During the past few months Murray River Council has been talking with our residents around a number of topics which affect council and our community. This includes our 2017/18 budget, Disability Inclusion Action Plan and shaping our council’s future.

We’d like to thank everyone who provided their input – we received valuable feedback around all these topics, all of which will be used to draft our future plans.

■ Residents have their say on council’s future direction.

■ Residents tell us how they want to engage with council.

See inside for the full story...
Contact council

Phone
1300 087 004
www.murrayriver.nsw.gov.au
admin@murrayriver.nsw.gov.au

All correspondence addressed to:
The General Manager
PO Box 21
Mathoura NSW 2710

Operating hours
Barham Office
15 Murray Street
Barham NSW 2732
Mon-Fri: 9am to 5pm

Mathoura Office
21-25 Conargo Street
Mathoura NSW 2710
Mon-Fri: 9.30am to 4pm

Moama Office
6 Meninya Street
Moama NSW 2731
Mon-Fri: 9am to 4pm

Moulamein Office
Tualka Terrace
Moulamein NSW 2733
Mon-Fri: 9am to 5pm

Mathoura Visitor & Business Centre
Cobb Highway
Mathoura NSW 2710
e: info@mathoura.com.au
Mon to Fri: 8.30am-4.30pm, Sat & Public Holiday: 10am-2pm, Sun: 11am to 3pm

Moulamein Business Centre
Morago Street
Moulamein NSW 2733
Mon-Fri: 9am to 1pm

Murray River Council
Organisational structure

DAVID SHAW
Administrator

MARGOT STORK
General Manager

SIMON ARKININSTALL
Director Environmental Service

BRYCE CRAGGS
Executive Director Business Support and Organisation Development

LEIGH ROBINS
Director Engineering

PETER ARTHUR
Director Corporate Services (Greater Wakool Ward)

PHIL HIGGINS
Director Corporate Services (Greater Murray/ Moama Wards)

STEPHEN PYKETT
Manager Economic Development and Tourism

DI COTTRELL
Project Management Office

JACKIE WARREN
Manager Community Services
Listening to our community

From front page...

In February we asked you to help shape council’s future, including input into our mission and vision statements, community strategic plan and community engagement strategy. These documents set the agenda for our council and community, identifying priorities, aspirations and our vision for the future.

Through forums across our Murray River Council land area and a survey, you gave us some great ideas and also let us know the concerns, issues and challenges our community face. This vital information collected will help us develop future plans and strategies.

Once the new mission and vision statement, community strategic plan and community engagement strategy are complete, you’ll get to have your say, with a second round of community consultations planned. The documents will be finalised by 1 July this year.

Also in January, we asked for your help in developing our 2017/18 budget, guiding the allocation of council resources for the coming year. We were particularly interested in your thoughts around council assets such as buildings, facilities and roads.

With submissions closing on the 17 February, the draft budget is now being prepared by our officers, to be released for public comment at council’s ordinary meeting in May.

After the public comment period, the draft budget, including any changes as a result of your feedback, will go back to an ordinary meeting for council to consider and formally adopt.

Our community has also provided important feedback around how we can improve access, information and services for people with a disability. This feedback was received through a short online survey, public meetings and informal drop-in sessions.

Your thoughts and comments will feed into our Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP). The DIAP guides how council can make our services and facilities more inclusive. It also outlines what our region can do to give visibility to disability issues and ensure they’re included in the development and implementation of policies.

Once the DIAP is prepared, the draft document will be released for your comment. After the feedback period, the DIAP will be presented at an ordinary meeting for council’s consideration.

ClubGRANTS funding now open

ClubGRANTS Category 1 funding for 2016/2017 is now open to community groups in our region.

Applications for the funding close on Wednesday 31 May 2017 and can be made under these categories:

- supports community welfare and social services
- community development
- employment assistance activities
- community health services
- projects aimed at improving living standards of low income and disadvantaged people

Last year in NSW more than $100M was given through ClubGRANTS funding, helping thousands of community organisations, charities and sporting groups.

We oversee two ClubGRANTS committees – one in the Greater Murray/Moama wards and one in the Greater Wakool Ward. The committees, which involve the major clubs in our council area, provide recommendations around eligible community projects.

In 2015/2016, the combined clubs in the Greater Murray/Moama Wards gave more than $200K through ClubGRANTS to a number of community projects. In the Greater Wakool Ward more than $93K was provided through the funding program.

