



Mayor's Report

For Triennial Term 1945-1947



CHILDREN'S PLAYING AREA

AUBURN WAR MEMORIAL
with Oval in background

AUBURN PARK

MUNICIPALITY OF AUBURN

Mayor's Report

FOR TRIENNIAL TERM 1945-1947

Gentlemen:

As the triennial term ends on 6th December a brief review of activities over the past three years is called for.

When we, the members of the present Council, offered ourselves for election we gave a definite promise that we would do our very best to carry out an extensive programme for the improvement of the Municipality. The electors placed their confidence in us and it can fairly be said we have faithfully carried out our promises in spite of the many difficulties of the post-war period. Possibly the only civic amenity mentioned in our programme and which has not been initiated is public baths. We could not do anything about this because of the building materials position and the shortage of other supplies essential for that project. Conditions, as everybody knows, are still far from normal. Road construction materials are still in short supply. Costs have risen enormously. Matters are not likely to be any easier in the immediate future. Cement supplies are severely curtailed, the Council's quota being considerably less than half our requirements. This has all tended to slow down our programme, particularly in kerb and gutter, foot-paving and stormwater drainage construction. While the manpower position is much better than it was, it must not be forgotten that most of the new staff engaged were inexperienced in the work and practically all had to be specially trained.

On assuming office in December, 1945, the first difficulty facing us was that of essential manpower. We immediately arranged a deputation to the Deputy Director and from that point were able to achieve gradual improvement. Considering the wide variety of works carried out and now in hand, full marks must be given to Council's staff. With very few exceptions they have done an excellent job.

This report will indicate the manner in which the Council has honoured its promises to the electors. We shall not seek to draw comparisons, invidious or otherwise. In a brief space covering so many activities, each item must of necessity be condensed. Possibly some matters may be overlooked. The real test is in performance, not in promises, and I think we can feel happy about what has been achieved. The members of this Council, with one exception, had no prior experience in civic administration but all set about the task with enthusiasm. All, I think, will come to the end of the term with unabated enthusiasm and with a feeling of confidence in the future progress and prosperity of Auburn.

1. Finance:

Notwithstanding the intensive programme achieved, including costly developmental works such as stormwater drainage construction, the Council's financial position is entirely sound. The last audited accounts disclose that assets exceed liabilities by approximately £4,000. In this connection it should be noted that the following works do not come under the designation of assets:- Construction of roads and streets, footpaving, kerb and gutter, stormwater drainage works, and all public works of a similar nature. This is peculiar to the Local Government accountancy system.

Total expenditure for the three years is approximately £165,000, being the highest in any one term since the Municipality was incorporated in 1892.

2. Collection of Income:

Arrears of rates were reduced by £1,700 during the term representing a decrease in outstandings by 11.2%. This result is specially noteworthy if the position is properly understood. Practically the whole of the arrears represent rates owing on lands of little value and on which the rates can be recovered only on sale by the Public Trustee. This authority has limited the number of applications for sale and the number of assessments in each application. The reason given is shortage of staff and the large number of Councils applying to sell land for rates. The position is particularly unfortunate in the case of this Council as we still have from 150 to 200 assessments which will have to be dealt with in this way. However, 54 properties were submitted to auction in February 1946, a most successful sale. A further application for the disposal of 50 lots should be finalised early next year.

3. Loans:

The following loans were raised during the term:-

Stormwater drainage	£55,000
Kerb and gutter constn. . . .	£10,000
Purchase of land for Parks and public reserves	£10,000

No loan rates were levied in respect of any of these loans, arrangements having been made for repayment of principal and interest instalments out of General Fund.

4. Public Works:

Expenditure on public works exceeded £80,000. This represents the highest expenditure in any one triennial term in the history of the Municipality.

