatives. Kogarah is home to a large education precinct containing the second largest **Technical and Further Education (TAFE) institution** in New South Wales and more than 20 schools.
- **Kogarah has accessible transportation routes** including public bus and rail services, pedestrian links and cycleways **as well as a planned, maintained streetscape of business and retail areas**.
- The City has a **Street Tree Management Strategy and Masterplan** to increase the number of trees along city streets to increase biodiversity, assist in climate control at the street level, improve visual amenity and increase canopy cover.



**Figure 4:** Kogarah's iconic 1892 Post Office, with its distinctive cylindrical tower and candle snuffer copper roof, and historic School of Arts Building (2012)

## ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE

*“A rich history deserves a rich future”*

### Our Indigenous Aboriginal Identity

The name “Kogarah” is of Aboriginal origin, meaning “**Place of Reeds**” and takes its name from the reeds that grew in the inlets along Georges River and at the head of Kogarah Bay. The City of Kogarah acknowledges the **original indigenous Aboriginal inhabitants** as the first custodians of this land. These people were the Darug-speaking Kameygal and Bediagal bands who lived in the area around Botany Bay and Georges River. The City celebrates the **national Aboriginal observance (NAIDOC)** week every year with Aboriginal storytime sessions, indigenous bushwalks and high school debates.



### Our European Identity

The **first recorded European visitors** to the area were on Lieutenant James Cook’s voyages in 1770. The first European land grants were given in 1808. Kogarah Municipality was proclaimed in 1885 and became a City in 2008, being the first in New South Wales to become a city by vote of its’ citizens.

**Kogarah’s European history** is recognised and valued by the community through 200 heritage items including three specified Heritage Conservation Areas. The **Kogarah Heritage Walk** guides locals and visitors along 22 of the local iconic heritage buildings.

### Our Sporting Identity

An important part of the local culture is the district’s **world famous rugby league team** – the **St George Illawarra Dragons** whose home ground, Jubilee Oval, is an energetic and vibrant sporting venue in the heart of the city. Jubilee Oval was renovated in 2010 and now boasts modern stadium and sporting facilities including a **200,000 litre rainwater harvesting tank**. The **Jubilee Stadium Legends Walk** located at the Oval commemorates the legends of rugby league.



Figure 5: The pride of Kogarah – the St George Dragons Rugby League Team (July 2011)

## Our Multi-Cultural Identity

Kogarah is a **multicultural melting pot**, with over 34% of its residents born overseas and more than 38% speaking a non-English language at home. Kogarah's culture and heritage has seen transformations from indigenous Aboriginal to English to European and now a strong Asian influence. This diversity in language, culture and religion shapes the **unique character of Kogarah**.

Kogarah's multicultural community is embraced and celebrated through the following:

- **Jadeworld Carnival** - A Chinese festival held annually at Carss Park, to celebrate one of Sydney's largest annual Asian events.
- **Greek heritage and culture** celebrated on 'Ohi Day' and Greek Easter Celebrations held in the Town Square annually.
- **Chinese New Year** in Kogarah Town Square, promotes local Chinese talents, restaurants, churches and community groups.



Figure 6. Cultural statues in the City including **Li Bai**, Chinese Poet at Ma'anshan Friendship Garden (Sept 2009) and **Bruce Lee** at Kogarah Town Square (both gifts from Sister Cities). (March 2011)



- Annual **Australia Day Celebrations** at Carss Bush Park. This carnival celebrates Australia in all of its multicultural splendour and involves conferring new Australian Citizens and awarding Citizens of the Year. The day includes Indigenous Aboriginal ceremonies.

## An Artist's City

Kogarah has a strong arts and culture movement with many events taking place including:

- The **City of Kogarah Art Prize** recognises the work of local artists, and brings artwork from around Australia to Kogarah. It has an open theme and offers \$12,000 in prizes with a category for school children also.
- **Music at Twilight** is a concert series in the heart of the CBD which features internationally renowned musicians and performers who perform various musical genres from jazz, blues, classical and pop.
- **Shopfront Theatre – Machine Atlas** is an outdoor theatre production performed in the Town Square. Young performers from a local theatre group bring to life a world where machines rule and imaginations run wild.
- **Kogarah Library** has an impressive foyer which hosts a variety of art and photography exhibitions as well as author talks. A recent highlight was a Harmony Day photography exhibition featuring entries into the 'Capture your world ... people, places, passion' photography competition.



