

# MURRAY Matters

FEBRUARY 2023

  
murray river  
council

*Your council  
news & updates*

## Council meetings back on the road

This month we're commencing our next lot of travelling council meetings. We'll be in Moulamein in February and Barham in March.

Visiting other locations outside of the Moama chambers gives our community the opportunity to attend our meetings and see what goes on.

It's also a great chance for residents to attend the informal catch-up sessions prior to the meeting to chat with councillors and staff over lunch.

If you love the idea of travelling meetings, be sure to let us know as it's a great way to personally engage with residents from all corners of our council.

You'll find us in Moulamein at the Bowling Club on February 28, and in Barham at Riverside Reception Rooms on March 28. If you're interested in attending, you can let our Executive Assistant know by calling 1300 087 004.

All other dates remain at the Council Chambers in Moama.



## Meet your Australia Day Heroes



Wakool's Irene & John Coote were awarded Murray River Council's joint Citizen of the Year at the Australia Day ceremonies held last month.

They were among six individuals and groups who were honoured for their contribution to the local community:

**Citizen of the year:** Irene & John Coote, Wakool

**Young Citizen of the year:** Billie Logie, Moama

**Young Sportsperson of the Year:** Matilda Eddy, Mathoura

**Sportsperson of the Year:** Luke Barlow, Moama

**Community Event of the Year:** Echuca Moama Bridge Opening

**Community Group of the Year:** Mathoura Biggest Morning Tea Committee

Congratulations to all our award recipients!

There have been lots of people who have made some lasting contributions in the community over the last twelve months, and it is their efforts that add to the story of Murray River Council and make it such a great place to live.

If you'd like to learn more about our award recipients and why they received their awards, head to the Australia Day section on our website.

TOP NEWS *inside*

- Message from the Mayor
- Roads updates
- Parks and garden updates
- Sign-up to MiWater

- Apply for Community Grants
- Business impact survey
- Murray Valley encephalitis
- Youth engagement updates

## From the Mayor's desk...



The summer season is nearing its end, the kids are back at school and 2023 continues to stretch away in front of us with who-knows-what in store! Two years of COVID and then a one-in-one-hundred-year flood event make us very wary of making any predictions and plans on what's ahead.

But what we do know is that 2023 is the year that we commence the mind-boggling task of returning our road network into a usable state again. Even now we still have areas in the footprint where roads are cut and, if not cut, unusable because of flood damage. It won't take weeks or months. It will be well over a year with our crews working full time on the repairs.

A large percentage of our road network needs attention. Some issues will be a one or two-day fix. Others could require a month's work. It's not a program of works that we can hope to fund ourselves, so we will be looking for substantial support from State and Federal Governments to get us back on our feet.

Part of this means following a clear set of steps in our restoration efforts. So, if you're wondering what our plans are moving forward, we've offered a quick overview of the process in this edition. It won't offer individual roads names, but it can give you a good idea of the process.

We are also continuing to push hard for some relief for our local businesses who have been impacted by the flooding event, which is why we are requesting all businesses affected to please complete our Business Impact Survey. The information gathered will be instrumental in our efforts to advocate to Government for adequate financial support to help with business recovery.

And remember...just because your toes didn't get wet, doesn't mean we don't want to hear from you! Many have been impacted by road closures, staff shortages or freight delay, so please let us know. You can access the link via the business support page on our website.

In closing, here is to a positive 2023. No matter what hurdles our region seems to face (floods, border closures, COVID: let's hope that's it!) we still remain a destination that people love to visit due to our bustling local industry and great sense of community.

Cr Chris Bilkey  
MAYOR

## Sign up to MiWater: It's our FREE customer portal to help you monitor your water use

Following the installation of smart water meters in Murray River Council, residents can now monitor their water consumption anytime, anywhere, and all for free!

Property owners now have the ability to view their own personal property water usage information via an online customer portal: MiWater.

The new MiWater portal will allow customers to break down their water use day-by-day.