For more information on ClubGRANTS call Kerri Keogh on 03 5880 3500 (Greater Murray/Moama wards) or Senay Uzal on 03 5887 5007 (Greater Wakool Ward).
It's been another three months with our nose to the grind stone. There's been a huge variety of community events, from festive celebrations, Australia Day, a slew of festivals that celebrate our produce, wine, music and natural surrounds, to more recent events to mark Seniors’ Week and International Women’s Day. I'd like to acknowledge the vast array of council staff, community groups and volunteers that dedicate their time to make these events happen each and every year. I'd like to congratulate all of our Australia Day recipients, particularly, citizen of the year recipients and former councillors, Lois Lockhart and Betty Murphy.

September is fast approaching, and our residents can rest assured that our staff are doing everything we can to ensure that Murray River Council is positioned for success when it's time for me to hand the reins over to the new councillors.

To-date, much of what we are doing has been behind the scenes, setting up IT and finance systems, conducting internal service reviews seeking input from our staff about how we can improve service delivery. In the coming months, with the roll out of a new website, more online services and streamlined ‘in person’ services our residents should soon see the results and reap the benefits of what all this hard work has been about.

We've been stepping up our efforts to consult with our residents on a range of issues as we start to solidify our community’s vision for our future and what Murray River Council needs to do to get us there. We're talking to our community about our 10 year rolling community strategic plan, budgets, community engagement and disability inclusion to name a few.

The driving force behind any changes being made to services or forward planning must be in the interests of the rate payers and residents we serve. The insights from all these consultations and surveys will help us pinpoint services and priorities that are most valued by our community, and focus our efforts where improvements can be made. While we are still going through the feedback, initial impressions of what our community wants has some clear themes, including

• bridge works
• increased focus on community consultation and engagement
• keeping the community informed – particularly through emails or the web
• making it easier to access services
• the condition of local streets and footpaths, particularly unsealed roads
• being transparent about what and how decisions are made

Your local representatives

The Local Representation Committee (LRC) represents community views on merger issues, such as our vision, mission and strategic priorities. You can email LRC@murrayriver.nsw.gov.au to discuss your views.

Jason Russell
CHAIR

Katarni Lipp
DEPUTY CHAIR
making sure there are the right systems, checks and balances to ensure we are a well-run and managed council now and into the future

Last, but certainly not least, I’d like to congratulate our interim General Manager, Margot Stork for winning the Minister’s 2017 Award for NSW Women in Local Government (senior staff member - rural or regional council category). Margot has been recognised for the instrumental role she has played successfully driving the Murray River Council amalgamation. On behalf of myself and all of council I’d like to thank Margot for her hard work and commitment to making Murray River Council a success.

David Shaw
Administrator

Congratulations to interim General Manager, Margot Stork for winning the 2017 Award for NSW Women in Local Government (senior staff member - rural or regional council category) - celebrating the contributions of women to local government in NSW.

The award recognises the hard work of women working in our local councils, who make a positive difference in their local areas and we are thrilled that Margot has been recognised for the instrumental role she has played in the successful delivery of the Murray River Council transition process – amalgamating the former Murray Shire Council and former Wakool Shire Council.

Under Margot’s leadership our council is often highlighted as an example of a rural council exceeding the Department of Premier and Cabinet expectations, delivering the milestones in the implementation program of the stronger council agenda. In doing so, Margot has demonstrated an understanding of the complexity of both technical and human processes required for major reform.

Margot is a wonderful role model for all staff, male and female – leading by example. Margot exemplifies what women in local government can achieve through great skill, knowledge, hard work, commitment and tenacity.
Following the expressions of interest process that closed in September 2016, council received 56 expressions of interest representing over $50M worth of activities. At an extraordinary council meeting on 22 December 2016, a shortlist of 11 projects were invited to proceed to full application for the $9M in funding from the NSW Stronger Community Major Projects Program. Work has commenced with each of the community project members to develop the full applications with assistance from council and an external project manager. These applications will then be assessed by an independent panel and recommendations for funding made to council.

Our economic development team will work to help community members that were unsuccessful to find alternative funding sources.

The major projects funding is the second phase of the Stronger Community Fund. The community grants program has already allocated just over $1M of funding to community groups. Among the recipients of the community grants program was the Barham Koondrook Festival Group's River Daze music, wine and food extravaganza. The event, which was held on 4 March, was granted $15K through the fund, ensuring it was able to reach its potential as a family-friendly event, while boosting the wellbeing of rural families.

Our community can now enjoy a new shelter, additional seating and in-built barbecue at the Koondrook Pool thanks to $38.2K in funding. Headed by a group of volunteers, the community-run pool is an important cross-border facility. It offers swimming lessons, school carnivals, swim club and fitness for our residents in Barham, Wakool and surrounding rural districts.