**Figure 7:** Australia Day Celebrations at Carss Bush Park (January 2012)

## Preserving and Celebrating the City's Culture and Heritage

Our community hopes to entrust future generations with a liveable and sustainable City, one rich with culture and character. Key projects and initiatives implemented to preserve our local heritage and culture include:

- **Oatley Memorial Boardwalk** includes commemorative photographs and plaques documenting deaths during peace time of those in the Australian Armed Services.
- **Oatley War Memorial** commemorates those who served in the war with historical artefacts including a cannon, an anchor and a propeller.



**Figure 8:** Oatley Memorial Boardwalk, commemorating Australian Armed Services who have died during non-combat times in the region (2008)

# ENVIRONMENTAL BEST PRACTICES

*“Listen carefully this, you can hear me.  
I’m telling you because earth just like mother  
And father or brother of you.”*

Bill Neidje - Bunitj Clan  
Elder - Oenpelli 1981

Kogarah’s community places great importance on the environment and the ecological systems which are fundamental in supporting society. The City leads best practices in local government environmental sustainability management.

## Achievements in Environmental Sustainability

Kogarah is a smaller City compared to other local government areas but it punches well above its weight on sustainability, implementing many environmental, climate change and sustainability programs which have won numerous awards and benefitted the environment. The City addresses local environmental sustainability issues through partnerships formed between the Council and its community, staff, neighbouring councils, industries and other organisations. Key achievements include:

- Overall Winner of the **National Award for Australia’s Most Sustainable City 2010-2011**
- Overall Winner of the **New South Wales Most Sustainable City: State Champion 2010-2011**



**Kogarah is in very good hands. They have a wonderful approach here.**

In the spotlight: Sustainable Cities judge Dick Olesinski at Moore Reserve Wetlands. Picture: Chris Lane

## Judge applauds council

**By Kate Carr**

KOGARAH Mayor Nickolas Varvaris was leaving no stone unturned as he took national Sustainable Cities judge Dick Olesinski on a recent tour of the municipality, devising an itinerary of highlights which resembled a lengthy shopping list.

After taking out the Keep Australia Beautiful state sustainability award, Kogarah Council is now in the running for the national gong, and Cr Varvaris, along with a large contingent of council staff, were keen to impress Mr Olesinski, showing him everything from the Carlton industrial stormwater harvesting plant to Kogarah Town Square’s sustainability features.

**Is Kogarah in with a chance?**

**Have your say**  
[theleader.com.au](http://theleader.com.au)

*The Leader* caught up with the team at Moore Reserve Wetlands, and found Mr Olesinski brimming with praise for the council.

“I think Kogarah Council has got a full grasp of sustainability and how to deliver that to the community,” he declared.

In ominous news for the area’s competitors, which include Burnie in Tasmania, Yarra City Council in Melbourne and Charles Sturt Council in Adelaide, Mr Olesinski also said he doubted he had ever seen a more effective team than that in Kogarah.

“Kogarah is in very good hands,” he beamed. “They have a wonderful approach here.”

The mayor adopted a more cautious tone, saying he was proud the council was in the running for the award.

“We like to think we are up there with a chance,” he said.

The winner will be announced on November 21.

## Sustainable Water Management

Kogarah has adopted a holistic, integrated approach to managing its water cycle. Water management is viewed from a complete water cycle perspective, encompassing ‘demand’ and ‘supply’.

Innovative ‘demand side’ water conservation initiatives undertaken include:

- Being the first City in Sydney to adopt **Total Water Cycle Management** principles.
- The **Carlton Industrial Sustainable Water Program** is an initiative to foster sustainable management of our precious water resource with local businesses and industries. 82% of businesses from Carlton Industrial Area joined the program.
- **Kogarah Smart Irrigation Project** promotes sustainable, smart and water wise irrigation in the City. The project improves the irrigation of public open space and sports grounds using a local weather-based system to control irrigation
- The City has participated in the **Every Drop Counts Business Program**, which has enabled it to establish formal water management systems and undertake water efficient practices. In May 2008, Kogarah City Council received the **highest ranking** (5-star rating) within the program.

