

# Murray Matters

February/March 2021



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# Message from the Mayor

Welcome to the first edition of Murray Matters for 2021.

The border chaos that defined much of 2020 seemed to follow us into the new year...once again having an enormous impact on our businesses that rely on the visitor population. The damage that has been done to our visitor economy due to border closures is immense and won't just magically be recovered.

That is why we will continue to support all promotional campaigns to restore confidence in visitors who would like to spend time here. We will continue to support the efforts of the tourism sector to spread that message as quickly and as far as we can, and I would encourage everyone else to do the same. Share the social media posts. Invite your friends and relatives. Every little bit helps.

You can find out more about our own 'Reconnect in River Country' campaign in this edition

We are also currently in the process of delivering a new Draft Murray River Local Environment Plan (LEP), which is another major step in planning for growth and development across the area.

The document is a consolidation of the two separate planning instruments Council currently operates under; being the Murray Local Environmental Plan 2011 and the Wakool Local Environmental Plan 2013. It has been developed as an interim document to bring consistency to planning and development across Council in the shorter term.



This single draft LEP will simplify the planning process for the community and help to ensure consistency across the region as soon as possible.

Amendments that are major changes and require strategic justification or further investigation, such as amendments to standards, lot sizes, zoning and riverfront land use will be investigated as part of future amendments to the LEP, informed by a suite of strategies that council will be undertaking in the next 18 months.

In the meantime, this current draft is about enabling consistency in development standards in the shorter term - so I would encourage all residents to keep an eye out for more information about its development in the coming weeks and month.

Cr Chris Bilkey



Keep an eye on updates or community information via our Facebook Page: Murray River Council.



Barham's Janet Cincotta is Murray River Council's Citizen of the Year, rounding out an impressive collection of residents and groups who received awards at last month's Australia Day celebrations.

Murray River Council, meet your Australia Day award winners...

## Citizen of the Year Janet Cincotta, Barham

As citizen of the year, Janet has been recognised for her devotion to keeping the streetscapes neat and tidy around Barham for many years!

Janet often wanders the streets, bucket and spade at hand, doing battle against the weeds that dare to grow near "her" footpath. It is so commonplace to



Barham residents, that they forget just how unusual a sight this must be to visitors to the town.

When asked why she does it, Janet said she simply likes to see the nature strips looking neat and tidy.

Over the years Council has recognised many contributions through its Australia Day Awards, and this year this award demonstrates that every little bit makes a difference and that every contribution – no matter how big or small - is valued by the local community.

With Janet's dedication to all things gardening and the passion she has for her local town, she is an outstanding example of a senior citizen doing all she can for the betterment of the local environment.

# **Young Citizen of the Year Phoebe Scalora, Tooleybuc**

Phoebe has been recognised as Young Citizen of the Year for her active involvement in local community life, and, most notably, her fantastic achievements in the Catalina Venturer Scout Unit.

Phoebe earned a Queen Scout Award in 2020 for her involvement in the group for the past thirteen years- a prestigious nod to her dedication. Phoebe will now be presented with her Queen Scout Award by the Victorian Governor at Government House.



Phoebe completed 4 parts of the Venturer Scout Award: Outdoor Activities, Community Involvement, Leadership Development and Personal Growth. These 4 parts involve 17 badges, which Phoebe had to complete over 3 years before her 18th birthday to qualify for the Queen Scout Award.

The badges are aimed at enhancing a Scout's life skills and the importance of community volunteering and participation, leadership and responsibility.

Phoebe is undoubtedly an inspirational role model for all of us - showing that hard work and passion can so often help us achieve our goals.

# **Young Sportsperson of the Year Shaleah Cooper, Mathoura**

Shaleah has certainly accomplished outstanding success across all sporting areas throughout 2020. At just thirteen years of age, Shaleah has accumulated an impressive list of sporting achievements. Her efforts and success at Mathoura Public School's carnivals and trials, led her to qualify to participate in multiple district, regional and state competitions.



Shaleah is an outstanding member of the local community and embodies all the values that the Young Sportsperson of the Year award stands for.

# Community Group of the Year Murray Downs Community Garden Group

The Club has been recognised for their efforts in establishing a community garden in Murray Downs.

The garden provides fresh organic produce, beautifies the entrance to the village residential area, continues to foster a sense of community and has motivated residents to think of other projects or improvements that could be taken to grow the area.

The garden project has also enticed some residents that would not normally join in community activities to come and see what is going on in their area. They are now involved and sharing their talents and ideas!