The youth-based and run Moama and Mathoura Community Skate Park Committee have been given support to develop community events with a $4.5K grant towards skate park events. The funding will not only give the committee project management skills, but will also promote positive social interactions. An event is already in the works to celebrate NSW Youth Week (31 March to 9 April 2017), with a skate park meet, demonstration and community celebration.
Community Living and Respite Services have been given $50K support towards the development of its Murray River Tea Rooms, which will include an opportunity shop. Expected to be in full operation by mid 2019, the tea rooms will provide an opportunity for people with a disability from Moama and surrounds to develop skills around retail, customer service, cooking and hospitality.

The first steps in providing dental services to Barham and surrounding communities has been realised thanks to a $50K grant. The $55K project by the volunteer Local Health Medical Trust is expected to be fully set up by June 2019. It will adjoin the current medical centre, with the Trust to buy an additional suite for the dental services.

Moulamein Preschool’s building will be extended and refurbished through a $50K injection, enabling stage 1 of the overall $166.3K project to be completed. Stage 2 of the project will see the construction of an additional room to run day care alongside the existing preschool program. The preschool currently offers a 3 and 4-year-old program two days a week, 40 weeks of the year. The intention is to offer services five days a week for children aged five months to six years.

Murray River Council has received the tick of approval from our ratepayers. In response to a survey, we were ranked as one of the best-performing amalgamated bodies in NSW.

According to the survey report, our top three performance areas were the appearance of public areas, water and sewerage and waste management.

In a phone survey conducted by a 3rd party on behalf of Murray River Council, 400 residents rated us as ‘significantly higher’ than other councils. Half the respondents rated council as either good or very good.

We received an index score of 61 out of 100 – above the regional/rural average for newly-formed councils (56 out of 100) and the state-wide index score of 58.

Areas we need to improve on include being a well-run and managed council, maintenance of unsealed roads and providing rate payers value for money.

We will work harder to communicate with you on these areas and will also look for opportunities where we can improve these results.

We’d like to thank everyone who participated in the survey and took the time to provide feedback. By telling us what you think, it helps us better understand what our community wants and needs from their council.

The survey results will also be used by us as a benchmark in the future, to ensure we are on track and see what we’ve achieved.

The satisfaction survey took place in late September and early October. The survey’s sample size was 400 adult residents aged 18 years and over, and was representative of the female/male population in the local area.
World of works

New construction

• Thyra Road (from 23.8km to 24.7km)
• Barham Road (from 29.7km to 30.9km - pavement works)
• Cobb Highway (segment 75, near Moira Station – pavement works)
• Bunnaloo Road (21.6km to 22.6km – installing culvert and reconstruction works)
• Moulamein Road (pavement, travel lane, shoulder widening and road sealed)
• Noorong road (pavement rehabilitation in two sections)
• Murrabit Road (pavement rehabilitation and guard rail renewal connecting to Gonn crossing bridge).
• Lawrence Street (kerb and gutter replacement 40m from Mathoura Street going east)
• Livingston Street (kerb and gutter replacement 20m from the pharmacy going north and 20m from Lawrence Street going south)
• Wakool Road Black Spot (shoulder widening and rehabilitation of base layers)
• Kirchhofer Street pump station No. 29 replacement
• transfer station filter odour control bed replacement
• Moama Raw Water Tower cleaning

Ongoing maintenance works:

Resealing works have been underway across the whole council:

• Cobb Highway
• Wakool Road
• Perricoota Road
• Barmah Road
• Barham/Moama Road
• Kyalite Road
• Barham Deniliquin Road

General maintenance grading and gravel resheeting of our unsealed roads networks, as well as pothole patching of our sealed road networks continues in the aftermath of the flood.

Water and sewer maintenance works are underway. We are flushing water mains and cleaning the sewer pump station, as well as pruning trees at Barham’s treatment plant.

Recently completed

• Blair Street kerb and gutter replacement – from Francis Street to Moama Bowling Club
• Bunnaloo Road (1km reconstructed from 4 - 5km)
• Noorong Road (700m reconstructed from 55.6km to 56.3km)
• Noorong Street kerb and shoulder
• Moulamein Road kerb and shoulder at Barham
• Picnic Point Boat Ramp Car Park (drainage, carpark and line marking and landscaping works have begun)
• Murray Downs new water main (160m bored under Murray River)
• Moama raw water intake pump rebuilt
• Murray Street, Barham, Sewer main replaced

Featured projects

Moulamein Road upgrade

Murray River Council’s Roads to Recovery and REPAIR program will see Moulamein Road in Barham receive a much-needed $1.7M upgrade.

At the moment, the unsealed road is prone to low-level flooding during the wetter months and dust during the dry summer season, which has sometimes been hazardous.