High water use activities are clearer to see and if there is a particular day where the customer has used a lot more water, they can look into it further.

Since the installation of smart meters across the towns, Council has been able to assist customers detect leaks at properties right across the council area.

"We are mindful that all savings, big or small, count for our residents and the environment, so we are really pleased with the smart meter capabilities thus far," Mayor Chris Bilkey said.

Residents can now register via council's MiWater portal and see in near real-time their own water consumption, set their own water consumption targets and set up alerts if these targets have been or are likely to be exceeded.

Council staff have also been trained in using the MiWater application which will alert staff to any potential leaks so they can notify residents of any potential issues on their property.

Customers can add any of their properties with smart water metres to their MiWater profile and give others, including tenants and real estate agents, access to view water usage information if they wish.

To register, head to:

[www.murrayriver.nsw.gov.au/miwater](http://www.murrayriver.nsw.gov.au/miwater)



## RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO YOU:



### Grab your FREE Weed ID Guide!

If you're a local landholder, be sure to grab a copy of our FREE Weeds Identification Guide!

The guide has been developed in collaboration with NSW Local Land Services and the Biosecurity Teams at Murray River, Edward River and Berrigan Shire Councils.

The guide is a great identification tool and includes descriptions and images of weed species through a range of growth stages to make the identification process as easy as possible for our landholders.

The priority weeds identification guide is available for free from any of Council's customer service centres or can be downloaded on our website.

## Flood recovery funding & information.

We understand many in our community are facing a very challenging time following the recent flood event. We have a flood support page on our website which hosts links to support programs (including financial support for individuals and businesses), which may be of assistance.

You can find out more at:  
[www.murrayriver.nsw.gov.au/flood-recovery-assistance](http://www.murrayriver.nsw.gov.au/flood-recovery-assistance)

## Development checklists.

The planning system in New South Wales can at times seem overwhelming and complex, so Council staff have developed some checklists to help you get all the right documentation in order before you lodge an application online.

You can download the checklists via the Planning and Building section of our website.

**TIP:** It is important to note that even when Development Applications and Construction Certificates are lodged together (at the same time) on the NSW Planning Portal, this does not mean they will be assessed or issued at the same time. Often, applications are separated and assessed separately by staff. This may also mean that any 'Requests For Information' are requested separately.

The Development Application is the first component in the assessment and in many cases, the development consent will be issued prior to the Construction Certificate being issued.



If you're part of a community group or not-for-profit organisation you can now apply for funding under the latest round of our Community Grants Program.

The program offers financial support for projects, equipment, events, exhibitions or performances which contribute positively to the Murray River Council community.

Grants of up to \$3000 are available.

Interested? Find out more via the grants section on our website.

Applications close 5 April 2023.



If your business has been impacted by the flood event, we need to hear from you!

We are asking all affected businesses to please complete our Business Impact Survey. The information gathered will be instrumental in our efforts to advocate to Government for adequate financial support to help with recovery.

It's important to remember that you didn't need to be flooded to be impacted: many have suffered due to road closures, staff shortages or freight delays (among many other things) so please let us know.

You can access the survey via our business support link on our website home page.



## Parks, gardens and open spaces update

We hate to keep talking about the floods- but there has been a lot of staff time dedicated to managing the floods and/or post-event operations.

But, this also gives us an opportunity to highlight the efforts of just a few of our team members who have had the job of sorting some of the immediate recovery efforts in our public spaces:

Our Parks and Gardens team!

Our Moama recreation areas in particular were completely inundated...which left a big clean-up job waiting for us when the waters receded. But the team jumped straight in and commenced clean-up at the Moama Soundshell, Skatepark, Horseshoe Lagoon and Wharf, along with some efforts at Moama Beach.

This is certainly not complete and a lot of the work is still ongoing, but the team have worked hard to ensure the community can access these key public facilities. Work included pressure washing structures, removing contaminated furniture and playground softfall, repairing irrigation, cleaning paths, remove debris, clearing tracks, repairing timber steps and more!

