



Community Services

Director John Banks

Throughout the year the Community Services Department continued to provide a diverse and challenging range of services that frequently engaged the interest of the community.

Highlights of the year included advocacy and the development of submissions on important community issues such as swimming pool fencing legislation, housing affordability, alcohol management and liquor licensing.

New regional playgrounds were commissioned in addition to the upgrade of 16 small playgrounds.

Substantial work was carried out to commence planning work for several major community infrastructure works including the Darwin Aquatic Facilities Feasibility and Master Plan, the Amphitheatre upgrade and the upgrade of the Casuarina Library and northern suburbs customer service branch.

Work also commenced on the contentious issue of the review of Council's Animal Management By-laws and Council organised and hosted a Year of the Built Environment Forum.

Council's library services were re-branded to better reflect Council's significant role and commitment to library services and were publicly relaunched with a new logo and signage.

Youth Services continued to attract a high level of participation by young people who were involved in the production of 'GRIND' a youth newspaper, and the youth week concert, 'Tha Big Gig', which was a tremendous success.

Community safety and security continued to be a major concern, however successful discussions with the Territory Government lead to the development of a jointly funded Community Safety Project Officer position.

The Sister Cities Program continued to develop and refine its activities and projects throughout the year. Council has formal sister city ties with Ambon (Indonesia), Anchorage (USA), Haikou (China) Kalymnos (Greece) Dili (East Timor) and Milikapiti (Tiwi Islands). In addition work was carried out to clarify the status and resources related to Friendship Cities. Council investigated Friendship City arrangements with Saumlaki (Indonesia) Honolulu (USA) and Kibi-Cho (Japan).

Two new board members were appointed to the Board of the Darwin Entertainment Centre and regular meetings were held with management of the Centre in respect to operational and strategic management issues.

Libraries

Mission

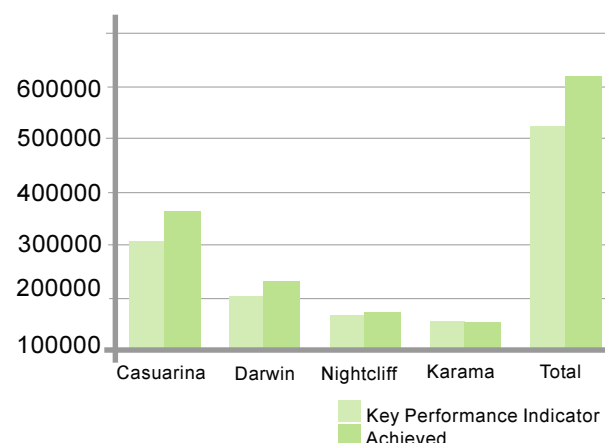
Darwin City Council Libraries are committed to delivering a dynamic, different and diverse public library service that promotes and supports the recreational and lifelong learning needs of our community.

Summary

2003/04 saw continued growth and use of the library service with an increase in loans of 16.7%; a total of 513,095 items loaned from the four libraries.

	KPI	Achieved
Casuarina	202866	258533
Darwin	102024	129514
Nightcliff	65667	72273
Karama	52632	52875
TOTAL	423189	513195

Library Loans 2003/04



Access to and use of the Internet, e-mail and electronic databases again proved to be popular, meeting a very real demand within the community for these facilities. Training sessions were periodically delivered by library staff and addressed everyday use of the Internet.

Library staff conducted several Family Literacy programs on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings at no cost to participants. Family Literacy, *Reading with your Family*, is a community based program designed to answer the questions parents might have about how to help their children learn to read, as well as to show parents how having fun can help children on their way along the literacy path. The sessions proved to be worthwhile and well attended.

Seniors' month was filled with activities and sessions across the four libraries, from quiz mornings to Internet training and self-publishing workshops.

Services

Inter library loans were once again in demand this year for both recreation and lifelong learning pursuits. Limits are placed on the types of materials that can be borrowed free of charge.

Services to housebound clients are ongoing with the delivery of library materials to those unable to visit the libraries personally due to frailty, injury or disability and cannot arrange for friends or family to assist.

Children and youth activities are strongly supported with enthusiastic participation in the annual Young Territory Author Awards, KROC Awards, TRACKS reading program, Storytimes and Karama library's Bedtime Stories.