Construction particulars:-

Roads and Streets

(Type of Construction)	(in miles)	(in chains)	(in Lin. Ft.)
Bituminous Macadam	2.125	170	11,220
Bituminous Surface and reseal	6.5	520	34,320
Formation & construction in gravel	3.0	240	15,840
Road shoulders	2.5	200	13,200
Totals	14.125	1,130	74,580

Footpaths

(Type of Construction)	(in miles)	(in chains)	(in Lin. Ft.)
Concrete	2.0	166	10,956
Asphalt5	48	3,168
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Totals	2.5	215	14,124
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Kerb and Gutter (concrete)	6.0	487	31,746
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Stormwater drainage (draining 463 acres)	3.34	263	17,346
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Grand Totals	25.965	2,094	137,796

5. Garbage and Street Cleaning Services:

Special attention was paid to garbage removal and street cleaning services. The garbage carts were replaced with an up-to-date 5 ton truck with specially constructed body.

Special "Clean-up" campaigns were conducted each year to coincide with Health Week. Many tons of rubbish were removed from the premises in this way, no charge being made for this service to householders. Extra trucks were engaged for this work, at one period four vehicles being employed constantly for two weeks.

Due to the gradual increase in the volume of garbage and refuse to be removed the introduction of a bi-weekly service may soon become necessary. The question of the erection of a garbage incinerator was thoroughly explored. From the point of view of benefit to public health the erection of the incinerator was considered desirable and it was thought that adjoining Municipalities would co-operate in its use, sharing the costs. Tenders were invited and a number of apparently excellent proposals were submitted. A comprehensive report was obtained from a leading firm of Consulting Engineers. However, it was finally decided to defer the proposal until some finality is reached on the question of the proposed alteration of municipal boundaries in the County of Cumberland.

Construction of concrete kerbing and guttering and extensive stormwater drainage works have greatly reduced the problem of dirty earth gutters and open drains. It is hoped to reduce this menace still further and at the earliest possible moment to eliminate it altogether. In the meantime special attention is given to the cleansing of earth gutters and drains. The position is particularly difficult in unsewered areas.

Although it was not possible to do away with the paspalum nuisance the staff available worked very hard to keep it under control. Parts for the motor mower were difficult to obtain. The machine could, therefore, only be used occasionally. While it is of some assistance in keeping the paspalum down, running costs are high due to abnormal wear and tear and the results generally unsatisfactory. The Council decided to adopt the poisoning method which has been used successfully in other areas. However, the necessary special plant is not now being manufactured and second-hand plant could not be obtained. The poisoning plant will be purchased and put into use immediately it is available.

The Council is most grateful to the many residents who kept the grass cut and mown in front of their homes. Their valuable co-operation helped in no small way to minimise the paspalum nuisance, in addition to the neat and tidy appearance.

6. Sanitary Services:

During the period 233 premises were connected to the sewer. The Board is now working on the extension of mains in the low level No. 4 area which will bring in West Auburn Public School and all premises in that locality.

The number of weekly services (1,690) is 20 more than in January 1945. This is due to the erection of new buildings including a fairly large number of Housing Commission homes.

Conditions at the sanitary depot have been improved by the provision of a constructed road from the entrance gate through the depot and to the garbage tip.

7. Public Health:

In each year a Diphtheria Immunisation campaign was carried out in co-operation with the Board of Health. 393 children were immunised. Unfortunately there are still a number of parents who do not realise the benefit of immunisation to their children.

A comparison of the number of infectious cases reported indicates the improvement in the position, especially as regards Diphtheria. Drainage improvements have also undoubtedly contributed to the better health statistics.

	1945	1946	1947
Scarlet Fever	43	27	19
Diphtheria	9	10	8
Infantile Paralysis	9	5	1
Totals	61	42	28

8. Buildings:

In spite of building restrictions there was considerable development during the period as indicated by the following figures:-

Year	Buildings Completed					
	Dwellings		Factories & Major Factory Additions		Total	
	No.	Value	No.	Value	No.	Value
1945	15	£11,074	13	£17,870	28	£28,944
1946	69	£65,683	19	£37,349	88	£103,032
1947	124	£133,188	23	£59,909	147	£199,097
Totals	208	£209,945	55	£115,128	263	£331,073

Note: Houses and other buildings erected by the Housing Commission of N.S.W. and War Service Homes Commission not included in above. Minor buildings and additions not included.