Moulamein is also getting some extra attention, with our team arranging park works and utility restoration in the affected park space at The Triangle.

And whilst this has been taking place we've still seen another busy summer period pass, so the rest of our team right across the council have been extra busy keeping our much loved recreation areas green, clean and pristine!

### ***Moving forward...***

Whilst the team has managed to clear the immediate hazards in most parks, we are continuing to undertake flood damage assessments at all open spaces impacted by the floods.

These assessments will look at physical damage to sites, equipment, access roads and tracks as well as hazardous trees, retaining walls and riverbanks. The assessments will take time to undertake and then longer still to rectify as we continue to seek funding sources to repair our outdoor sites.

We'll keep you updated on our progress!

## Youth Engagement update

Our Youth Engagement Program (YEP) is still ticking along, with our 'Y Hub' in Moulamein well supported by the local community. Registered participants meet every Friday afternoon to socialise and play games at the local community space. The Y Hub participants have also organised a colour run as part of the 'Celebrate Moulamein' Festival this month!

Our next big event will be Youth Week in April where local youth will get the chance to tidy up their skateboarding skills at workshops in Barham on April 25 and Moama on April 26.

More details will be available closer to the date, or keep an eye on the YEP Facebook page.



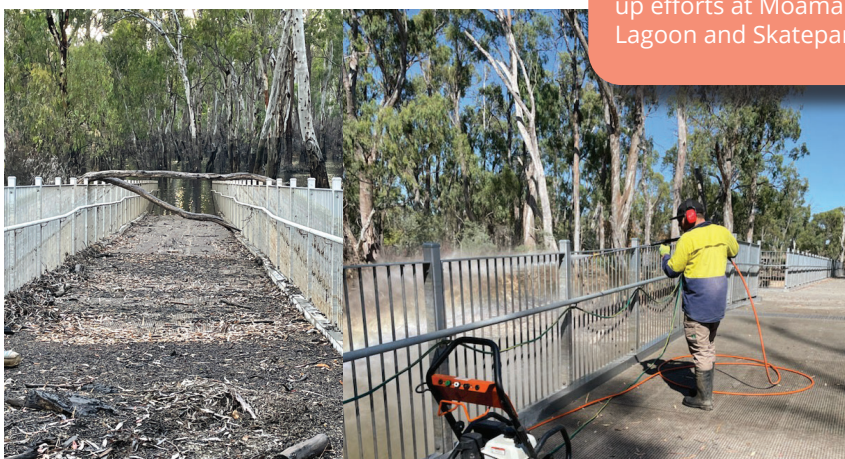
Murray River Council YEP



**YOUTH  
ENGAGEMENT  
PROGRAM**



Our Parks and Gardens Team have undertaken some intensive clean-up efforts at Moama's Horseshoe Lagoon and Skatepark area.





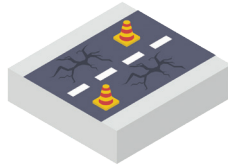
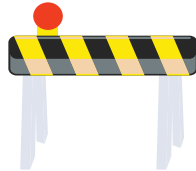
Many roads across our area have been impacted by the effects of the flood event.

In fact, so far over 100 kilometres of our road network has suffered significant damage with large potholes and sections of road destroyed.

Here's a quick snapshot of the effects on our road network and what we need to factor into our work schedule over the coming year/s.

#### Road closures

During the flood event, 1,101kms of roads were closed across the council. This is broken up to be 739km of sealed roads and 362km of unsealed roads.



#### Pot holes

We have an estimated 2500 potholes requiring repair.



#### Culvert sites

There have been approximately 70 different culvert sites impacted, totalling 950m of culvert damage.

#### The damages

Various damages experienced included loss of materials to shoulders and unsealed roads, pot-holes, various sealed road impacts and damage, signs, guideposts, guardrails, culverts, debris, excessive material left at various sites, excessive silt in drainage structures...and more.



#### Grading works

We have up to 50km of unsealed roads that require either replacement of material or grading.