Babes'n'Books, a new program introduced in late 2003, has gone from strength to strength with an average of 30 babies and 31 adults attending each session. The program is designed for babies under 12 months of age and their parents or care-givers with the aim of introducing babies to libraries and assist and educate adults about libraries, literature and resources suitable for the very young. Developed by a staff member, the program is highly successful and continues to grow.

The highlight of the year was a visit to Darwin City Council Libraries by well-known Australian young adult author, Scot Gardner, as part of his Territory wide tour.

Adult events, such as book launches, author talks and speakers on topics of local interest have grown both in number and level of community interest.

Use of large print materials, books and magazines in languages other than English and resources in a variety of formats demonstrate the diversity of public library services.

Regular displays are a feature at each of the libraries and relate to library collections, special events, community organisations and public awareness of Council or government activities.

Children and Community

Children's Week

Each year Council is represented by the Children and Community Projects Officer on the Children's Week Committee, which in the Top End is made up of community volunteers from organisations, agencies and individuals concerned with children and families. Children's Week is auspiced by Early Childhood Australia (ECA) NT Branch and funded by the Department of Health and Community Services, sponsorship and donations.

Children's Week was held in the last week of October and Council's support included hosting the official launch at the Fun Bus venue in Civic Park in Darwin and the Fun Bus attending and providing activities at the Darwin Family Fun Day.

Approximately 80 children, parents and carers attended the official launch at the Fun Bus joined by approximately 50 invited guests and officials. The Family Fun Day, which was held at Dripstone Park Casuarina Beach, was well attended by approximately 1,500 children and families.

Regional Playgrounds

In 2003/04 Council completed the installation of its second regional playground. This follows the 2001 adoption of the 10 year playground strategy and the first regional playground that was installed at Lake Alexander in 2002/03.

The new regional playground at the Water Gardens in Jingili incorporates a marine theme and has been extremely popular with children throughout the municipality. It has also enhanced Council events and activities held at this venue such as FREEPS (Free Recreation and Entertainment for Everyone in the Parks), Fun in the Parks and the Fun Bus. The Water Gardens playground also includes an 'access for all' ramp giving children with disabilities the opportunity for integrated play.

The third regional playground, located in Yanyula Park, Anula is due for completion in 2004/05.

Inaugural Train Arrival Celebrations

Council provided in-kind support at the Inauguration of the Australasian Railway Celebrations held at the Freightlink Container Terminal, Port of Darwin on 17 January 2004. The Fun Bus, together with face painters from the Fun in the Parks program, provided activities for children, too many to count, from the estimated attendance of more than 10,000 people who enjoyed this historic Darwin community celebration.



Youth Services

'Tha Big Gig'

'Tha Big Gig', hosted by Darwin City Council's Youth Advisory Group was a drug and alcohol free event, staged in April, 2004. All bands and artists were local and eight of the acts were from local high schools and show-cased 14 performers. Held at Council's Civic Park, 'Tha Big Gig' was admission free and marked the culmination of National Youth Week.

From late February through till April 2004, members of Council's Youth Advisory Group along with interested parties met on a weekly basis to create and plan Tha Big Gig. The members were not required to attend every meeting due to the commitment required, however each meeting had at least 12 people present which was indicative of the Group's level of interest in the project.

The Group made all decisions relating to the event and they had great ownership of the project, which led to success in process and outcome. The scope of decisions and activities included:

- arranging the when, where, what of planning meetings
- selecting bands, contacting bands, creating biographies and planning event timetable
- working out the event time, location, duration and naming the event
- arranging the event publicity including organising media and distributing all posters
- supporting the participation of other organisations such as Ausdance NT, Darwin High School VET Music class, Brown's Mart Community Arts, Music NT into the planning process
- arranging and speaking at high school assemblies to promote the event
- selecting the type of food to be available at the event and sourcing suppliers
- creating all artwork for lanyards, posters and promotional material
- arranging for teams to run the event from an 8am set up through to 11.30 pm take down and clean up
- documenting and recording event via video and photography

'Tha Big Gig' was well attended by approximately 1,500 people over the course of the day. There was maximum youth participation in the event's organisation and staging. Young people were employed, where possible, to undertake tasks such as stage crew, which would normally be undertaken by adult professionals. This was made possible by a very supportive event management team. Brown's Mart, St John's First Aid, Kiwanis, NT Police, Darwin High School VET music staff and students and Darwin City Council volunteers in combination, all played an invaluable role in the smooth running of 'Tha Big Gig'.