Innovative ‘supply side’ water management initiatives undertaken include:

- The **Beverley Park Water Reclamation Plant** (also known as **Sewer Mining**) taps into the local sewers and treats wastewater to a high-quality. Recycled water is then used for irrigation on public parks and sports fields. Water tanks have been installed in many of Kogarah’s fields and the plant, which was the **first of its kind in Australia**, can produce 400,000 litres of water per day.



**Figure 9:** A tour of the Beverley Park Sewer Mining Plant (October 2011)

- The **Carlton Industrial Stormwater Reuse Plant** is an innovative stormwater harvesting plant reusing harvested water at a local concrete plant.
- **Schools Rainwater Tank Program** assisted primary and secondary schools in the City to install rainwater tanks for toilet flushing and irrigating school gardens.



**Figure 10: Kogarah Town Square Water Reuse Project** involves stormwater reuse for irrigation and rainwater harvesting for residential toilet flushing, at Kogarah Town Square (2008).

## Sustainable Energy and Climate Change Management

The City of Kogarah has always had a commitment to sustainable energy management and it has long recognised that climate change is a significant global challenge. Council resolved to participate in ICLEI (International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives) in 1999. Kogarah City Council strongly believes that climate change should be addressed not only through mitigation efforts but also through adaptation strategies.

The City has partnered with a number of stakeholders to deliver innovative and pioneering initiatives including:

- The **Kogarah Town Square Development** was the result of partnerships with a number of stakeholders and includes the integration of photovoltaic (solar) cells into the fabric of the building with 1459 photovoltaic cells covering the roof. The system is rated at 160 kilowatt peak and is estimated to produce about 200 megawatt/hours of electricity annually.
- In partnership with neighbouring cities, Kogarah delivered the **Businesses for an Environmentally Sustainable Tomorrow (BEST) Program** to local businesses which included environmental assessment and retrofits, including the installation of energy efficient fixtures.
- In partnership with ICLEI, the City participated in the **Cities for Climate Protection Program (CCP) and Adaptive and Resilient Communities (ARC) Program**. These innovative programs helped the City reduce greenhouse gas emissions through energy efficiency, transport management, building policies, waste management and land-use strategies. The ARC Program assisted the City in building its capacity for future planning to respond to climate change and reduce the community's vulnerability to its impacts.

**Figure 11: Kogarah City Council's Solar Depot Project** where 216 solar modules were installed with a capacity of 37.8 kilowatt. The solar panels reduce approximately 40% of the Depot's annual energy use. (2010)



By using **3D modelling and mapping**, Council investigated how the City's foreshore might be affected by **sea-level rise** and other climate-change related conditions.

## Sustainable Waste Management and Resource Recovery

Through *Bright Future, Better Lifestyle: Kogarah 2020*, our community has communicated their vision for a 'clean' City. This not only refers to the reduction in litter and rubbish, but also to well planned trees, well placed street furniture and targeted educational information to encourage the community to play a role in achieving the vision. Key projects and initiatives undertaken for waste management, resource recovery, litter reduction and waste education include:

- Over **42 Stormwater Quality Improvement Devices (SQID)** have been installed since the 1970's to prevent litter from entering Kogarah's waterways. These include Pit Litter Baskets, Litter Nets, Bandalong Traps and Booms.
- The **Georges River Riverkeeper Program** addresses proper disposal of waste items along the foreshore.
- In 2008, Kogarah implemented the '**Don't be a tosser**' campaign to discourage littering in local high schools. Litter audits were conducted and each school developed an anti-litter commercial. Prizes were awarded for the most effective anti-litter message.





**Figure 12:** The **Catchment Crusader Program** has been delivered to local primary school students for over six years. It is an integrated environmental education program addressing sustainable management of catchments, including pollution, understanding stormwater systems and how the City's waste is managed. (March 2011)

- The City has participated in **Clean Up Australia Day** for over 10 years with over 250 residents participating in 2012 and approximately 6.5 tonnes of rubbish collected from nine sites. This year six schools also participated in Clean Up Schools Day.
- **Chemical Collections** are run annually to correctly collect and dispose of household chemical products. Kogarah has diverted (annually for the past six years) over 40 tonnes of chemicals from landfill, 23 tonnes of paint and 3.5 tonnes of batteries. **Electronic waste collections** divert over 80 tonnes of e-waste from landfill annually.
- The City **recycles asphalt profiling material** removed from local roads during resurfacing works and reuses it for road and kerb and gutter construction.