## Restoration steps...

So with such a large amount of work ahead, we know the community are wondering just what Council's plans are moving forward. Assessments are still in progress on areas of our road network, but to give you an idea of how we'll tackle the recovery works, we've mapped out the key steps we'll be following below.

In these steps we refer to '**essential public assets**', which means roads, road infrastructure (including footpaths, bike lanes and pedestrian bridges), bridges, tunnels, culverts, public housing, flood levees and stormwater infrastructure. This is also in-line with the NSW Government's Disaster Assistance program.

### Step 1: Emergency Works

We are currently completing emergency works to temporarily restore essential public assets to an acceptable operating level. Examples include removal of debris, temporary repair works, works to make roads trafficable for adjoining landholders, placement of warning signs and barriers.

The prioritisation will be regional roads followed by bus routes, local sealed roads and unsealed roads. However there may be instances where there are damages to a lower prioritisation that is escalated due to the severity of damage and access limitations. As we've learnt, things can change quickly!

These areas will remain in this condition until reconstruction works (step 2) can be completed.

### Step 2: Immediate Reconstruction Works

Immediate reconstruction works are activities we'll be undertaking to fully reconstruct an essential public asset prior to 30 June 2023. This date is linked to requirements under the NSW Disaster Assistance Arrangements.

These works require more planning, coordination and scheduling than 'emergency works' to restore affected areas to their pre-disaster function. Priorities are similar to emergency works however further consideration to the extent of works and resourcing is needed to determine if each area can be completed prior to the deadline. As we work through the various sites, any works unable to be completed during this step, will be completed as part of Step 3.

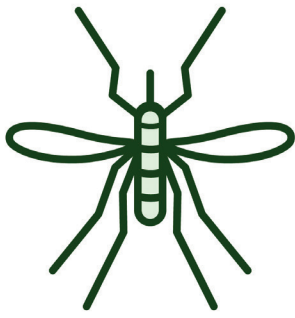
### Step 3: Essential Public Asset Reconstruction Works

Similar to Step 2, Essential Public Asset Reconstruction Works are restoration activities to fully reconstruct an essential public asset to its pre-disaster function.

However, the difference is that these works are completed beyond the June 30 date, carrying over into the next 12-18 months.

As you can see there is a lot of work ahead of us, so please bear with us. And if you see our crews working please remember to slow down, abide by signs and give our teams space to get the jobs done. Thank you!





## Mosquito alert in our community.

The Murray River Council community are encouraged to take measures to protect themselves against mosquito bites following the detection of Murray Valley encephalitis (MVE) virus.

The virus was detected through routine mosquito trapping carried out as a part of our arbovirus surveillance program.

People in the area are urged to take actions to prevent mosquito bites to protect against all mosquito-borne viruses. Protect yourself and your family by:

- covering openings such as windows and doors with insect screens
- removing items that might collect water outside your house where mosquitoes can breed
- wearing light, loose-fitting long-sleeved shirts, long pants and covered footwear and socks, especially around dusk and dawn
- applying repellent to all areas of exposed skin and re-applying repellent regularly
- using insecticide sprays, vapour dispensing units and mosquito coils to repel mosquitos (mosquito coils should only be used outside).

For further information and ways to protect yourself visit the NSW Health website.

## Is your home sustainable? Borrow a kit to find out.



A program to help people save power and money is now available for loan at Mathoura and Barham Libraries as part of the NSW Government's Home Energy Action Program.

The 'Save Power Kit' contains a range of practical tools including a power monitor to work out how much power your appliances are using.

With energy costs rising fast, having a sustainable home is more important than ever, so if you would like to borrow a kit please visit one of our libraries or call 1300 087 004.

## Upcoming events

Koondrook Barham Fishing Comp: Feb 24-26  
RiverDaze Barham: March 4  
NSW Open Golf Championship - Rich River Golf Club: March 6-19  
Wakool Show: March 10-11  
Moulamein Fishing Comp: March 11-12  
Southern 80: March 24-26

 @Visit River Country



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