# BLACKTOWN CITY COUNCIL COMMUNITY REPORT 2015

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‘PEOPLE IN OUR COMMUNITY’
BY BLACKTOWN ARTIST DANIELLE RAWNSLEY-GALISTON, WALL MURAL AT LALOR PARK SHOPS, INSPIRED BY LOCAL FACES AND CHARACTERS
IT IS A PRIVILEGE AND HUMBLING EXPERIENCE TO SERVE AS MAYOR.

Our 2015 Community Report highlights our achievements, and I hope that you will use it to learn more about Blacktown City Council’s services.

This is an exciting time to be in Blacktown City. We’re not only growing – we’re doing it with heart.

Council is the custodian of around $3.2 billion worth of community assets. Over the past year, we’ve begun upgrading these – the roads, bridges, footpaths, parks and libraries that we all rely on – and lowered the infrastructure backlog from nearly $80 million to less than $60 million.

We’ve delivered wonderful new family spaces, such as our community hubs in Glenwood and Lalor Park.

We’re a compassionate City that cares for our pensioners, and offers positive strategies to address drug addiction, domestic violence and unemployment.

We’re leaders in sustainability, and we celebrate all our residents’ achievements in education and the arts.

We’re encouraging fitness and activity like never before, with world-class sporting events at Blacktown International Sportspark Sydney and great community occasions like Waterworld Central and the reopening of the Mount Druitt Swimming Centre.

The Western Sydney Wanderers will make Blacktown its permanent training and administration headquarters, in a huge boost to our City’s sporting profile.

Our community is friendly and welcoming to all, no matter where in the world our people come from and what their needs or aspirations may be. Our City stands out, and we can all be proud to call it home.

My thanks to all the residents, volunteers, and business, community, sporting and multicultural organisations who are working to make our City the greatest in Australia.

So read on – and see why Blacktown City has so much character, and such incredible heart.

Councillor Stephen Bali
Mayor of Blacktown City
BLACKTOWN CITY IS EXCITED ABOUT THE FUTURE. THIS COMMUNITY REPORT SHOWS HOW WE ARE WORKING TO BUILD THAT FUTURE WITH YOU.

We’ve had some terrific achievements over the past year. We’re debt-free and our population is booming.

We’ve managed our finances carefully so we can offer services to all our residents and upgrade vital roads, bridges, footpaths, parks and playing fields.

We’re now launching an ambitious transformation program to cater for a population of 500,000 in coming decades.

Our ‘B500 strategy’ imagines what Council’s services will look like tomorrow, so wise investments can be made today. We’ve also launched ‘Eyes on Blacktown’, an innovative program to improve the City’s attractiveness to visitors travelling through its main corridors.

The work that Council does affects people in so many ways. This year, we began formulating our 2016 Social Plan and sought your views on how we can care better for everyone.

Our community hubs provide outstanding services. A total of 1.4 million people visited Blacktown City Libraries. Our childcare centres support 1,000 children every day.

We’ve modernised Blacktown Customer Information Centre. Our extended trading hours are 8am to 5.30pm, Monday to Friday.

We’ve reached agreement with Telstra to deploy free public Wi-Fi in the Blacktown and Mount Druitt CBDs. We’re pursuing innovative ways to recycle and prevent litter.

Businesses are moving into the area, bringing jobs and opportunities. The new Sydney Business Park, located in Marsden Park, will employ up to 15,000 people when fully developed.

In 2014, Blacktown City had the highest number of building approvals determined in any NSW local government area and one of the shortest assessment timeframes.

It’s proof that Blacktown City is the place to be – and I have never been prouder of our community.

My thanks to the directors, managers and incredible team of 1,650 staff at Blacktown City.

Each day, we support the 15 elected Councillors and proudly honour our mission of service to you.

Kerry Robinson
General Manager
FINANCIAL OVERVIEW 2014–15


The 2014–15 operating result was a surplus of $221 million, when capital income is included. This is higher than the previous year’s surplus of $97 million. The increase is due to the high number of section 94 developer contributions we received for essential infrastructure works in the North West Growth Sector during the year.

When capital grants and contributions are excluded, the operating result was a small deficit of $2 million. This is an improvement on last year’s deficit of $12 million. The improved result is mainly due to the increased rates we received as part of the approved special rate variation for additional asset renewal.

The balance sheet is a snapshot of Council’s financial position, including assets, liabilities and net wealth (equity) at 30 June 2015.