9. Parks:

(a) Auburn Park:

This area of 8 acres was constructed and developed from a bare paddock to what promises to be one of the most attractive public reserves in the metropolitan area. The total cost was £12,000. The works comprised two bowling greens with club house, etc., full sized cricket oval, a children's playing area with all necessary equipment and a War Memorial section. The monument was removed from the Railway Reserve to the new site in the centre of the Park. The approach to the Memorial

is featured by a fine wide path, gravelled and kerbed, and lined with a Memory Avenue of native trees. The Council is indebted to the Deputy Curator, Sydney Botanical Gardens, for advice in the tree planting layout and the type of trees and shrubs planted. The cost of the trees was donated by Auburn Citizens Patriotic Fund in memory of the fallen, when the Fund was wound up. The Memorial section is, of course, the dominating feature of Auburn Park. Very successful Anzac and Commemoration Services have since been held there.

Dressing rooms and lavatory block for the oval is now nearing completion. The size of the building was determined by present building restrictions. Provision, however, has been made for enlargement if necessary and the concrete roofing will be later used for a grandstand. The Oval was officially opened with a cricket match on the 20th October, 1947.

The Bowling Greens section of the park is being developed by Auburn Bowling Club who have undertaken the whole of the cost for establishment and development.

The new Auburn Park was officially opened on 26th October, 1946, by His Royal Highness The Duke of Gloucester, Governor General of Australia. A special feature of the occasion was the pageant and display by about 3,000 local school children.

(b) Mona Street Park:

Arrangements were made with the late Mr. A. R. Trenholm to secure his adjoining land so as to increase the area of Mona Street Park from 12 to about 20 acres. Plans for the final development of this Park, which should ultimately be the principal playing area in the District, are still in course of preparation. In the meantime the southern half of the Park has been fenced in with a chain wire fence, the ground levelled and additional cricket pitches laid down. This was achieved with the co-operation of Auburn Combined Sports Committee. This body is representative of all sporting interests in the Municipality. It is very active and has raised about £1,000 during the past two years for the improvement of parks and playing areas in Auburn.

(c) Municipal Tennis Courts:

Plans are being prepared for Municipal Tennis Courts on land having frontages to Station Road and Melton Street, just north of Parramatta Road. This proposal provides for a fully enclosed central court with all necessary dressing rooms and conveniences as required for championship tennis matches. The three courts on this site will make an invaluable contribution to tennis in this district.

(d) Parks and Public Reserves Generally:

Arrangements are proceeding as expeditiously as possible for the acquisition of additional land by resumption and purchase. Silverwater Park is being extended to Clyde Street to make a compact area of 12 acres with Duck and Parramatta Rivers on two frontages. A level lot of 10 acres is being secured in Carnarvon Street west, to provide adequate playing fields in that section. In the south west part of the town a compact area of 50 acres is visualised as an ultimate aim, in addition to Mona Street Park.

Plans which the Council has in hand provide for an ultimate reservation of approximately 150 acres for public recreation. This includes Cooper Park at the corner of Norval Street and Auburn Road, the resumption of which should be finalised soon. This will be the only park area in that particular locality.

The Council realises that the ideal for Auburn would be at least 250 acres open spaces and this would have been easy of attainment in earlier days. However, 150 acres represents a marked advance from the original 21 acres.

It will be possible to reconstruct and replan the Railway Reserve after the completion of the quadruplication of lines and erection of the new railway station. Some improvements have, however, been made. The popular draught tables had to be removed on account of railway construction to the Station end of the Park.

10. Baby Health Centre:

This building was erected, furnished and equipped at a cost of £2,883. Out of 251 Baby Health Centres in New South Wales, Auburn Centre was the first to be constructed in conjunction with the Public Health Department under a new Government policy of grants-in-aid. The Government contribution was £1,403. A special local Committee within a few months raised £1,006 and £17 was received in other sundry donations from the public. Net actual cost to the ratepayer was, therefore, only £457 for this public asset worth £3,000.