The Murray Downs Community Garden Group are certainly worthy recipients of the Community Group of the Year award and are to be commended for their efforts in delivering an amazing project for all of Murray Downs to enjoy and be part of.



## Community Event of the Year Moulamein Gourmet Fair

The Moulamein Gourmet Fare held in September last year has been recognised for its celebration of local producers, growers and retailers.

This event was a collaboration between the Moulamein Bowling Club and the Moulamein Art Gallery and was hosted at a much-needed time in the crazy year that was 2020.

The event showcased fresh seasonal producers and sustainable agribusiness in our region through a range of stalls and activities.

It is an enduring credit to all the organisers and producers who managed to arrange a celebration of local goods at a time when we needed it most.





# Smart Water Meters - where are we up to?

Council's smart meter installation program moved into stage two late last year, with raw water meters installed in Mathoura, Moama and surrounds.

Raw water meters in Barham, Moulamein, Tooleybuc and Murray Downs will occur this year. Look out for information in your mailboxes prior to the installation period.

We will also be launching a customer portal later in the year to enable customers to monitor and review their water usage.

This will allow customers to check how efficiently water is being consumed within their home and property.



Keep an eye on updates or community information via our Facebook Page: Murray River Council.

## Welcome to the team Terry!

This month Council welcomed new Chief Executive Officer Terry Dodds to the team, following the retirement of former CEO Des Bilske at the end of last year.

Terry was the CEO at Tenterfield Shire Council for the past 3 years and has developed a very high reputation for performance and regional leadership. He is a former CEO of Isaac Regional Council in Queensland and has held previous Director of Infrastructure roles at Wagga Wagga, Ryde and Bega Valley Councils.

Terry brings with him impressive qualifications in civil engineering, project management and personnel management. He is an award-winning CEO, with the Voice Project Award for culture improvement at Tenterfield a highlight.

Terry will lead the organisation over the next five years.

Staff and Councillors have welcomed Terry's arrival; noting his fresh focus on community development and internal staff culture.

Terry said he is looking forward to getting outand-about to meet with a broad cross section of the community.

"I will be doing my best to visit all corners of the Council area to listen about any opportunities and better understand challenges being faced."

"I feel incredibly privileged to be able to be part of the exciting future of this stunning



■ Council's new CEO, Terry Dodds.

region and I look forward to meeting many of our residents when I'm out and about across the area soon."

Terry also thanked staff for the warm welcome so far.

"I have enjoyed meeting the staff team so far and will continue to work with everyone to find out how I can help them achieve the highest levels of job satisfaction and to ensure they have the right resources to do their jobs effectively."

"Our staff are the key to making the organisation reach its full potential."

Terry also thanked council's Director of Operations and Major Projects, Scott Barber, who acted in the CEO role over the Christmas and January period.

#### Got a burning interest in our council meetings?

Even though meetings are now back open to the public, we are still live streaming all the monthly council meetings, ensuring everyone in the community can see how decisions are made. You can also watch the meeting at a later date, with all recordings filed for access. If you want to see what happens at council meetings, head to our website and follow the link to our live stream channel.

www.murrayriver.nsw.gov.au/council/about/meetings

# What are our long-term service needs?

Council is currently undertaking an extensive asset assessment project which will deliver a detailed report on the condition of buildings, land and fleet and how they are utilised.

With 312 buildings and 320 land sites across the municipality, consultants CT Management are in the middle of undertaking a comprehensive evaluation of all council assets, engaging with stakeholders to determine required use, levels of service and cost for service.

Mayor, Chris Bilkey said the project is vital in providing a clear understanding of long-term service needs.

"It's critical for the responsible management of our finances to understand what assets we have, and the state they are in."

"Depreciation of all our assets is a major item on our balance sheet, so we need to have a good handle on it," he said.

The assessment includes all building, recreational land, plant and fleet assets across Murray River Council.

Some of the project components to be delivered include:

- determine the current market and physical value for each asset
- report on the asset defects, risk, consumption, use & demand, capacity and utilisation
- future expansion or consolidation requirements of each asset
- provide a summary and long-term plan of management for each asset class
- detailed 10 year forward financial plan for renewal, upgrade, maintenance & operational expenditure
- provide a needs assessment for Councils' sports and recreation facilities based on current and future demands
- review and renew Master Plans for the Moama Recreation Reserve, Barham Recreation Reserve and Tooleybuc Recreation Reserve.