INCOME STATEMENT

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<th></th>
<th>2014–15 $’000</th>
<th>2013–14 $’000</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total income from continuing operations</td>
<td>$504,993</td>
<td>$359,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total expenses from continuing operations</td>
<td>$283,861</td>
<td>$262,070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating result from continuing operations</td>
<td>$221,132</td>
<td>$97,180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net operating result for the year before grants and contributions provided for capital purposes</td>
<td>($1,688)</td>
<td>($12,089)</td>
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BALANCE SHEET

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2014–15 $’000</th>
<th>2013–14 $’000</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total current assets</td>
<td>$358,688</td>
<td>$221,384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total current liabilities</td>
<td>$95,911</td>
<td>$83,219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total non current assets</td>
<td>$3,274,875</td>
<td>$3,049,835</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total non current liabilities</td>
<td>$6,097</td>
<td>$8,260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total equity</td>
<td>$3,531,555</td>
<td>$3,179,740</td>
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OUR REVENUE

WHERE THE MONEY CAME FROM

Council received $505 million in revenue and other income. The largest income sources were capital grants and contributions, which totalled $223 million, and rates and annual charges, which totalled $180 million.

OUR EXPENSES

WHERE THE MONEY WAS SPENT

Council spent more than $336 million during the year – $232 million on operations and $104 million on capital projects and property acquisitions.

INFRASTRUCTURE SPENDING INCLUDED:
- Roads $34.6 million
- Drainage $4 million
- Community buildings $4.5 million
- Parks, reserves and sports fields $8 million

SOME MAJOR PROJECTS COMPLETED IN 2014–15
- Glenwood community hub $5.3 million
- Lalor Park community hub $0.65 million

INFRASTRUCTURE, PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT ASSETS

$3.192 billion

FINANCIAL SUMMARY 2014–15

- Revenue $505 million
- Expenditure $284 million
- Assets $3.6 billion
- Liabilities $102.1 million
- Total equity $3.5 billion
OUR ASSETS

WHAT WE OWN
Our infrastructure, property, plant and equipment assets were valued at $3.192 billion at 30 June 2015.

The value of our infrastructure is:
• Roads $1.192 billion
• Drainage $494 million
• Buildings $333 million
• Land $972 million
• Plant and equipment $35.5 million
• Land improvements (recreation and other assets) $124 million
• Other assets $2.4 million
• Investment properties $39 million

OUR LIABILITIES

WHAT WE OWE
Nothing. Council is debt-free.

TOTAL EQUITY

WHAT WE OWN, MINUS WHAT WE OWE
Council’s community equity (defined as our net worth) was $3.5 billion at 30 June 2015.
THE NUMBERS

ZOOM IN ON 2015

BLACKTOWN CITY WELCOMED OVER 7,000 NEW RESIDENTS, CONTINUING ITS TRANSFORMATION INTO ONE OF SYDNEY’S MOST VIBRANT CENTRES
332,000
BLACKTOWN CITY’S POPULATION, THE LARGEST POPULATION OF ANY NSW LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA ...

45% aged under 30
18,000 businesses in Blacktown ...
110,000 jobs ... 44% held by local residents

1.4 million visited Blacktown City Libraries ...
1 million items borrowed ...
466,267 Wi-Fi log-ins ...
213,699 sessions on free computers ...
1,502 events

5.5 million garbage bins collected
2.7 million recycling bins collected

1,000 children cared for across Council’s child care centres each day

$13 BILLION
ANNUAL ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

15,000 welcomed Chinese New Year at Nurragingy Reserve
5,000 celebrated the opening of the Glenwood and Lalor Park community hubs
900 competed in the inaugural Westlink M7 Blacktown City Running Festival
10,000 visited the Waterworld Central mobile water park
800 Clean Up Australia Day volunteers ...
9 tonnes of waste ...
41 registered sites

26,900 plants given away at community festivals and gardens

$502 MILLION
BUDGET APPROVED FOR 2015–16, BLACKTOWN CITY’S BIGGEST EVER, WITH A RECORD $95 MILLION FOR CAPITAL WORKS

4,000 GreenMoney recycling scheme participants after just one month
9,000 meals served at Lethbridge Park Community Kitchen
500 Blacktown City Art Prize entrants
300 children received bikes and other gear at the Happiness Cycle

More than 11 million visitors at Blacktown Leisure Centre, Stanhope

3 ICC Cricket World Cup 2015 warm-up matches held at Blacktown International Sportspark Sydney
COMMUNITY
VIBRANT AND INCLUSIVE

TRANSFORMING THE CITY INTO A CENTRE OF CULTURE, ART AND LEARNING

CREATING A COMPASSIONATE AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY

HELPING INDIVIDUALS WITH UNIQUE NEEDS TO ACHIEVE THEIR POTENTIAL
NEW COMMUNITY HUBS

• We continue to plan and construct community hubs across the City. These innovative facilities consolidate community services under one roof, offering space for playgroups, community celebrations, private functions, clinic services and more. They are a vital part of our mission to help people access services, make friends and learn new skills.

• We opened new hubs in Lalor Park and Glenwood, and continued to operate successful hubs in Bungarribee, Mount Druitt, Ropes Crossing and The Ponds.

• The Bungarribee community hub won the Urban Development Institute of Australia Awards for Excellence prize for Government Leadership for Urban Design.

SUPPORTING OUR DIVERSE COMMUNITY

• We consulted more than 2,155 people between March and May 2015 to develop the Blacktown Social Plan 2016.