### Fostering Sustainable Behaviour

Education and fostering sustainable behaviour is essential in supporting environmental initiatives. Key educational and community awareness programs delivered within the City include:

- The **Sustainability Expo** is an annual initiative which creates awareness of environmental issues amongst residents as well as provides tips and resources to assist residents to reduce one's environmental footprint.
- To encourage reuse and recycling practises, the City hosts '**Retail Your Rubbish**' where suburbs hold community wide garage sales.
- Education is provided to local schools about local native flora and fauna and their current threats. Site visits, talks and a **Biodiversity Kit** are disseminated to the community.

- Assistance is provided to **businesses to maximise recycling and minimise waste**, including **workshops, forums and avenues for provision of advice** to the community, with interpreters to present the material to **Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD)** communities.
- Other community **celebrations** include World Environment Day, Walk to Work Day, Sustainable House Day and Earth Day.



**Figure 13:** Recycling education with local schools (2005)



## COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT



*“The people are the City’s biggest assets”*

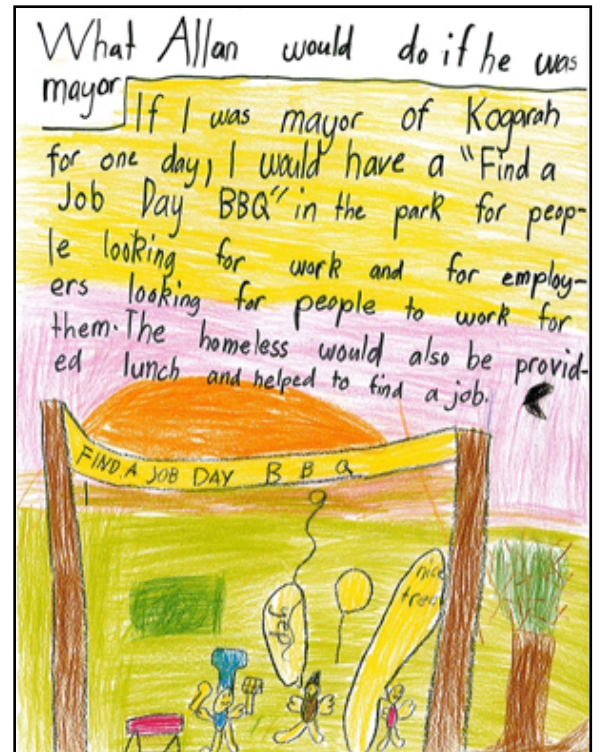
Kogarah’s senior resident, 72 years old, 2010

### Capturing Community Conversations

The City’s vision and future direction is a response to our community’s aspirations and conversations. All members of the community help determine the City’s identity by participating in a future visioning process held every four years. Through the City’s last visioning process, *Bright Future, Better Lifestyle: Kogarah 2020* (the Community Strategic Plan) the community’s hopes and desires were captured through:

- **My Ideal Kogarah Postcard Survey** – developed and distributed widely throughout the community to provide feedback on broad issues. A **youth specific** postcard survey and a **Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Community** survey were also distributed. Over 5,000 postcards were distributed and received.
- **Community Forums** were held to discuss specific key themes and goals. These forums sought feedback from the community on priorities for the City and future funding of outcomes.

- **Engaging our Youth** - a number of projects specifically targeted at engaging our younger residents were developed including:
  - Children aged 6-12 participated in a **drawing/short story competition** which asked them what they would wish for if they were **Mayor of Kogarah for a day**.
  - A **photographic competition** for 12-18 year olds living or studying in Kogarah. Entrants submitted a photograph encapsulating what they liked best about living/visiting Kogarah.
  - **Artwork from Kogarah's child care centres** portrayed a vision for the City and these were converted into banners which lined the City's streets.



