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AND MORE...

**Moulamein Courthouse.
Photograph courtesy
We are Explorers**

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Message from the Mayor

I'm pleased to invite you to view our proposed budget for 2021/22.

As always- we want to hear from you on whether we got it right!

The draft budget is available for viewing on Your Say Murray River, where you can find all the documents and see what we're planning for the upcoming financial year.

Last year we aligned our rates, this year the fees and charges have their turn; meaning there won't be different charges for former Murray and former Wakool as of July 1.

One of the more notable changes involves the raw water usage charges in the Wakool Ward, so we've covered off on a few of the frequently asked questions relating to this in this edition.

I encourage you to view the draft budget and make a submission.

Council continues to be successful in attracting State Government support for the replacement of its remaining timber bridges, which have long been crying out for stronger wider alternatives. We were recently awarded funding to the tune of \$4.8 million to replace 5 of the remaining relics of the early 20th century (or maybe even earlier!). All users of these crossings, from farmers, locals, truckies and bus drivers will welcome their departure. More on that in this edition too.

And finally, border issues have come into sharp focus this last year with the chaos that COVID and the closures have brought to our communities. We certainly hope that the worst of that is behind us.

But let me introduce another border issue to you...

Did you know that Victorian accredited building surveyors cannot work in NSW without undertaking NSW accreditation? And that such accreditation takes upwards of 6



months to achieve? This is one of the many border anomalies that we battle every day, one that has a major impact on our ability to attract qualified building surveyors. That is in a background of a national shortage of these professionals. As a result, we are suffering from a backlog of inspections that is holding up our approval times.

Outsourcing this work to private certifiers has been one option for us in the past, but they are all up to their ears in work as well. To alleviate the situation longer-term we have two cadet positions currently filled, but they have another 12 months to go in their training before they can operate on their own.

With Development Applications up some 40% on last year, it's little wonder that our staff are feeling the pinch a tad. Nonetheless they are working hard to review and approve applications as quickly as they can.

We understand that there will be some frustration at times when approvals don't come through as quickly as people would like. Please be assured that our staff are striving to bring those processes to completion as quickly as possible.

Cr Chris Bilkey



The project updates...

Here are some updates on just a few of the community infrastructure projects we are continuing to deliver!

Murray Downs Footpath

Funded under the Australian Government's Regional Growth Fund and NSW Government's Stronger Country Communities Fund

The shared path at Murray Downs will receive an extension with the next stage from Kidman Reid Drive to Swan Hill road due to be upgraded this month! Previous work connected the residents to the Murray Downs Resort. The next stage will complete around 50% of the distance back to the Swan Hill Bridge.



Wakool Recreation Reserve

Supported by the NSW Government's Showgrounds Stimulus Program and the Australian Government's Drought Communities Program

Wakool Recreation Reserve has undergone lots of improvements for the local community over recent months. The new LED lighting, irrigation upgrades, installation of power outlets for overnight stays, dump ezy and upgrades to the Pavilion toilets and showers to allow public access will enhance opportunities for the community to host visitors and events. This is also complemented by the recent upgrades at the Bowling Club.



Howard Park Moulamein

Upgrades continue at Howard Park. The recent installation of the shelter, BBQ and playground have all added to the appeal of the local park space. New footpaths have allowed better access and staff are now continuing to work in the space to deliver new furniture and a bubbler for the community. Remaining works include fencing, irrigation and new turf. This is all due for completion by June 30 and is funded via Council's Capital Works Budget.



LIKE US ON
FACEBOOK

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

Mensforth Park Tooleybuc

Funded under NSW Government's Stronger Communities Fund and Australian Government's Regional Growth Fund

Final designs have been received for Stage Two at Mensforth Park in Tooleybuc. After a lengthy design and consultation process with the Tooleybuc Secondary School students, Council is ready to begin construction on the 'Youth Space'.

Inclusive to the design is a new 40m flying fox, footpaths, a "hang out space" and landscaping. The design allows opportunities for further improvements such as a free skating area, outdoor stage and also includes an outdoor table tennis table. Construction started earlier this month.



Barham Recreation Reserve

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

The improvements continue at Barham Recreation Reserve with the inclusion and creation of a new entry from Parkman Avenue. Working in with the sealing of Parkman Avenue, the new entry will improve safety and functionality for the Reserve during larger events.

Other upgrades include the internal roads, drainage and further landscaping to improve the amenity of the area. To date, completed works have included the Pavilion, playground, footpaths, irrigation, fencing, solar lighting and landscaping.