• We served about 9,000 meals at the Council-supported Lethbridge Park Community Kitchen in 2014-15.

• We finalised the second round of Council’s small grants program in which 9 community groups shared a $7,500 fund. The grants went towards a domestic violence program, gardening and art resources and general operating costs.

• We held a Volunteer Thank You event on 20 June 2015, in which 142 community members celebrated volunteering in Aboriginal communities. The event featured a performance by the Mount Druitt Indigenous Children’s Choir.

• We partnered with Multicultural NSW, Youth off the Streets, Ted Noffs Street University and the Mount Druitt Ethnic Communities Agency to hold a successful Youth Networking Evening for more than 90 young people in May 2015.

CELEBRATING ART AND CULTURE

• We launched the Blacktown City Art Prize with a glittering reception at Blacktown Arts Centre on 5 December 2014. More than 500 entries were received for what is one of Western Sydney’s most popular art prizes.

• We began the pop-up garden project at the Blacktown Arts Centre, with local volunteer gardeners recycling waste materials to grow fresh produce.

• We hosted the Doug Moran National Portrait Prize for the first time in February 2015 at the Blacktown Arts Centre and local schools took part in free photography workshops.

BLACKTOWN SHOWGROUND

• We continued to take advantage of the Blacktown Showground, an outstanding venue for a diverse range of community events.

• The Showground received a major accolade, winning the Parks and Leisure Australia Playspace Award.

• In March, the site hosted the Blacktown City Show, which brought a large audience to the Showground.

• The Showground also hosted 2 Indian community festivals and 5 gymkhanas over the past year.

BLACKTOWN CITY FESTIVAL
VIBRANT AND INCLUSIVE: ACHIEVEMENT

NEW COMMUNITY HUBS OPEN IN GLENWOOD AND LALOR PARK
COUNCIL IS IMPROVING ITS NETWORK OF COMMUNITY HUBS. THESE MULTI-PURPOSE FACILITIES DELIVER MODERN SERVICES, ALL UNDER ONE ROOF, AND FOSTER A VALUABLE SENSE OF LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOOD PRIDE.

Over the past 12 months, we have had exciting activity around our community hubs. We officially opened new hubs in Glenwood and Lalor Park during well-attended family fun days in April. The Bungarribee hub, which opened in February 2014, won a prestigious industry award. Our other hubs in Mount Druitt, Ropes Crossing and The Ponds are continuing to successfully serve their communities and support residents.

**GLENWOOD**

The state-of-the-art Glenwood community hub has been redeveloped out of the former Glenwood neighbourhood centre. Its layout and design are the result of intensive public consultation, dating back to a 2011 open day attended by hundreds of local residents, who participated and completed surveys.

The hub has a range of facilities, including a 250-seat banquet hall, a smaller meeting hall, meeting rooms, a computer room, playground, outdoor barbecue facilities, café and commercial kitchen. The building’s green features include solar panels and rainwater harvesting, as well as captivating floral artworks and sculptures designed by local artist Nerine Martini.

The hub will be a venue for weddings, birthdays and other religious and cultural occasions. It will provide a convenient space for playgroups, clinic services, school holiday activities and exercise and dance classes, as well as office capacity for small businesses.

**LALOR PARK**

Based in one of the City’s more established suburbs, the Lalor Park community hub is a refurbished building that was previously home to the Lalor Park senior citizens’ centre. It is yet another impressive multipurpose facility providing a wide range of activities, well suited to the community’s diverse needs.

A prominent feature in the hall is a beautiful mural with a bamboo design painted by local Indigenous artists as part of a program run by Marist Youth Care, Blacktown.

The hub is already home to important services such as Care Connect, which offers health and wellbeing programs to help elderly people and those with illnesses to live independently. It is also the new headquarters for the Blacktown City Band.

**BUNGARRIBE**

The Bungarribee community hub was recently recognised by the Urban Development Institute of Australia through its Awards for Excellence. It won the prize for Government Leadership for Urban Design. The judges noted that the hub had ‘set the benchmark’ for council, state agency and public collaboration in the development of long-term community facilities.

As we look toward the future, Blacktown City Council remains passionately committed to local community hubs as a way to support local culture and recreation, health and wellbeing, and lifelong learning.
A CLEAN AND SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT

Provide local spaces and environments that are clean and healthy.

Collaborate with our community and other stakeholders.