**Figure 14:** Children aged 6-12 participated in a **drawing/ short story competition** which asked them what they would wish for if they were **Mayor of Kogarah for a day**. (September 2010)

## Ongoing Community Participation and Consultation

The community's involvement and participation in the planning, development and management of the City is reflected through numerous groups and committees. These groups provide ongoing input into the City's future:

- Our **Community Reference Group** is a representative group of Kogarah residents and rate payers who provide feedback on the implementation of the Key Strategic Directions contained within *Bright Future, Better Lifestyle: Kogarah 2020*.
- The City's voluntary **Youth Advisory Committee** meets once a month to discuss issues, express views and contribute to the development of the local community. The committee helps to organise youth activities and contributes to important community development projects affecting young people.
- **Kogarah Chamber of Commerce** aims to ensure that Kogarah continues to provide a range of important civil, health and administrative functions for the region, as well as providing an employment base for residents.
- **Kogarah Central Business District Task Force** ensures a coordinated approach by all major stakeholders in the future planning of the Kogarah Town Centre.
- **Chinese Friendship Group** was established to provide an avenue for Chinese community members to learn conversational English and review the suitability of Chinese language materials.
- **Southern Sydney Regional Transport Forum**, a partnership with neighbouring Councils, for the improvement of the Illawarra line.

Other methods where the community can participate in **the City's decision making process** include:

- Participating in a public forum during Council meetings every month.
- Responding to policies and plans placed on public exhibition.
- Making representations to Councillors and politicians.
- Discussing issues with Council officers.
- Participating on certain Council Committees/Working Parties.
- Attending forums, seminars, workshops and public meetings.
- Through neighbour notification procedures.

## Community Partnership Projects

Central to achieving the City's vision are these successful community partnership projects which have brought numerous benefits to our society:

- **Carss Park Community Gardens** was established in 2008 in response to overwhelming resident interest in a local food producing garden. The garden is tended by a group of keen and enthusiastic gardeners who aim to promote sustainable gardening within the local area. It also has raised garden beds for wheelchair access and elderly gardeners. The gardens promote health and wellbeing through the growing of organic produce, working outdoors, improving social interaction as well as encouraging active participation from all areas of the community.
- Numerous projects are implemented by the community through the provision of **Community grants** and Environmental grants (**Mayor's Green Grants**). These include the installation of sustainable gardens, rainwater tanks, electronic newsletters, stormwater improvement projects and multi-cultural educational programs.
- National Youth Week occurs annually and, as part of this, an annual live music event, '**Park Live**', is held for young people featuring young local bands and budding music talents.
- Kogarah City Council and more than 20 community volunteers built **Carss Park Eco-shed**, a multi-functional garden shed used for community meetings and workshops.



**Figure 15: The Carss Park Eco-shed - built from straw bales with recycled tyres as foundation** instead of a full concrete foundation. Rainwater tanks were also installed. (February 2009)

- The annual **Kogarah Fair and Charity Bedrace** transforms the main street in Kogarah into a colourful spectacle. Teams race decorated hospital beds to raise money for the local St George Hospital with over 60 community groups and local businesses pledging support and raising money.



**Figure 16:** The annual Kogarah Fair and Charity Bedrace, where teams push decorated hospital beds to raise money for the local St George Hospital (September 2011)

### A sense of ownership through volunteering

Our volunteers are the heroes of the City, sacrificing their time for others without seeking payment or recognition. Kogarah's community has contributed millions of hours to services such as community health care, heritage and arts, environment conservation, emergency services, education, social justice and sports. These include:

- **Community volunteer bushcare groups** who participate in local bush regeneration and weed management.
- A water quality monitoring volunteer group, the **Georges River Watchers**, who collect samples of the local waterways and produce water quality data.
- Volunteers with the **State Emergency Services** assist the community during emergencies and natural disasters.



## HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

*“A healthy City is a happy City”*

Kogarah resident, 10 years old, 2012

### A Place for an Active Community

The City of Kogarah has many opportunities for active and healthy lifestyles with a total of 189 hectares of open space area, including 51 sporting reserves and 56 playgrounds, offering a variety of recreational facilities. The City also features jetties, fishing platforms, aquatic centres and tidal baths.

### Living a Healthy Life in the City

Kogarah City Council also provides services such as health and wellbeing programs, sport and leisure initiatives and information about activities and facilities. The projects delivered within the City to promote health and wellbeing include:

- The **Fighting Heart Disease** in Kogarah Strategy to reduce the behavioural risk factors associated with heart disease in the community. The strategy unites a number of Council programs that all target healthy weight and heart health.