Overall the process for delivering 'Tha Big Gig' worked exceptionally well. Collaborative relationships with community organisations and individuals enabled the event to be a success and provided the organising committee with exposure to professionals in the arts community.

Art and Culture

Art and Design Forum for Year of the Built Environment

In March 2004 Council hosted the Art and Design Forum for The Year of the Built Environment. The Forum was a Council initiated event sponsored jointly with Arts NT and held in collaboration with the NT Property Council and the Royal Australian Institute of Architects NT Branch.

The outcome of the Forum will guide the development of Council's Public Art Strategy in cooperation and consultation with the development of the NT Government's Public Art Policy.

As a project initiated by Council's Arts and Cultural Development Advisory Committee, the Art and Design Forum was a professionally presented Council event with high calibre speakers and presenters. In the lead up to the Forum regular weekly meetings were held with Arts NT to coordinate speakers, program and other logistics. The success of the Forum led to Arts NT using the Council initiated format and two of the Forum's speakers at a similar Forum in Alice Springs later in the month.

The Darwin Art and Design Forum had an attendance of 130 delegates on the first day and approximately 90 on the second. The four key, guest speakers were The Hon Jeffrey Kennett (former Victorian Premier and Minister for the Arts) who provided the keynote address, Ms Pamille Berg of Pamille Berg Consulting,

Mr John Stafford from the Queensland Public Art Agency and Ms Ros, Coordinator of Indigenous Art Projects, Jumbana Group.

Feedback on the day and immediately afterwards from attendees indicated that not only were the speakers very well received, but that the Forum had the potential to generate improved outcomes in collaborative art and design in Darwin. Arts NT and other sponsors also considered the Forum highly successful.

'Intimate Encounters': Photographic Exhibition and Forum

In May 2004, Darwin City Council along with Arts Access Darwin (formerly Darwin Arts and Disability Steering Committee -DADSC) and Artback NT hosted a tour of the 'Intimate Encounters' disability and sexuality photographic exhibition and forum.

Intimate Encounters is a beautiful and powerful photographic exhibition of 40 works representing the experiences of people with disabilities. It explores the myriad of connections between disability and sexuality. All images were developed with full input and participation from the people photographed, shaped by the participant's own feelings, thoughts and aspirations. The photographer, Belinda Mason-Loving, has worked extensively with all the participants to define how they wish to be represented.

Each photograph took the viewer through a journey of emotions, tapping into thoughts and feelings so often dismissed and denied. It also challenged the hidden (and often at times not so hidden) myth in our society that only the most glamorous, attractive and successful among us lead active, healthy and imaginative sexual lives. The exhibition encompassed a broad range of socially taboo subject matters and was held at Top Coins Gallery in The Mall in May 2004.

A forum was also held in conjunction with the photographic exhibition to challenge and discuss issues around disability, sexuality and body image.

Guest speakers, including Micheline Lee and Jeremy Muir, talked about their experiences. Issues covered by speakers included intellectual disability, physical disability and transexuality.

Community Grants Program

Darwin City Council established the Local Community Grants Program (LCG) to support local initiatives that progress Community Planning outcomes and make a contribution to local cultural, environmental, community or social development or address important social and/or welfare needs.

The Local Community Grants Program aimed to:

- provide limited financial assistance to carry out projects, activities or events of benefit to the Darwin community
- initiate or develop services and resources to address the needs of particular community groups
- encourage community participation in local community and cultural activities and build a greater sense of community
- enrich the diversity of recreational, cultural and social opportunity to Darwin residents
- contribute to Darwin as a dynamic, different and diverse tropical city

Three funding streams were available within the program:

- one-off, short-term projects to a maximum of \$10,000.
- Organisations or projects with a forward commitment requirement for funding up to three years to allow the opportunity to develop certain type of services within the Council's jurisdiction.
- in-kind assistance to organisations through the provision of and access to, Council equipment or services at no charge.