Moama Botanic Gardens

Stage five of the gardens has commenced, and work is progressing well. The designs were completed by landscape architect consultants and include a 3.5 meter lookout. The works will complete the western aspect of the gardens and provide connectivity around the space. Earthworks are ongoing with the important construction of the mound using large landscape rock sourced from the Castlemaine area. Works in the space will continue and are funded via Council's Capital Works Budget.



Winbi Park Moama

The local Winbi Park has been upgraded with the addition of irrigation and turf to make the space nice and green for the local community!

Council staff will continue to improve the space through mulching and revegetation.



Raw water charges update - Wakool Ward

We recently wrapped up the installation stage of our smart meter project, with raw water meters now in the ground at connections right across the council.

The finalisation of this meter installation also ties in with our 21/22 budget, where residents will see the same fees and charges applied right across the council; a final step in amalgamating services between former Murray and Wakool.

One notable change relates to raw water charges in the Wakool Ward (former Wakool Shire) following the installation of raw water meters in Barham, Moulamein, Tooleybuc and Murray Downs.

We've had a few regular questions pop-up from residents relating to this, so we've included these below for information.

What is changing?

Residents and businesses with a raw water connection in Barham, Moulamein, Tooleybuc and Murray Downs would recently have had a raw water meter installed. Prior to the installation of the raw water meters you were being charged a single flat rate based on the size of your connection.

Now that raw water consumption is being metered, from July 1 2021 you'll be charged a reduced access charge based on the size of your connection and also the amount of water used, similar to the way filtered water is being charged.

Why did council place meters on raw water services that weren't previously metered?

Measuring water is the best way to effectively manage our water delivery system. It helps us to:

- access precise information about how much water is being used so that we can understand the real impacts of our water use,
- adequately plan for maintenance and upgrades to water infrastructure and services by accurately measuring the water people are using,
- become more efficient with our water usage, learning about optimising water efficiency, and setting water consumption targets.

As we are also harmonising rates and charges across the council; having a meter on the raw water ensures equity for all water users.

How much will my bill cost once my raw water is metered?

This is very hard to predict and will be different for every household- similar to filtered water.

It is anticipated that the average user should expect to pay a similar price for raw water usage as they do now as the annual access fee is at a reduced rate. This will of course vary slightly between users and the choices made around water use.

For information, the raw water usage charges are at a lower rate than filtered water.

As an example:

Currently a typical residential property (20mm connection) pays an annual connection charge of \$595.45 with no usage charge. From July 1 2021, the annual connection charge for 20mm will reduce to \$114.62 with a usage rate of \$0.816 per kilolitre. This will mean that customers who use less than the average use (600 kilolitres per year) will expect to have a similar bill... while those with a higher use will have a larger bill.

What about watering my nature strip?

It is up to you if you wish to water your nature strip or not. We appreciate that in some areas unmetered raw water access has meant thorough watering of nature strips, however we always encourage residents to be water wise where possible.

Public parks and reserves will continue to be watered and maintained as per usual. This will be metered and charged to council accordingly.

Calling local youth!

Do you know a young person interested in planning youth activities and events?

Our Youth Engagement Officer Elisha is looking for passionate and creative people to join our Youth Reference Group. If this sounds perfect for someone you know, get them to contact Elisha on 0427 736 094 or YEP@murrayriver.nsw.gov.au



Master Plan Reviews

Council has engaged consultants CT Management to undertake a review of our current and future demands for recreation spaces across our area.

As part of the project, the Moama, Barham and Tooleybuc Recreation Reserves will receive a full master plan review so that we can plan for the future needs of local communities.

CT Management and staff have recently consulted with all committees around the council to ensure the community has representation in the process. Further to this, a recent survey was conducted to gather as much feedback as possible to gauge current and future usage needs.

The review is still underway and information continues to flow in. Next stage of the master plan reviews will be the inclusion of landscape designs which will then be presented to the community groups to provide further comment on.

The project will allow Council to plan for the future and ensure the development of recreation spaces is sustainable into the future...whilst also meeting the needs of all communities.

Watch this space!

The 2021 Australian Liveability Census. Have your say, pave the way

In 2021, Place Score, with support from the Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources, is running the Australian Liveability Census - Australia's largest social research project, running from 24th March to June 30, 2021.

In no time, you can ensure our community has a voice in this national research. By responding, you'll get the chance to win 1 of 10 \$100 vouchers to be used in over 80 retailers.