Turn awareness into action to halt or reverse threats to the built and natural environments.
TEAMING UP WITH OUR COMMUNITY

- We awarded 8 local schools funding totalling $14,959 through the Eco-Active Schools Program. The program provides grants to schools in the local government area to complete an environmental project over 12 months. Participating schools were William Rose School, Willmot Public School, St Clare’s Catholic High School, Shalvey Public School, Plumpton Public School, Glenwood High School, St Agnes Catholic High School and Lethbridge Park Public School.
- We held Earth Hour 2015 Picnic in the Park in partnership with Lalor Park Community Garden and local volunteers. Dubbed by Earth Hour as the largest event of its type in Sydney and designed to promote local food security, it was attended by hundreds of people.
- In 2014, we held Sustainable September, a priceless opportunity to showcase sustainability themed activities and events across the City, including a ‘Day at the Farm’ and the Showground Spring Fair.
- We held 101 bushcare group activities and 17 events to promote the local bushcare program.
- More than 26,900 plants were given to the community at various community events and festivals.
- About 800 volunteers from across the community collected 9 tonnes of waste from 41 registered sites on Clean Up Australia Day 2015. More than 9,500 students from 40 schools also participated.

RECYCLING AND MANAGING WASTE

- We launched GreenMoney, a community recycling incentive scheme. The program is designed to reward households for helping the environment. The initiative was launched on 30 May, and nearly 4,000 residents registered within the first month.
- We established a new litter prevention program in Minchinbury and in the Prospect industrial area, assisted by funding from the NSW Environment Protection Authority. We engaged 30 stakeholders, installed 4 surveillance cameras and 20 customised bins near the Skyline drive-in and at bus shelters on Blacktown and Reservoir Roads, Prospect.
- We helped launch the NSW Environmental Protection Authority’s Householders Asbestos Disposal Trial for Western Sydney. To date, residents across Western Sydney have lodged 181 rebate requests.

CULTIVATING COMMUNITY GARDENS

- We continued to support local community gardens, holding events including workshops and school holiday activities as well as weekly gardening activities at Grantham, Bungarribee, Blacktown Showground and Lethbridge Park community gardens.
- We completed a collaborative project with TAFE NSW to build a greenhouse at the Grantham community garden.
- The 2014 Blacktown City Garden Competition attracted more than 60 individual entries and 17 in the community, school and commercial category, the most new entrants for this competition in many years.

LEADING BY EXAMPLE

- We became a member of the Green Building Council of Australia. This is a national, not-for-profit organisation that is committed to developing a sustainable property industry for Australia by encouraging the adoption of green building practices.
WE ARE COMMITTED TO ENHANCING OUR ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS AND ENGAGING WITH OUR COMMUNITY TO IMPROVE ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES THROUGHOUT BLACKTOWN CITY.

We work in partnership with our community, our suppliers and other stakeholders to continuously advance our journey towards environmental sustainability.

We are working to rehabilitate our waterways, conserve and protect local bushland and wildlife, extend native habitat, improve air quality, and reduce waste and our carbon emissions we seek to provide a health environment for residents of Blacktown now and in the future.

In 2014, as part of its commitment to the conservation, restoration and enhancement of the local environment, Council delivered its highly successful program, ‘Sustainable September’.

Sustainable September is a program of community events, sustainable living workshops and children’s activities targeted at a broad cross-section of residents. Showcasing sustainability in action, the campaign’s purpose was to break down communication barriers around environmental issues and make the idea of sustainable living accessible to everyone in the community.

The program had two large-scale community events. The first was ‘a day at the farm’, where Council created an urban farm at Grantham Heritage Park in Seven Hills. Residents learned about food security and urban agriculture, and how to support the local food system.

The second was the ‘Showground Spring Fair’, held at Blacktown Showground, which focused on community gardening and protecting the local stormwater catchment.

Other activities included film nights; cooking, gardening and craft workshops; guided bushwalks and frog-spotting tours; open gardens; environmental talks; and native plant giveaways.

A publicity campaign that included outdoor banners, posters, social media and online promotions kept residents well-informed about what was going on.

Sustainable September gave residents information on a range of environmentally-conscious lifestyle options. Feedback after the events showed the month was a success, with many positive remarks on the wide range of activities available and the usefulness of the information supplied.

Sustainable September was the largest program of environmental engagement initiatives that Council has so far developed. Its success in appealing to a diverse cross-section of the community, the activation of under-utilised community spaces and the level of community participation it generated, has provided significant momentum for further environmental education programming.

The campaign has been significant in that it has changed how Council approaches environmental engagement in terms of community participation.
ECONOMY

SMART AND PROSPEROUS

COMMON GROUNDZ CAFÉ, LALOR PARK
LIFELONG LEARNING
- We welcomed about 1.4 million visitors to Blacktown City Libraries during 2014–15.
- We delivered 1,502 library events, attended by 57,819 people.
- We hosted a well-attended TEDx live-streamed talk from the Sydney Opera House at Max Webber Library.
- We received 225 entries for the Mayoral Creative Writing Prize, and around 400 people attended the announcement of the winner on 22 August 2014.

FREE PUBLIC WI-FI
- We reached an agreement with Telstra to deploy free public Wi-Fi in the Blacktown and Mount Druitt CBDs for the next 5 years. We will install 15 access points in the Blacktown CBD. We anticipate that Mount Druitt CBD access points will be installed in 2016.