In 2003/04, there were two funding rounds of the Grants Program. The following organisations were offered financial assistance totalling \$75,300.00:

Christmas in Darwin	\$3,000
World Solar Car Challenge	\$3,000
Crimestoppers	\$3,000
Clean Up Australia	\$3,500
Royal Agricultural Society	\$16,000
Beer Can Regatta	\$3,000
Aboriginal Performing Arts	\$3,000
The Shak (cash or in kind)	\$3,000
The Beat	\$10,000
Fringe Festival	\$5,000
Manunda Terrace Rope Ragers Skipping Demonstration Team	\$900
Darwin Community Legal Service	\$400
Ausdance NT	\$3000
Darwin Volunteer Unit Association	\$2000
MIDI per annum for 3 years	\$5,000
YWCA Bike Workshop per annum for 3 years	\$1,500
Darwin Arts and Disability	\$5,000
Steering Committee (DADSC) per annum for 3 years	

Organisations provided with 'in-kind' support within this program were:

- Alcoholics Anonymous
- Frangipani Buddies
- NT Tropical Garden Spectacular
- St. Paul's Primary school
- SIDS
- Salvation Army
- Multicultural Council of Northern Territory
- NT Reconciliation Council
- Girl Guides

Sister Cities Program

2004 Australian Sister Cities Association Awards

Darwin City Council's Sister Cities Program was recognised this year for its success in the area of international relations. Council has a history of achievement in the National Annual Sister Cities Awards presented by the Australian Sister Cities Association.

Awards were received in two categories. In the category of 'Assistance to a Sister City' for the assistance provided to Ambon in the form of a solutions package to a Rabies Emergency and in the category of 'New Affiliation' for the relationship Darwin formalised with Dili, East Timor in 2003.

Assistance to Ambon was provided through a collaborative project with Medicines Sans Frontiers (Doctors without Borders) an aid organisation working in Ambon in September and October 2003, providing a quick and highly successful response to a rabies emergency, which had stricken the city of Ambon killing at least 10 people.

Six thousand dollars was committed from the Lord Mayor's Ambon Appeal Trust Fund, which was fundraised in 1999 for Ambon after violence erupted in the City. Around 5000 lives were lost during the unrest and a State of Emergency was declared continuing until September 2003.

Darwin City Council, through the Ambon Sister City Community Committee, continues to offer support to Ambon during the rebuilding process.

The Dili - Darwin relationship has attracted lots of attention since it's formalisation in September last year. Darwin is Dili's closest large neighbouring city and the two cities shared an intimate bond for many years prior to the signing of the Sister City agreement for a number of reasons.

The Darwin community supported the East Timorese people during times of trouble under Indonesian rule and then continued support when the territory came under United Nations administration prior to independence on the 20th of May 2002. Lord Mayor Peter Adamson was there to share in the exhilaration of this historic event.

Council continues to aid Dili in long term support programs. These include supplying equipment and expertise through staff exchange, training to help restore and maintain the playing surface and facilities at the Dili Oval and Stadium and assisting in the establishment of a library service for the community.

International Collaborations for Darwin Primary Schools

The Sister Cities Program has been working closely with the Department of Employment, Education and Training to establish a schools program, linking Sister City Schools with schools in Darwin for on line collaborative projects. The project is an extension of the 'Sharing Our Territories' Program and a unit of work entitled 'The Sister Cities Project' has been posted on the Program website for teachers to implement in the classroom.

In 2004 Darwin's Kalymnos Sister City Community Committee donated a computer to the 4th Karpathio Primary School of Kalymnos, Greece. Kalymnos School will be the first school to form a relationship with a Darwin school under the exciting Sister City component of the 'Sharing Our Territories' Program.

Photographic Exhibition entitled 'Reborn: Ambon After the Conflict'

Council's Ambon Sister City Community Committee, in association with the Monsoon Studio hosted an exhibition entitled "*Reborn: Ambon After Conflict*" which was held from 21 – 26 February 2004.

The exhibition was a collection of photographs by Jakarta based photographer Tanyo Bangun, whose work has appeared in Time, National Geographic and Asiaweek publications. It provided a window into the determination and progress of the Maluku community towards restoring normality to a shattered society. Taken over a period of several weeks through August and September 2003, Tanyo captured the essence of life in Ambon, the courage of the people and the strength that will allow Ambon to one day emerge from devastation.

Regulatory Services

Parking

The implementation of the Fines Recovery Unit for recovery of unpaid infringements, such as parking fines, is now fully operational. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Unit and Council that enabled a relatively smooth process for developing administrative procedures for unpaid infringements.

Since its introduction in 2002, drivers have become used to the idea of paying for on street parking with little negative feedback being received. However, a technical problem still to be overcome is that the paper parking meters dispense can stick inside the meter during the wet season. Council continues to search for paper that can be used 12 months of the year.