So have your say today and pave the way for things that matter to your community every day.

www.placescore.org/dc



Your Community Services

Murray River Council is served by a multitude of State and Commonwealth Government services.

This edition we are highlighting services delivered by our Community Services Team and Intereach.



Murray River Council Community Services

- Services to frail-aged persons living within the community
- Community Transport to persons isolated from public transport options
- Youth Engagement Program to offer opportunities for personal development and individual support

Call the Team on 1300 087 004 or visit www.murrayriver.nsw.gov.au



Intereach offers a wide range of services, support and information for children and families, people with a disability, older people, community and mental health.

They have 17 office locations including Deniliquin, Balranald, Swan Hill and Echuca, with staff regularly visiting Murray River Council towns. For more information: 1300 488 226 or www.intereach.com.au



Coming soon! Mobile library and service centre

Did you know we will soon have our own mobile library and service centre?

Council was awarded funding under the 2019/2020 Public Library Infrastructure Program to invest in a mobile library truck, which will offer access to services for residents in our remote communities.

The mobile library will offer:

- Library services
- Access to council services and information; such as paying accounts, forms or items on display
- Access to online government portals
- Community information.

Community demand for information and technology access points means the mobile centre will not only operate as a library but as a mobile community hub too!

It hits the road in the new financial year. Stay tuned!



Our budget - have your say



Our 2021-22 Draft Operational Plan and Budget is now on display- and we invite you to let us know what you think.

You'll also find our four-year Delivery Program too, which is the plan that translates the priorities identified in our Community Strategic Plan into actions!

Since the harmonisation of rates at our last budget period, Council has also been working towards harmonising service fees and charges. And we're almost there!

As part of our 21/22 budget, residents will see the same fees and charges applied right across the council.

This is one of the final steps of amalgamating services between former Murray and Wakool.

So....with a number of draft budget and operational documents on display, we encourage you to take a look.

The column to the right lists the ways you can access documents and how you can have your say.

Don't miss your chance to have your say whilst it's on display.

LET US KNOW WHAT YOU THINK

We're encouraging residents to take a look at our budget documents and provide feedback where relevant.

All documents can be found at yoursay.murrayriver.nsw.gov.au

You can have your say:

Online

Via the submissions tool on the Your Say platform.

Mail

You can send your submission to PO BOX, 906, Moama, 2731

Email

admin@murrayriver.nsw.gov.au

Got questions?

You can ask to speak to our Finance Manager by calling 1300 087 004.

The final 2021-22 Draft Operational Plan and Budget will be adopted at a special council meeting in June.



Timber bridges on the road to completion

Council recently secured \$4,820,000 of funding from the NSW Government's Fixing Country Bridges Program.

This will support our ongoing timber bridge replacement program, enabling the replacement of 5 additional bridges.

These include:

- Rangemore Road/Jimaringle Creek Bridge, – (with 50% funding from the Australian Government's Bridges Renewal Program),
- Sandys Bridge Road/Barber Creek Bridge
- Drysdale Lane/Merran Creek Bridge
- Frasers Road/Murrair Yarrein Creek Bridge
- Tooranie Road/Yarrein Creek Bridge

With the contracts already awarded for the construction of other remaining bridges including Nacurrie Road North/Middle Creek Bridge, Nacurrie

Rd South/Merran Creek Bridge and Rangemore Road/Jimaringle Creek Bridge, we are now set to have all remaining timber bridges replaced in the next two years!

"This milestone will be welcome news to locals who have waited patiently for the replacement of the timber structures," Mayor Cr Chris Bilkey said.

"The bridges have certainly been a big priority for us here at Council for many years, so this funding really supports our efforts to improve safety on our bridge network and better support freight travel in the region."

The replacement bridges are designed for higher mass limit capacity and have a design life of one hundred years.

When complete the new bridges will improve heavy vehicle access, enhance high productivity freight movement and provide that vital link to the arterial and regional road network for movement of farm produce, including grain and livestock.



■ Council is now set to have all remaining timber bridges in need of repairs replaced in the next two years! This includes the Nacurrie Road North/Middle Creek Bridge, pictured here before removal.

Weed updates

The winter weeds

Our weeds officers are now out on the roads targeting the Winter weeds including Boxthorns, Horehound and Bridal Creeper...to name a few!

We are also now conducting more private property inspections too. In the on-going battle against the weeds, prevention needs to focus on stopping weeds entering and becoming established on properties; now is the optimum time for control.

All weeds, both on roadside and private property, are being mapped and reported back to NSW DPI on a monthly basis. These then go on the State Register, with the priority weeds uploaded to the NSW weed-wise website.