The fine area on which the Health Centre stands extends to Station Road and was acquired for £1,405. Such of this land as is not needed in connection with the Centre will be used, when conditions permit, for extension of facilities to promote infant and maternal welfare. These may include Kindergarten or Day Nursery, Children's Library and Arts and Crafts Centre, etc.

The Baby Health Centre was officially opened on 17th September, 1945 by Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Cloucestor. The proceedings were broadcast throughout Australia over the National network. A sound picture of the ceremony was subsequently shown in theatres throughout Australia and overseas. The thousands of local school children lining the route from Parramatta Road to the Health Centre provided a fitting welcome to Her Royal Highness. The Duchess presented to the Centre a tinted photograph of her son, Prince Richard, then scarcely a year old.

11. Children's Free Library:

On the request of a Ladies' Committee, the Council recently agreed to sponsor the Children's Free Library and Arts and Crafts Centre. This movement was begun under the banner of the Auburn Community Centre Movement which had been wound up when the approach was made to the Council. It was felt that it would be a calamity if this Library Movement was not carried on and developed. The Council was impressed by the fine spirit shown and excellent work done by the ladies and their helpers. It was impossible to disregard the importance of such a Movement to the welfare and development of the children and to the community generally. In the few months since this decision was made the rate of progress has been somewhat slow because of the necessity to take care of immediate and future accommodation requirements. However, the Council hopes to solve this problem soon and looks forward to the rapid development of this new and important Municipal undertaking.

12. Town Hall:

During the term the Council was obliged to make a slight increase in rental of the Town Hall so as to give hirers a better service generally. The appointment of a full time male cleaner has been amply justified by results.

The following figures are from the audited statements:-

	1944	1945	1946
Expenditure	£487	£677	£826
Income	£781	£818	£1,084

It is anticipated that the income for 1947 will be (approx.) £1,200, fully maintaining the favourable margin.

13. Road Plant:

During the period the Council spent £2,257 on the purchase of road plant, including a new International truck. To carry out road works quickly and economically plant of the type necessary for the particular job must be available. Heavy ripper and grader machines are, however, very costly to purchase and soon wear out. A machine of this type might cost anything from £3,000 to £5,000. The Council found it more economical to hire heavy plant as required. The auto grader purchased last year at a cost of £775 has already more than paid for itself. In addition to road work it was used with great advantage in the storm-water drainage construction. This machine has made possible the grading of many miles of road shoulders, as well as cleaning out water-tables and in the reconstruction of roads in conjunction with the heavier machines. It has also proved invaluable on preparation work for kerb and gutter construction.

A secondhand truck with water tank proved to be a good investment. Material for new construction and reconditioned formation can now be properly watered so as to ensure satisfactory consolidation when rolled. At the same time nuisance from dust is greatly reduced.

14. Town Planning:

The Council has been constantly in touch with the Cumberland County Council, planning authority for the County of Cumberland. Problems during this interim development period have, so far, been satisfactorily resolved between the two Councils. Many interests are affected, some adversely, by planning procedure. However, all interests and the public generally will ultimately benefit. Patience and goodwill must be and remain the dominant note.

The zoning under interim plan is working fairly well, especially as regards the factory areas. Planning, of necessity, envisages a long-term programme. It affects, not one area but the whole of the County. We shall see everything in clearer perspective when the master plan comes out about the middle of next year.

Council itself has initiated three important proposals intimately related to the replanning of Auburn. The first concerns the realignment of Rawson Street from Station Road westerly. That section, particularly adjacent to Auburn Station, now presents a difficult traffic problem. When the new station is completed the section between Macquarie and Northumberland Roads will be in the nature of a bottle-neck. Arrangements have already been made for all bus services except one to pick up and set down passengers from defined stands adjacent to the railway park. The widening of this section will have to be effected by the realignment method, and may take some years to finalise.