#### Where are we at?

Members of the project team have been travelling through the council area over the past few months undertaking the preliminary reviews of facilities and assets. More works are scheduled to occur during 2021, some of which will involve community and user group consultation and input.

The team are also releasing a community survey regarding use of our public sport and recreation facilities which is a great opportunity to have your say on the spaces you love in your area.

Contact will also be be made with specific user groups, interest groups and other identified groups or individuals relevant to the respective plans/locations being considered and investigated.

....then there will be lots of draft plans out for public comment in April/May. Watch this space!

For more info, you can keep an eye on our Your Say platform (*yoursay.murrayriver.nsw.gov.au*) or touch base with our Assets Team on 1300 087 004.

## **Reconnecting in River Country**

Have you spied any of council's updated tourism recovery campaign material?

'Reconnect in River Country' is councils new tourism campaign consisting of a line-up of promotional videos, imagery, signs, social media and marketing collateral.

Council's economic development and tourism team have been working behind the scenes to develop the campaign material which seeks to inspire holidaymakers – including locals - to plan their next getaway exploring the incredible natural surrounds of the region.

The 'Reconnect in River Country' campaign was made possible thanks to \$100,000 of funding under the Australian Government's Drought Communities Programme Extension, which was awarded to council to support the implementation of a campaign to encourage visitation to the region.

Mayor Chris Bilkey said council are trying to do their bit to support the local industry and inspire holidaymakers to book their next getaway in the local area.

"It's been an incredibly tough time for the tourism industry, so now's the time for us to work together and showcase our amazing region in an effort to increase visitation, overnight stays and profit."

"This campaign will help to bring new tourists to River Country in the important months that lie ahead and even remind locals of the amazing natural and cultural attractions they can visit right across the footprint," he said.

The campaign has seen the creation of a new photography and video library produced by creative agency 'We are Explorers,' who have previous experience with state and national tourism bodies.

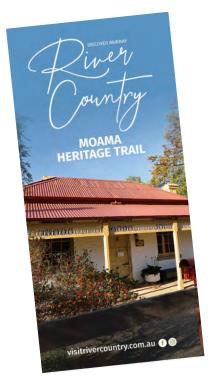
New marketing collateral has also been developed including town maps, a regional touring map, a food and wine guide, walking guide and a fishing guide.

There will also be a significant social media campaign across various platforms.

Cr Bilkey encouraged local operators to share the campaign and let visitors know that the area is open and ready for business.

"Simply sharing some posts from our social media platforms helps increase the reach of the 'Reconnect in River Country' campaign, ensuring the region stays front of mind to our regular visitors and encouraging new people to add our incredible towns to their to-visit-list," he said.

You can view the campaign material on the Visit River country YouTube channel, the website *visitrivercountry.com.au* or via the Instagram or Facebook pages: *@visitrivercountry* 









#### **Barham Pavilion surrounds**

Funded under NSW Government's Stronger Country Communities Fund and NSW Government's Showground Stimulus Funding Program.

Following the completion of the pavilion, Stage 2 development works are now also complete including construction of footpaths, park furniture, children's playground, car parking and landscaping around the new pavilion.

But not to stop there...we'll also be upgrading the new entrance via Parkman Avenue, which will include internal road upgrades and solar lighting.

## Wakool Recreation Reserve upgrades

Funded under NSW Government's Showground Stimulus Funding Program.

Works are well and truly underway to give facilities at the Wakool Recreation Reserve a freshen-up.

One of the standout improvements includes the installation of an RV dump point, which will be complimented by RV friendly signage in the town's centre and at the entrance to the showground.

Other works include replacing the existing equipment storage shed, upgrading the existing powerheads, installation of solar lighting for internal roadways, new bowling green lighting, irrigation upgrades to the main oval and re-marking the existing synthetic netball courts to provide more flexibility in their use, including tennis.

The pavilion amenities are also receiving a facelift with the installation of new plumbing fittings, new tiling, lighting, roof, floor and wall repairs, along with a fresh paint job.



## **Howard Park upgrades, Moulamein**

Funded under 2020/21 Capex Budget

The Moulamein community have been seeing movement at the Howard Park playground recently as we've been preparing the area for some new additions.

We'll be improving the park space with the addition of a new playground, BBQ shelter, footpaths, irrigation system, fences, bubbler and park furniture.

Some of the work has temporarily affected park use, but we appreciate everyone's understanding as we complete these exciting upgrades!

All elements of the work should be complete in the next few months.



■ The current playground (pictured) in Howard Park is receiving a facelift. Watch this space!