IMPROVING CITY AMENITIES
- We completed improvements in the CBDs, including the Campbell Street footpath works outside Bowman Hall, Blacktown, and the bus–rail interchange in Mount Druitt.
- We endorsed ‘Eyes on Blacktown’, a document repositioning the public image of Blacktown City, focusing on transport lines and hubs as a way to enliven, engage and encourage use of our public spaces.

SUPPORTING RETAIL AND SMALL BUSINESS
- We finished upgrading the Whalan shopping precinct on Bulolo Drive.
- We reinforced our support for small business by joining the Small Business Friendly Councils Program, developed by the NSW Office of the Small Business Commissioner.

BLACKTOWN CITY CENTRE
- We used market research to find out what people think about living, working, visiting and investing in the Blacktown CBD.
- We are preparing a place making strategy to make the Blacktown CBD a more attractive destination for residents and visitors.
- We scheduled public domain improvements to Main Street, Blacktown, which are due to start before the end of 2015, using funds from the 2014–15 and 2015–16 budgets.
- Council adopted a draft section 94 contributions plan for city centre infrastructure improvements in June.

BECOMING A REGIONAL CITY
- We continue to make vigorous representations to the NSW Government to relocate a state government department to the CBD.
- We attended the Urban Development Institute of Australia’s National Congress. This platform allowed us to promote the Blacktown Local Environment Plan and infill housing opportunities to the development industry.
- We worked closely with NSW Government consultants to identify ongoing barriers to developing key metropolitan centres.

DIGITAL NETWORKS AND COMMUNICATIONS
- In 2014–15, visitors to our libraries enjoyed 466,267 Wi-Fi sessions, including 213,699 sessions on free computers. In addition, our libraries delivered almost 300 computer-training sessions in 2014–15.
- We worked with Telstra to offer computer training to Centrelink customers through our libraries, and Blacktown and Mount Druitt libraries also offer computer training in Arabic and Hindi.
The opening of the Marsden Park store in May 2015 is part of IKEA’s ongoing investment in the Western Sydney region. For some time, IKEA has identified the area as providing great opportunities for our business, which continue to grow with the booming population, rapid housing development and business investment in the area. We’re proud to make the ongoing commitment to job creation in the area and for us, Blacktown continues to provide us with a huge talent pool of potential IKEA co-workers. Annie Chandler, Store Manager, IKEA Marsden Park.
It’s official: Blacktown City is booming! By 2036, an extra 200,000 people are expected to call the area home, with more than 70,000 new local jobs and a planned multibillion-dollar overhaul of the CBD. This makes it the ideal place to do business.

Now home to more than 332,000 residents, and the largest local government area in NSW, Blacktown continues to grow. The City boasts an increasingly skilled workforce and a strong education sector.

Already, more than 18,000 local businesses provide over 110,000 jobs to the residents of Western Sydney. The City has attracted a broad range of industries, embraced high technology opportunities and taken measures to expand its professional services sector.

For those looking to do business in western Sydney, Blacktown City offers many strategic advantages, including easy access to three motorways – the M4, the M2 and the Westlink M7 – which form an outer orbital ring road around the Sydney metropolitan area.

Blacktown City has 3,000 hectares of designated employment land, 34% of which has been set aside for further commercial development.

Many household name businesses have already moved to the area.

**VOLVO**

In 2014, the state-of-the-art facility for the Volvo Commercial Vehicles dealership officially opened near the intersection of the M7 and M4 motorways.

Set on two hectares, the $16 million complex functions 24 hours a day and caters for medium-sized and heavy trucks as well as buses and trailers.

Essentially a one-stop shop for Mack, UD and Volvo truck owners, the facility offers specialised services, including brake checks and roadworthiness testing.

The dealership further improves the company’s service to truck fleets operating along the East Coast of Australia.

**TOLL IPEC**

The nation’s largest express parcel freight depot is now in full operation following its July 2014 opening at Bungarribee by Australia’s largest mover of freight, Toll IPEC.

The $170 million express facility, which features state-of-the-art design, is set on an 18-hectare site close to key transport routes that service Sydney and the rest of Australia.

The 53,000-square metre facility accommodates around 600 employees once spread across four sites in Moorebank, Homebush and Bankstown, and offers the capability to expand these numbers as capacity increases.

More than 200 full-time equivalent jobs were created in the site’s construction phase.

**IKEA**

In March 2014, Swedish retailer IKEA held the ground-breaking ceremony for its new multimillion-dollar store at Sydney Business Park in Marsden Park.

The 28,500-square metre store now sits alongside major retailers Bunnings and Masters, as well as fast food outlet McDonald’s and a Shell service station adjoining Richmond Road, just off the M7.

The store features a 5,753 square metre showroom, 5,750 square metre market hall, a 450-seat restaurant, a staffed children’s play area and 850 car parking spaces.