**Figure 17:** The City of Kogarah was the first in the region to deliver the **Say No to Transfats Program**, which saw unhealthy cooking oils replaced by **alternative liquid vegetable oils such as canola, cottonseed, olive and sunflower** from 200 food businesses in the City. The City received the **Heart Foundation National Award** for this program. (2009)

- The City was the first regional City to develop and implement a **Smoke Free Zones** policy for public places. Signs are provided upon entry into all smoke free areas, such as Council owned buildings, eateries, children's playground and bus shelters.

- **Active Ageing Program** is a physical activity program designed to encourage older residents (over 50 years of age) to be more active, promote health and wellbeing and encourage a healthy lifestyle.
- The Council's Children's Services deliver a '**Munch and Move Program**' which encourages young children to have an active lifestyle. It includes a walkathon, 'Count Your Steps Challenge' and 'Battling the Obstacles Course'.
- Council works with the local hospital and clubs to host and participate in **10,000 Steps Walking Challenge**.
- With Assistance Dogs Australia, '**Dog's Breakfast**' is held annually as an informative and fun day for our dog-loving community at one of the many-dog-leash-free parks. The event encourages healthy living, pet care and raises funds and awareness for Assistance Dogs Australia.
- **Recipe for Food Safety** training sessions and educational material are provided in five languages including English, Cantonese, Mandarin, Thai and Vietnamese. It is vital that food safety messages reach every non-English food handler in the City.
- The **Life Education Van** visits all schools in the area to provide life skills / human /sex education.



**Figure 18:** Children of the South Hurstville Kindergarten with vegetables harvested from their own school organic garden (March 2012)

## A Safe and Inclusive City

The City prides itself in catering for all sections of our community such as non-readers and non-English speaking residents, people with limited mobility and children. Examples of the City's initiatives and projects include:

- A **Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) Action Plan** which incorporates facilities and assets for persons with a disability such as public toilet access and access to playgrounds.
- An **equal access sensory garden** has been established to cater for disabled and elderly members of the community. A 'Sensory Garden' theme was chosen to stimulate the use of the five senses and incorporate features that people with disabilities can appreciate. The site includes garden beds

including indigenous and native species, as well as accessible pathways. A number of community groups were consulted on the proposed design and features of the Garden including Kogarah Council's Equal Access Committee, Royal Blind Society of NSW and Calvary Rehabilitation and Geriatric Service.

- A **disabled access jetty** to enable people with disabilities to sail on Kogarah Bay, built in partnership with the Sailability NSW, an organisation dedicated to sailors with disabilities.
- Carss Park Aquatic Centre has a **portable pool hoist** that gives people with mobility issues easier access to the pool.
- '**Liberty swings**', which are disabled access swings, have been installed as part of the play equipment at Oatley Park and Carss Park.
- A **community bus** is provided for senior and elderly residents to travel within their local community. There is also a **free shuttle bus service** that loops around the Kogarah Centre.
- Resident information and **local signage in different languages** to accommodate non-English speaking communities. Environmental and community services workshops are also run using bi-lingual educators. Council's customer service centre runs a '**Call Up an Interpreter**' service.
- To manage crime and safety issues (drugs and alcohol) within the City, the Community, Council and the Police work closely together.



**Figure 19:** The Disable Access Jetty at Dover Park Boat Ramps, allowing sailors with disabilities to sail on Kogarah Bay (February 2012)

# STRATEGIC PLANNING

*“Vision without Action is merely a dream; Action without Vision just passes the time”*

*Joel A Barker, 2010*

The City of Kogarah will celebrate its 127th birthday on 23rd December 2012. It was proclaimed a municipality in 1885. In 127 years, a lot has changed. People have prospered and passed on, buildings have been built and demolished, and trends have come and gone. Many decisions have been made over time, which determine how we live today. With good management and respect for what was inherited, we hope to sustain the longevity of Kogarah’s built and natural systems so that we are able to achieve another 127 years (and the years beyond) for the City of Kogarah.

The City’s community participate in a visioning process every four years. The aspirations for the City are captured and reflected in **Bright Future, Better Lifestyle: Kogarah 2020** (Kogarah’s Community Strategic Plan). This serves as Council’s highest level strategic document, guiding planning of the City and informing future decisions, to achieve our shared vision, targets and ideal future for the City of Kogarah. Ultimately, it is a direct response to the hopes and views of those that work, live and visit Kogarah.