#### The little extras at Moama's Off-Leash Dog Park

The Off-leash dog park in Moama has been a welcome addition to the Moama Recreation Reserve with many people and their dogs utilising the space during recent months.

In response to community requests, the park's 'small dog area' now also has an external access gate, at the western end of the site. This allows for those smaller, timid, nervous or 'not as social' dogs to enter and exit the site without having to interact with larger or more social animals.

If you haven't yet visited, this park is a great space to provide dog owners with a safe place for their dogs to play, have fun and learn new skills. The space includes creative sensory landscapes, areas for obedience and open areas for exploration. And some shaded table areas for the pooches' two-legged friends too!



## **Community Grants Program - now open**

Applications are now being sought from community groups and not-for-profit organisations for the next round of Murray River Council's 2020/2021 Community Grants Program

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

Applicants can apply for grants of up to \$3,000 via the program.

Applications will be accepted until 4.00pm on 8 April 2021.

For information and access to the online application form, visit www.murrayriver.nsw.gov. au/community/grants/council-grant

## Is that a weed?

One of the challenges of effective weed control is knowing what is actually a weed and what's not. There is a range of resources available to help you identify what plants you have growing on your property and whether or not they might be a problem and require control.

Some weeds can look similar to native species, so if you're unsure it's always worth investigating what you have as it may help you avoid spending time and money on controlling something that is a desirable species. Some examples of plants that can be easily mistaken for each other include:

 Native sticky everlasting daisy and St Johns wort (weed)

- Native Austostipa grass species and Chilean needle grass (weed)
- Native kangaroo grass and Coolatai grass (weed).

You might like to chat to our Biosecurity Team; they can help with identifying plants and also provide advice about management of pest plants.

There are also online resources such as NSW WeedWise, available as a free phone app and online, which describes more than 300 weed species: weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au/

Information courtesy of Local Land Services.

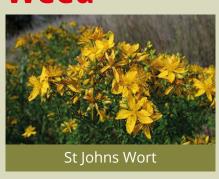
#### **Native**







#### Weed







## Let's talk budgets...

Each year from February to June, Council prepares an Operational Plan and Budget which outlines our planned activities for the coming financial year.

This year we are also reviewing our four-year Delivery Program, which translates the priorities and aspirations in our Community Strategic Plan into actions!

Whilst our budget relates to our core, planned activities this process is also your opportunity to tell us if you agree with the allocation of funds in relation to maintaining local parks and gardens, roads and footpaths, sports fields, or any other activity that is important to the community.

We encourage you to stay connected with us via Your Say Murray River and have your say on our draft budget when it's on public exhibition.

Here's the remaining budget timetable for this year:

#### March/ April

Preparation of draft 2021/22 Budget.

#### May

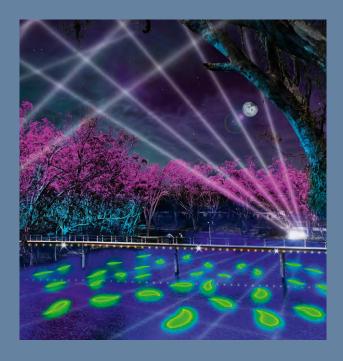
- Council meeting to adopt draft Budget
- Advertising period of 28 days for public comment and consultation.

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- Review of public comments/ feedback
- Final adoption of Budget and associated Plans by Council.



■ The budget outlines planned activities at our local parks and gardens, roads and footpaths, sports fields, and other important community activities.



# Are you ready to see the lights?

We are very excited to deliver you a new festival in May this year!

Moama Lights will be an immersive sound and light trail starting at the underside of the Echuca Moama bridge and highlighting the natural beauty through Horseshoe Lagoon and ending at the Murray River.

For the period of 8 to 22 May 2021, each night captivating light installations will transform Horseshoe Lagoon and tell the story of Echuca Moama through light and sound. The show will feature light installations and projections including theatrical fog, strobe and cutting edge moving light technology.

If you loved the lighting trail on display across the council during the Christmas period, you'll be sure to love this too!

Moama Lights is a **FREE** ticketed family event.

For more information and to secure your spot head to *visitrivercountry.com.au* 

### Let's talk trash...

In late 2019, Council employed a dedicated Waste Management Team. Over the past 12 months the team has developed a 10-year Waste Management Strategy, which was formally adopted by Council in late 2020. Implementation of the Waste Strategy is now a high priority for the team. We have also implemented the new kerbside waste collection service and for the first time in over 20 years have taken over operational control of the Moama Waste Management Facility and Mathoura Transfer Station.