IKEA’s second-largest store in NSW will significantly boost the local economy through the creation of jobs and investment in new infrastructure at the site.
OUR LEADERSHIP ROLE IN WESTERN SYDNEY’S GROWTH

• We welcomed 7,000 new residents, taking Blacktown City’s population to more than 332,000. This is projected to soar above 500,000 over the next 2 decades.
• Development activity across the City continues to increase, with almost $1 billion worth of construction approved.
• Blacktown City had the highest number of building approvals determined in NSW during 2014–15, and one of the shortest assessment timeframes.

TACKLING THE INFRASTRUCTURE BACKLOG

• We began implementing our strategy to upgrade Blacktown City’s vital infrastructure.
• The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal approved Council’s application for a special rate variation to fund the majority of works. Council also reduced its capital and operational expenses by $3 million a year.
• In the 2014–15 budget, we allocated an extra $8.557 million for infrastructure renewal spending, of which $5.557 million was funded from the special rate variation.
• We adopted a plan to fund an extra $12.3 million in asset renewal works after hosting a strategic forum on key City priorities in December 2014.
• This reduced the infrastructure renewal backlog to less than $60 million by 30 June 2015.

A LANDMARK YEAR FOR PLANNING

• Our draft Local Environmental Plan 2015 was made law on 26 May 2015. This will shape the development of Blacktown City for generations to come.
• We entered into 4 planning agreements with developers to provide infrastructure works and funding to the North West Growth Centre.
• We conducted our biannual developers’ forum as part of our engagement with key stakeholders to deliver new housing in Blacktown City.
• We finalised the Ashlar Golf Course Planning Agreement between Council and Australand Residential Developments. This will meet the demand for public infrastructure resulting from the construction of up to 850 dwellings.

KEY UPGRADES TO LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE

• We laid, resurfaced, resealed and rebuilt pavements at Acacia Gardens, Arndell Park, Blackett, Blacktown, Bidwill, Colebee, Dean Park, Dharruk, Doonside, Emerton, Glenwood, Hassall Grove, Hebersham, Huntingwood, Kellyville Ridge, Kings Langley, Kings Park, Lalor Park, Lethbridge Park, Marayong, Minchinbury, Mount Druitt, Parklea, Plumpton, Prospect, Quakers Hill, Rooty Hill, Schofields, Seven Hills, Shalvey, Toongabbie, Tregear, Whalan and Willmot.
• We improved traffic facilities at Breakfast Creek Main Branch in Blacktown, Sterling Road in Minchinbury, Murreau Reserve in Rooty Hill, Lynwood Park in Lalor Park, School Parade in Doonside, Harry Dennison Park in Rooty Hill, Quakers Hill Parkway in Quakers Hill, Wilson Road in Acacia Gardens, Doonside Crescent in Blacktown and Kildare Road in Doonside.
• We built cycleways at Cross Street in Doonside and at Stanhope Parkway in Stanhope Gardens.
• We finished refurbishing Emerton Leisure Centre and Blacktown Leisure Centre, Stanhope.

INVESTING IN TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE FOR CURRENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS
COUNCIL IS THE CUSTODIAN OF AROUND $3.2 BILLION WORTH OF COMMUNITY ASSETS, WHICH IT USES TO PROVIDE SERVICES TO LOCAL RESIDENTS, BUSINESSES, WORKERS, STUDENTS AND VISITORS.

Along with other councils, Blacktown City Council needs to invest more to renew the City’s infrastructure such as roads, footpaths, bridges, drainage and stormwater assets, parks and sports ovals, as well as Council libraries and community centres.

Our draft Community Strategic Plan, Blacktown City 2030 – City of Excellence, captures Council’s practical approach to fulfilling the community’s aspirations for the City, including maintaining its growth and its place as a regional leader.

The plan includes a set of ‘trigger projects’ that will advance this long-term strategy. It is envisaged that from 2013 to 2017 we will spend around $80 million on these projects, working in partnership with relevant stakeholders to ensure this vision is achieved.

Council will work in partnership with relevant stakeholders to ensure this vision is achieved.

TACKLING ASSET RENEWAL

A major challenge confronting the whole NSW local government sector is the need to increase funding allocated to maintaining and renewing infrastructure. Without adequate funding, we cannot effectively maintain and renew our assets to maximise their life.

Despite significantly higher funding for asset renewal over the previous decade, Blacktown City’s asset renewal backlog as at 30 June 2014 was $79.8 million.

In February 2014, Council adopted an asset renewal funding strategy, which included an application to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal for a special rate variation, to be directed to asset renewal, together with reallocated funding from new capital works and operational savings. This strategy increased the year’s asset renewal funds by more than $10 million over that of the previous year.

Looking ahead, Council will face much higher funding requirements than now, as the 1980s-era infrastructure in large areas of the City will need to be renewed. Because of this, Council must adequately assess its asset renewal requirements to more accurately predict funding requirements.

Council is committed to maintaining and renewing existing infrastructure through long-term financial planning based on renewal modelling.

REDUCING THE BACKLOG

Council’s asset renewal backlog was $60 million at 30 June 2015 and is projected to be less than $50 million at 30 June 2016. Based on Council’s current asset renewal funding strategy, around $247 million will be allocated towards asset renewal between 2015–16 and 2024–25.