General Duties

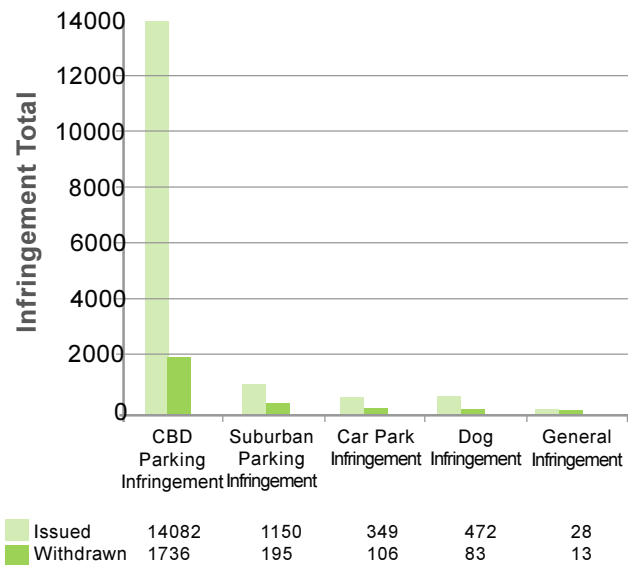
Council has continued with Regulatory Services' general duties without any significant changes. These activities include inspection of long grass complaints, abandoned vehicle complaints and other offences against the by-laws. Council's practice for the disposal of abandoned vehicles changed from direct sale to public auction.

Public Places

Regular work by Council's Public Places Patrols, together with Mission Australia's Community Patrol, has reduced anti-social behaviour resulting in public facilities such as barbecues within the municipality being used by visitors and residents alike for the purpose they were intended for.

On the spot penalty notices issued to people for contravening the by-laws such as camping/sleeping continue to be dealt with through complaint and summons in the court of Summary Jurisdiction rather than the Fines Recovery Unit. This allows a magistrate to find a defendant either guilty or not guilty by way of evidence put before the court.

**Infringements Issued/Withdrawn
1 July 2003 - 30 June 2004**



Animals

Aim

To foster responsible animal ownership and administer an active dog education and control program for the community's safety and amenity.

Summary

The Animal Management Team's main focus is to educate the community in relation to responsible dog ownership and enforce Council By-laws when required. The Animal Management Team has an education officer, four Regulatory Services officers and a supervisor. Registration is compulsory in the Darwin municipality for all those dogs older than three months of age, or where the dog is in the municipality for more than one month.

Throughout the year, Council officers have actively enforced dog registration and provision of adequate fencing. Regular fencing inspections have been done at various properties, with dog owners given 28 days to fix faults or risk having the dog's registration cancelled.

Regular registration checks are done to ensure that Council's registration records are accurate, as this is the basis for an effective animal management program. When officers are not investigating complaints they are patrolling the community, reacting to any breach of the Animal Management By-laws that they detect. They also operate in early and late shifts with hours of the day covered being 0600 hrs to 1900hrs.

Dingo trapping has continued at East Point throughout this year. To facilitate this, a large permanent trap has been built in the reserve. This year, there have been six wild dogs removed from the reserve. Four were adult dogs and two were pups. Indications are that there are still at least two adult dogs remaining in the reserve and trapping will continue indefinitely as per Council's decision.

Under contract with Council, the RSPCA continues to operate the pound. In the past financial year, 843 dogs were impounded. Pound contract conditions require that all dogs released from the pound to owners will be registered if they are Darwin municipality residents. The education program has continued, with the education officer actively providing advice and assistance to dog owners and residents that have dog issues. A school awareness program continues to run, with good support from local primary schools.

The program focuses on educating children in the five to nine year age group on pet ownership responsibilities and awareness of their action when near dogs to prevent bites.

Council has had by-laws drafted relating to cat control in the Darwin municipality which will be presented at the November 2004 meeting of the Council Committee. Barking dog complaints continue to be a community problem. As part of Council's review of the Animal Management By-laws, barking will be addressed. The present options available to Council are limited and a great deal of owner cooperation is required to achieve a satisfactory result. One of the methods that has had some success has been to get the customer and the dog owner talking through the Community Justice Centre.

The Community Justice Centre offers a free mediation service to allow parties to settle problems without the need to go to court. Several barking complaints have been referred to the Community Justice Centre where upon the problem has been resolved. If complaints continue, then various actions are taken which can include infringement fines, conditions on the dog's registration and on some occasions cancellation of the dog's registration.

The education officer continues to handle barking complaints, provide personal advice and help dog owners on correcting nuisance behaviour.