The second project is the construction of a new road, from South Parade in the vicinity of the railway overhead bridge to the north east corner of Queen Street and Auburn Road. This involves the re-location of the railway overhead bridge to a position slightly east of its present site.

This new road will provide an additional shopping block right in the business centre of Auburn. At the same time it will eliminate unsightly buildings and bring the land in that vicinity into profitable use.

Both these proposals appear to be essential for the proper development of Auburn. However, full consideration cannot be given to them until the Surveyor's report and recommendations are available.

The third project is the provision of a pedestrian bridge over the railway tracks from Marion Street to North Parade. This will give direct access across the lines for residents in that vicinity. It will be of special value to workers in adjacent industries who live in that area. The Railway Department will construct this bridge for the Council and will contribute towards the cost.

15. General:

It is pleasing to note the increasing interest of the public in civic affairs. The active and valuable co-operation of the Combined Sports Committee is one instance of this. The visit of The Duchess of Gloucester and later of Their Royal Highnesses, The Duke and Duchess, were perhaps the events of greatest civic significance. We were also privileged to entertain a few months ago personnel from the visiting British war ships.

The Mayoral Ball raised about £100 each year, in addition to the pleasant social aspect. Auburn Citizens Patriotic Fund, The Combined Sports Committee and Auburn Citizens Memorial Hall Committee benefitted equally in that order.

As your Mayor I have always been pleased to play my part in all public movements, whether sponsored by the Council or not. Like you, I deem it a pleasure to work for the advancement of our town and district.

16. Conclusion:

I desire to express thanks and appreciation to the Aldermen for their loyal support and assistance during three strenuous years. Nothing at all could have been achieved without that co-operation. I feel sure the harmony which now exists will long continue.

I would like to thank also our Federal and State Members and all heads of Government and other Departments with whom we have had Council business. Perhaps a special word of appreciation should be said to our representatives on the Water and Sewerage Board, The Sydney County Council Electricity Undertaking, The Board of Fire Commissioners and The Cumberland County Council. I would like to thank the Town Clerk and every member of his staff, including all officials and employees, indoor and outdoor staff alike, for ready co-operation and assistance and for loyal and efficient service.

I conclude by wishing all ratepayers and residents the compliments of the approaching season of goodwill and every joy and prosperity in the years to come.

Yours sincerely,

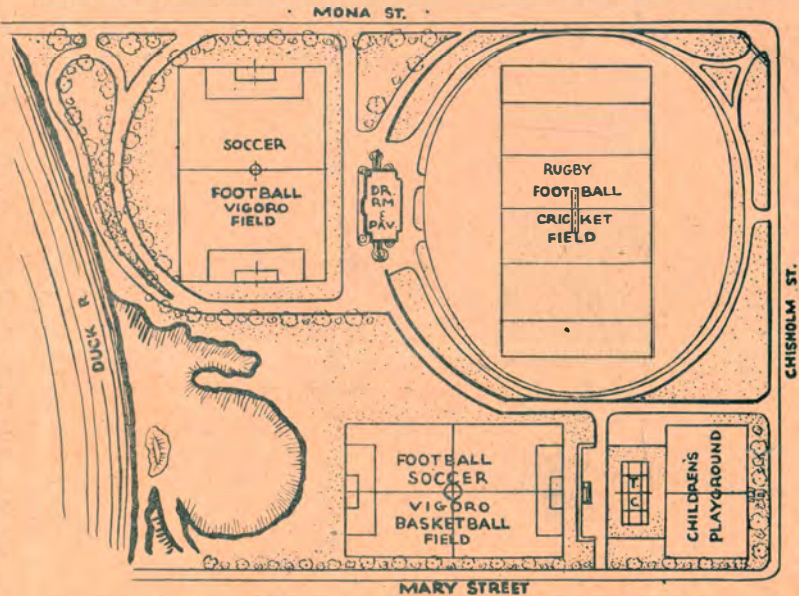
A. KERR,

Mayor of Auburn.

Mayor's Room,

Town Hall, Auburn.

12th November, 1947.



**PROPOSED SPORTS AREA
MONA STREET PARK**