A major goal for Council’s Long Term Financial Plan was to reduce the backlog using funding from the special rate variation. And while the asset renewal funding strategy does not eliminate the backlog, it is forecast that the current level of funding will allow Council to keep it at a manageable level over the next 10 years, when it is expected to be around $78 million.

We have allocated funding from the federal government’s Roads to Recovery program to help reduce the backlog.
SPORTING CITY

GETTING ACTIVE

PROMOTING COMMUNITY SPORTING PARTICIPATION AS PART OF A HEALTHY AND ACTIVE LIFESTYLE
BRINGING THE WORLD TO BLACKTOWN

- Blacktown International Sportspark Sydney was selected to host 3 ICC Cricket World Cup 2015 warm-up matches: Pakistan versus Bangladesh, Scotland versus Ireland and Bangladesh versus Ireland. The games were attended by thousands of enthusiastic fans.
- The ICC Cricket World Cup trophy was paraded and a business luncheon held to coincide with the games.
- The Sportspark also hosted the 14th annual Softball Australia International Friendship Series, in which Australian teams competed against visiting teams from the US and New Zealand.
- Events at the Sportspark provided priceless international exposure for Blacktown City, and the quality of our facilities garnered high praise.

BLACKTOWN INTERNATIONAL SPORTSPARK SYDNEY MASTERPLAN

- We made considerable progress on the Blacktown International Sportspark Sydney Masterplan in 2014–15.
- We consulted with Western Sydney Parklands Trust, Blacktown District Soccer Football Association and the Western Sydney Wanderers on a new vision for the northern sector of the parklands.
- We continue to vigorously lobby the NSW Government to reverse funding cuts and secure continued support for the Sportspark as a 2000 Sydney Olympic legacy venue.

PROMOTING COMMUNITY FITNESS

- We reopened the Mount Druitt Swimming Centre in November 2014, following a passionate community campaign against the closure.
- We held the inaugural Westlink M7 Blacktown Running Festival on 27 July 2014, which combined the Cities Marathon and Festival Fun Run. About 900 competitors registered across 6 individual events.
- Emerton Leisure Centre hosted the Happiness Cycle run on 10 November 2014. More than 300 local children received a free bicycle, helmet and light. They also participated in workshops about road safety, as well as building and maintaining bicycles. The event was supported by Coca Cola, 4 local agencies and community volunteers.
- Blacktown Aquatic Centre was a finalist in the Fitness Services category of the Local Business Awards.
- Blacktown Leisure Centre, Stanhope received its 11 millionth customer.
- Waterworld Central, Australia’s only inflatable waterpark, operated at Blacktown International Sportspark Sydney, attracting more than 10,000 visitors.
GETTING ACTIVE: ACHIEVEMENT
BLACKTOWN CITY RUNNING FESTIVAL
IN LINE WITH ITS COMMITMENT TO SUPPORT LOCAL RECREATION, HEALTH AND WELLBEING, COUNCIL AND MAJOR SPONSOR WESTLINK M7 SUCCESSFULLY DELIVERED THE INAUGURAL WESTLINK M7 BLACKTOWN CITY RUNNING FESTIVAL.

The festival was held on Sunday 27 July, 2014 at Blacktown International Sportspark Sydney, Eastern Road, Rooty Hill.

It was the first time that the Blacktown City Fun Runs and Westlink M7 Cities Marathon merged to form one event on the same day. The event combined the Marathon, Half Marathon, 10km Run and Walk and the 4km Run and Walk, which made up part of the Blacktown City Festival program. Previously the Fun Run was held in May each year; the new-look combined race is now held in July.

The Running Festival attracted 900 local and international competitors, including participants from Hong Kong, Africa, New Zealand and Europe. For locals, the event proved especially popular, with the Fun Run drawing lots of participants, many of them family groups.

Boasting one of the world’s only traffic-free marathon circuits, the race provided runners of different skill levels a seamless course, free from worries about negotiating kerbs, gutters and traffic. Running alongside the M7 motorway, the marathon course was internationally accredited by the Association of International Marathons and Distance Races.

The 42.195km marathon was held in ideal weather conditions, starting in Liverpool at Robins Football Club car park, Ash Road, Prestons. Runners then travelled along the Westlink M7 Shared Pathway some 32km to Quakers Hill, where they turned back and continued to the finish line at the Athletics Centre, Blacktown International Sportspark Sydney in Rooty Hill.

Competitors vied for their share of a $20,000 prize pool – courtesy of Westlink M7 – for the Marathon and Half Marathon, while Blacktown City Council sponsored the 10km and 4km events. First across the line in the marathon was NSW runner David Criniti, who completed the course in 2 hours 24 minutes and 32 seconds, ahead of 176 competitors. David received $5,000 in prize money.

The event finished with a presentation to congratulate all participants and present award winners with their prize money, prizes and trophies. Thanks also went to volunteers and officials, without whose efforts the Running Festival could not have been staged.