The aquatic weeds

Council has recently received \$20,000 to target aquatic weeds along a 550km stretch of the Murray River.

Funded via NSW Government Local Land Services, the funding will support council in our efforts to control pesky river weeds including Water lilies, Sagittaria, Noogoora Burr and Blackberry.

Control works are now taking place until the end of June.

For all things weeds, please speak to our biosecurity team on 1300 087 004.



■ You'll see our Weeds Team out-and-about battling the Winter Weeds.



A new rebate can help small businesses reduce running costs

The NSW Government's \$1,500 Small Business Fees and Charges Rebate can help small businesses, sole traders and not-for-profit organisations with the cost of government fees and charges.

Eligible businesses can use the rebate to claim back the cost of NSW and local government fees and charges up to \$1,500.

The Small Business Fees and Charges Rebate is available from 1 April 2021 until 30 June 2022 for eligible fees and charges due and paid from 1 March 2021.

How to apply

To view the full eligibility criteria and apply, visit <https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/small-business-fees-and-charges-rebate>.

You can also call 13 77 88 to speak with a Service NSW Business Concierge.

Barking dogs

This year we have seen a notable increase in the number of complaints received by Council in relation to barking dogs.

There are a number of reasons why a dog barks, including:

- Weather changes / Thunderstorms
- People returning to work / no longer working from home
- Intruders onto their owner's property
- Feeling stressed or feeling their owner's stress
- Feeling unwell
- Hungry, thirsty, on the wrong diet or generally neglected
- Untrained
- Under exercised or not exercised at all
- Chained to a fixed point without enough room to move, or kept in a space which is too small
- Victim of abuse.

Compassion and common sense can eliminate many causes of excessive barking. By doing the following thing you can lessen excessive barking:

- Ensure your dog has enough space to move freely in an enclosed backyard
- If your dog has to be chained, it should be on a running chain
- Make sure there is a space that is their own that is waterproof and ventilated. Under section 8 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979, a dog must be provided with adequate shelter that protects them from wind, rain and sunshine
- Provide your dog with regular and adequate exercise according to their breed and size.

For further information check out the NSW EPA Dealing with barking dogs website.

www.epa.nsw.gov.au/your-environment/noise/neighbourhood-noise/dealing-with-barking-dogs



In late 2020 Council's Waste Team applied for an Organics Grant through the NSW Environmental Trust to roll-out and begin collecting food and garden organics from the western and central districts of Councils Local Government Area. We recently received notification we were successful in this application.

This \$321,914 grant will work in conjunction with the previously attained organics grant, which saw green bins rolled out to Moama and Mathoura kerbside waste customers several years ago.

We aim to begin collecting Food Organics Garden Organics or FOGO from all residential kerbside waste customers in early 2022. Keep an eye on our Facebook page, website and local print media for more information as it comes to hand.

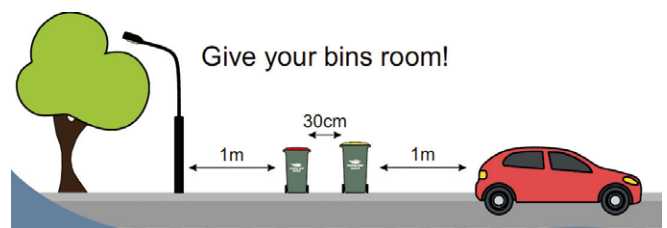


This project is supported by the Environmental Trust as part of the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment Waste Less, Recycle More initiative funded from the waste levy.

Did you know...

Did you know your bins need to be placed a minimum of 300mm apart to allow the truck to pick them up?

They also need to be a minimum of 1m away from obstacles such as basketball and netball hoops, parked cars, caravans, boats or streetlights. It's important to place your bins on the kerbside correctly to ensure they are emptied each week.



Waste Services Policy

In October 2020, Council formally adopted a mandatory Waste Services Policy.

Under section 496 of the *Local Government Act 1993*, a Council must make and levy an annual charge for the provision of domestic waste management (DWM) services for each parcel of rateable land for which the service is available.

This means, if a garbage, recycling or organics collection truck drives past your house or land then there is a mandatory charge for your property for Domestic Waste Management. There are two charges, one for vacant land and one for land that contains a dwelling.

The adopted policy states the domestic waste management service includes a weekly 140Lt garbage service and a 240Lt fortnightly recycling service. A 240Lt organics bin is also provided depending on service availability.

Did you know...

Did you know that grapes and raisins are toxic for dogs?