## Bright Future, Better Lifestyle: Kogarah 2020

The latest planning process for the **Bright Future, Better Lifestyle: Kogarah 2020** was undertaken in 2010 and included extensive community consultation. Through the engagement process, the Council and the community were able to address the issue of sustainability within the context of Council’s other competing priorities.



**Figure 20:** Consulting our community during the Bright Future, Better Lifestyle: Kogarah 2020 future visioning process (2010)



Our community's aspirations for the future of Kogarah are built around **six key strategic directions**:



These key strategic directions, which are closely connected and are interdependent on each other, provide a framework which will guide our City for the next 10 years.

To achieve the outcomes of the Community Strategic Plan, Council prepares a **four year Delivery Plan** and an **annual Operational Plan**. In addition, a Resourcing Strategy is prepared which addresses resource requirements such as financial, assets and people.

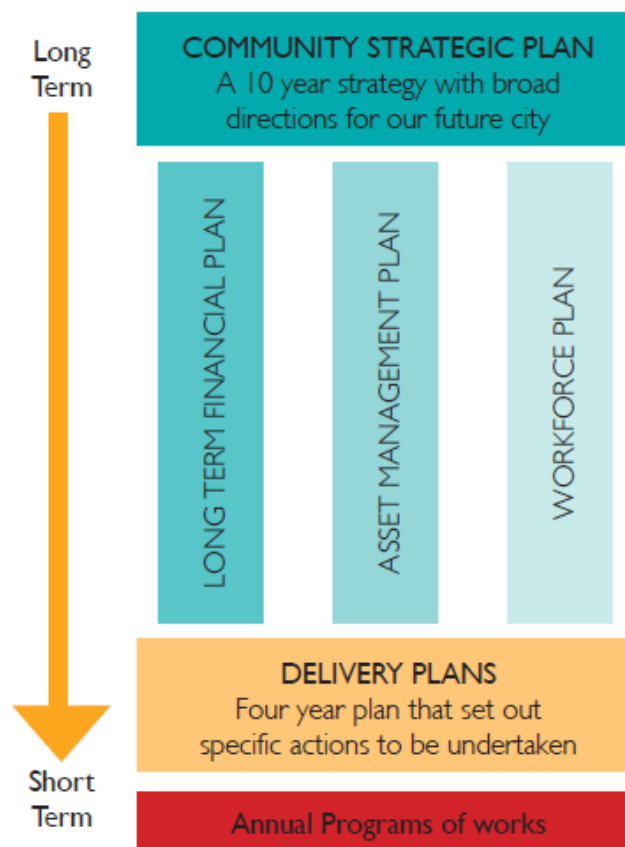
The **Resourcing Strategy** incorporates:

- A **Workforce Plan** focusing on securing a **skilled, efficient and innovative workforce**.
- An **Asset Management Framework**, which highlights our **community's infrastructure network** and ensures the provision of sufficient funding over the life of the Plan to achieve a level of service that the community agrees to and can afford.
- A **Long Term Financial Plan** focusing on Council's long term goal of financial sustainability and delivery of quality services to the community.

The diagram over shows **how the different plans exist to convert the community's vision and aspirations into their ideal City**:



**Diagram 2:** The relationship between the Strategic Plans for the City of Kogarah



**Diagram 3** Turning our Community’s vision into reality, with practical and realistic financial, social and asset planning

In addition to these high level plans, the Council also implements a range of more targeted plans and strategies. It is important to track how we are progressing in delivering a **Bright Future, Better Lifestyle: Kogarah 2020** over the coming years. Council frequently monitors the indicators across all six key strategic directions and provides an assessment of residents' quality of life. The Council reports its progress to the community through annual reports, rates notifications, community report cards, KogarahLife newsletters, forums and City Indicator reports.

This adopted integrated framework recognises that communities do not exist in isolation but are part of a larger natural, social, economic and political environment that influences and shapes their future direction. This framework integrates Council planning to make it more efficient and reflective of the community's needs.

## CONCLUSION

*“The future is not somewhere we are going, but something we are creating.”*

*Professor Ian Lowe,  
President of Australian Conservation Foundation, 2007*

Those who have gone before us today have made our City great, just as we will continue to honour that legacy for those who will follow us. Central to our success is getting our strategic planning right and ensuring thorough consultation with our community. The outcomes of all elements working together is an amazing, beautiful, happy place we call home – the City of Kogarah.