The event is primarily funded by Council, in a welcome gesture, for every marathon finisher Council donated $5 to the Westmead Medical Research Foundation, to help purchase medical equipment and fund care services and research projects. The Running Festival also raised funds for Blacktown, Mt Druitt and Westmead Hospitals to ensure local families receive the best care when they need it most.

Following this successful launch, the plan is for the Running Festival to become a permanent annual fixture, both locally and on the international sporting calendar.
A LEADING CITY

INNOVATION AND EXCELLENCE

PROMOTING A SHARED VISION FOR THE CITY AND OUR COMMUNITY

IMPROVING OUR STANDARD OF SERVICE

PROJECTING FINANCIAL STRENGTH
STRONG FINANCIAL OUTLOOK

- We adopted the 2015–16 budget at Council’s ordinary meeting on 17 June 2015.
- At $502 million, the 2015–16 budget is forecast to be our biggest ever. We propose to spend a record $95 million on capital works and asset renewal.
- Our 2015 budget launch was attended by representatives of 68 local businesses. This event drew impressive region-wide media coverage about the scale of our budget and extent of capital spending on roads to support business activity.

SUPPORTING OUR WORKFORCE

- The NSW Industrial Relations Commission formally approved our 2015 Enterprise Agreement. This agreement will operate for 3 years and represents a significant achievement for Council, its staff and unions.
- We have employed 8 business administration trainees, 6 apprentices and a graduate design engineer since the start of 2015.
- We have provided work experience opportunities for 235 students.
- We are doing our part to promote opportunity throughout Blacktown City through our Youth Ambassador Program, Tertiary Scholarships and a partnership with Western Sydney University offering scholarships of up to $5,000 for local students.

AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- Our Bungarribee community hub won an Urban Development Institute of Australia Award for Excellence, in the category of Government Leadership for Urban Development.

PROMOTING BLACKTOWN CITY

- In September 2014, we engaged an external marketing and brand expert to devise a fresh Blacktown City brand and logo that will enjoy longevity and appropriately reflect our community’s unique character. Extensive interviews were conducted with Councillors, staff members, local residents, and business and community leaders. The project is subject to future Council reports.

HEARING MORE FROM YOU

- We are currently undertaking extensive community engagement. The results of these consultations are being incorporated as we develop future strategies and projects, most notably the 2016 Social Plan.
INNOVATION AND EXCELLENCE: ACHIEVEMENT

BLACKTOWN SHOWGROUND WINS PRESTIGIOUS AWARD

KEY TO COUNCIL’S 2025 VISION

17 HECTARES OF FAMILY SPACE

4 NEW PLAY AREAS FOR ALL AGES
LOCAL CHILDREN AND FAMILIES HAVE ALREADY GIVEN AN ENTHUSIASTIC THUMBS UP TO THE PLAYGROUND FACILITIES AT THE REVAMPED BLACKTOWN SHOWGROUND. NOW, INDUSTRY EXPERTS AGREE.

Parks and Leisure Australia, the national peak industry association, has recognised Blacktown City Council for delivering an outstanding community play facility.

It awarded the Council the prestigious Playspace Award for Excellence for projects worth more than $1 million, praising its creation of an ‘open, accessible green park in a large populated city’.

The iconic 17-hectare Blacktown Showground contains a cluster of four much-loved playground spaces for people of different ages and abilities. Completed in May 2013 as part of the $16 million stage one redevelopment of the Showground, they include:

- a junior playground (for children aged 2–8) with an activity unit, swings, stepping stones, rotating ball and timber balance beams
- a senior playground (for children aged 8–12) with a cableway, timber balance beams and challenging climbing opportunities
- a splash pad featuring a special toddlers’ area, ground sprays, water tunnel and interactive sound features
- a low water-use playground featuring a water maze made from concrete and river pebbles.

In recognising the play spaces at Blacktown Showground, Parks and Leisure Australia highly rated the quality of the design and construction, creativity and innovation, cost-effectiveness, integration with surrounding environment and social sustainability. The peak body also recognised Council’s extensive community consultation, and the strong public satisfaction with the facilities.

Council first identified the redevelopment of the Showground in its Vision 2025 document. The aim was to create a stunning green showcase for the City and a lively cultural, entertainment and community precinct with connections to transport and residential areas.

Today, the Showground is a place where people of all ages can jog, cycle, play sports, enjoy picnics and barbecues, or simply find a quiet area to read and reflect.

We created new and exciting water features, both in the play spaces and by introducing a sustainable wetland. This followed very strong feedback from Blacktown City residents who were eager for respite and refreshing environments to enjoy during hot weather.

The Parks and Leisure award is fitting recognition of everyone who works so hard to make our facilities great – including architects, builders, landscapers and maintenance staff.

Most of all, it is a tribute to the Blacktown community, which told Council exactly what it wanted: a versatile play space that would inspire children for generations to come.