As part of the new waste strategy, there is a large focus on community understanding of waste and, in turn, community education on areas where knowledge could be increased. Waste topics vary but generally encompass general household rubbish, organics (food and garden), recycling, construction and demolition materials, oils, batteries, textiles, mattresses, scrap metal, white goods, gas bottles, paper / cardboard, e-waste and glass.

#### What we need from you:

We are currently seeking feedback from the community in relation to various areas of our waste services, including kerbside collections, landfills and transfer stations. Genuine and constructive feedback is sought for suggestion on what we can do better. What waste topics you would like additional information on, any suggestions you have that could assist Council in being more environmentally responsible and sustainable in relation to waste and waste management, recycling or any other feedback or ideas you have regarding waste.

Council will also be developing a community newsletter in relation to waste. The information received as part of this community feedback will assist us in development of the newsletter.

To provide your feedback or sign up to Councils waste newsletter, email waste@murrayriver.

nsw.gov.au. All information will be captured and used to inform future community education campaigns.

#### **Kerbside Contamination**

Commercial and residential kerbside waste collection customers who place incorrect items in their bin will now be receiving letters in the mail outlining the contamination or issue occurring with their bin. Customers who do the wrong thing will also notice stickers on their bins lid outlining the issue.

If you have any queries in relation to contamination please contact Council's waste team on 1300 087 004 or email <code>waste@murrayriver.nsw.gov.au</code> with your enquiry. Please ensure you place your address and assessment number in the body of the email, so we can identify your property during the enquiry.



#### Did you know...

Our garbage trucks have cameras on them that not only allow us to see what waste you place in your bin but also if your bin was placed in the correct location and presented for collection?

If you are placing the wrong items in your bins, the trucks can identify this (in real time) and notify Council.



### Did you know...

Battery boxes to recycle household batteries are available for collection at all Murray River Council offices, landfills and transfer stations. Simply collect a box, take it home, fill it up and bring it back to any of our offices, landfills or transfer stations for free and we will organise the batteries to be recycled.



### Did you know...

Do you know about the 5 second rule for paws? If the ground is too hot for you to hold the back of your hand against the ground for 5 seconds, then the ground is too hot for your pet's paws.





#### **2021 Waste Collections Calendar**

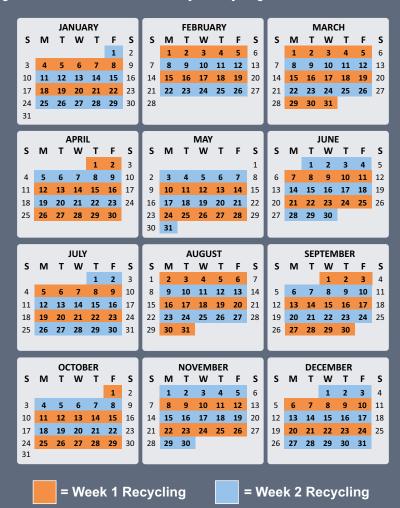
The 2021 Waste Collections Calendar magnet is now available for collection at all Murray River Council offices and Community Service locations. Alternatively, if you would like us to send you a copy in the mail please call Council on 1300 087 004 or email your contact details to <code>waste@murrayriver.nsw.gov.au</code> and request a 2021 Waste Calendar.

# 2021 Kerbside Bin Collection Calendar



How to use your NEW calendar - if you are:

- Orange Week, your recycling bin goes out on the orange shaded days
- Blue Week, your recycling bin goes out on the blue shaded days Your garbage bin goes out every week and your organics (green lid) bin goes out on the alternate week to your recycling



#### To ensure your bins are emptied please check:

 Your bins have 1m clearance from other objects and 30cm from other bins



- Your bin weighs less than 70kg
- · Your bin lid is closed



#### Are you interested in becoming a volunteer driver?

Murray River Council's Community Transport Program offers valuable and safe community transport to its residents, providing critical links to community access – social, shopping and appointment destinations.

Our service area includes residents of towns including Moama, Mathoura, Bunnalloo and remote, Barham, Wakool, Moulamein and remote, Murray Downs and remote, Tooleybuc and remote.

We are always on the lookout for potential volunteer community transport drivers to assist us to deliver this valuable service.

#### Could this be you?

For more information please contact Christine Dunn/Moama on 0438 524 808 or Leanne Orr/Barham on 0427 991 842.





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To the Householder