With grape growing season well underway and many areas within the region having either large or small-scale viticulture occurring, it's important to remember to keep our dogs away from the grapes.

If your dog does ingest grapes seek medical advice from your local vet as soon as possible.



Have you paid a visit to our *Visit River Country* website yet?

This is one of the key sources of information on all-things-tourism... and it's not just for the visitors!

Now that we are able to get out-and-about again, why not be a tourist in your own backyard and discover some of the great things on offer in your neighbouring towns?

By heading to our Visit River Country site you'll find a wide variety of events, nature-based activities, cultural experiences and "must-see" attractions right across our Council area.

You can also keep up-to-date on new events, facilities or destination information via our River Country Facebook and Instagram pages.

Go on, check it out... and share it with your friends and relatives!

🌐 www.visitrivercountry.com.au

f @visitrivercountry

📷 @visitrivercountry



Dine and discover before 30 June

NSW residents can apply online to receive Dine and Discover vouchers.

Every NSW resident aged 18 and over is eligible for four \$25 vouchers worth \$100 in total, to spend in participating businesses. The program ends on 30 June.



Dine & Discover NSW vouchers are divided into two categories:

- two \$25 vouchers to be used for eating in at restaurants, cafes, bars, pubs and clubs 7 days a week, excluding public holidays
- two \$25 vouchers to be used for entertainment and recreation, including cultural institutions, live music, and arts venues, available 7 days a week, excluding public holidays.

Businesses can register to participate in the program at any time and vouchers are valid until 30 June 2021.

The vouchers can only be used at eligible businesses that have implemented a COVID Safety Plan and are registered as COVID Safe.

Find out more at www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19-coronavirus/dine-discover-nsw

We've got plans and projects awaiting your influence....

Have you registered on our online engagement platform yet?

Your Say Murray River is Council's online community where you can participate in the future of your neighbourhood, local community and our area.

Why engage with council online?

There's heaps of benefits of connecting with us via Your Say, and it's a chance to bring a more diverse range of people into the conversation. And...

- You don't have to attend community meetings at a set place and time, you can contribute at a time and place that suits you.
- It's a quick, safe and convenient way to have your say on a range of issues and topics.



- It's a great way to keep up to date and contribute your views on issues affecting your community.
- You can see what other community members think about an issue or topic, respond with your own views and engage in a discussion.
- It allows for a range of different people, with different views to discuss matters that impact on their community.

Sign up, stay engaged and help shape the future of Murray River Council.

➡ yoursay.murrayriver.nsw.gov.au

Need help finding grants?

Council has launched a Grants Hub for all businesses, community groups and not-for-profits located in Murray River Council.

The Hub provides a comprehensive list of all grant and funding opportunities available Australia wide. This is a FREE service...all you have to do is register and start searching! Once registered, it will send you email alerts with new funding opportunities.

<https://murrayriver.grantguru.com.au/>

Did you know you can receive your rates notice electronically?

eNotices allows you to self-manage all your properties, send notices to multiple email addresses and print off additional copies!

To register, simply find the eNotices logo and your individual reference number on your rates notice, then head to murrayriver.enotices.com.au



Receive your rates notices via email

Sign up for >  eNotices



Watch our councillors in action

If you have a burning interest in how Council meetings proceed, how debate evolves and decisions are made, you can watch our council meetings on the web.

All council meetings are live-streamed from the Council Chambers in Moama.

"This has been up and running for over a year now and has helped us connect with a broader range of our community," Mayor Cr Chris Bilkey said.

"It provides greater transparency of Council decisions so people who cannot attend meetings can watch them from the comfort of their home."

All ordinary and extraordinary Meetings of council will be recorded.

Confidential Sessions of Meetings that are closed to the public in accordance with Section 10A of the Local Government Act 1993 will not be webcast.

Future meeting dates until the new council come on board are:

Tuesday 22 June at 2pm

Tuesday 27 July at 2pm

Tuesday 24 August 2pm

Tuesday 28 September at 2pm

If you want to see what happens at council meetings, head to our website and follow the link to our channel.

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

Save the date

2021 NSW Local Government elections

**Saturday
4 September**

Voting is compulsory

**elections.nsw.gov.au/lge21
1300 135 736**

Interested in becoming a councillor?

If you are passionate about what happens in your local community, becoming a councillor is an opportunity to make a difference and to represent the interests of residents.

For more detailed information on the process, visit the NSW Electoral Commission (NSWEC) website at www.elections.nsw.gov.au.



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To the Householder