The initial stage of the project has been completed, including installation of a 1075m stormwater drain, as well as pollutant traps to easily remove any future litter from the drain.
Second stage works are underway, with construction of a 1400m kerb and gutter, which will include 32 driveway crossings (completed at the end of last year), and paving.

The works, which are expected to be finished by June, will provide an important upgrade to the road, ensuring residents and tourists in our region will be able to travel more safely.

**Barham kerb upgrade**

Parents and students at Barham Public School have a safer school drop-off and pick-up zone thanks to upgrades to the kerbside. Years of damage to the kerb and gutter caused by Ash trees planted along the footpath of Noorong Street has now been fixed. The works included the replacement and improvement of 173m of kerb and gutter at the school’s entrance.

Work on the kerb and gutter replacement started in late January and was completed in February.

The Ash trees along the fence line will be replaced and more suitable trees will be planted providing shade and shelter – without damaging our drains, gutters and infrastructure.

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**Flood recovering funding welcomed**

Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) has announced $500K in funding relief for Murray River Council to repair local roads.

The funding will go towards kick-starting road network repairs after last year’s flooding saw damage to many of our council roads across the region.

This funding is very much welcome news as financial assistance is a key part towards our recovery and rebuilding efforts.

The $500K is on top of the $13M grant announced in early October last year. The $13M is being shared among 21 councils that were declared eligible for the NSW Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery arrangements.

Last year’s flooding across the region affected many areas of our council – including the farming community, tourism operators and residents. Properties were also inundated, while roads were cut off.

Repairing the damage to our road network is a huge task that spans a large geographical area. Our team is progressing these works as quickly as possible.

An allocation of $500K will be used to repair Nullabooma Road, Moulamein Road, Bunnaloo Road, Caldwell Line Road and culvert construction on our various council roads.

We’ve assessed the full extent of damage in our towns and rural areas caused by the flood water, we estimate recovery works in Murray River Council to be in the vicinity of $2.5M.

RMS assessed the road damage as the administrators of the NSW Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery funds.

All levels of government are working together to help affected communities get the support they need so they can get back on their feet as soon as possible. Knowing council will have these funds available goes a long way to helping achieve this.

Engineering standards have also come a long way in the 50 years since the levee banks in Moulamein and Barham were constructed. So we’ll also be seeking funding from the Office of Environment and Heritage to re-design these levee banks to ensure their future integrity.

Completion of last year’s road recovery works include Wakool Road, which was submerged under 500mm of water at the peak of the flood event, Colligen Creek Road and Millewa Road (gravel had been washed away on both roads).

Aratula Road pavement was repaired after overflow from the Tuppal and Bullatale Creeks damaged the road’s seal. Rock repair works also took place on Tarragon Road.
Making our mark

At the start of the year, Murray River Council unveiled its new uniforms with our new logo.

The new logo and uniforms make it easier for our staff to be identified while delivering vital services out in our community, making Murray River employees instantly recognisable for residents.

As well as being able to identify your council staff, a uniform is important for building a strong and cohesive sense of identity among our team and broader community.

Our staff are an exceptionally dedicated team, who are proud of the work they do within council, as well as their work as council representatives within the community.

As a resident, it’s always going to be easier to obtain the help you need from council when staff are out and about in our community if you know who to look for. The new uniforms mean you will be able to recognise staff readily and have a chat to them regarding a council matter.

Feedback from our team on the new uniforms has been overwhelmingly positive. Staff are excited about being seen to be one united team who are committed to serving our community.

We’re sure our residents will become more and more familiar with the new uniforms in the coming months, and will welcome the uniforms (just like our team has) and the recognition they provide among the community. We’ve already seen the way our community has embraced the recognition of a united vision, including our future as one Murray River.

You’ll also notice that new council signs are now on all of our depots and starting to be rolled out across our offices in Moama, Barham, Mathoura and Moulamein.

Don’t forget to also keep an eye out for new town ‘welcome’ signs which we expect to be installed soon. The signage is another way for council and our community to make its mark across the region. This not only reaffirms our identity among our residents, but also identifies us as one Murray River Council to visitors to our region.

Training opportunities

Murray River Council staff from Moama, Barham and Moulamein have joined forces with Riverina TAFE NSW to deliver accredited occupational training certificates.

The program will give our community the chance to do their training and gain a variety of licences locally, improving employment opportunities and harnessing local expertise.

One hundred and thirteen students have already successfully received certificates in responsible service of alcohol, responsible conduct gaming, food handling and supervisor training.
It was fantastic to see communities across our region come together to celebrate Australia Day, with great crowds at events in Barham, Koraleigh, Moama, Moulamein, Tooleybuc and Wakool.

As well as the chance to enjoy a delicious barbecue breakfast, celebrations included ceremonies and the announcement of the Murray River Council Australia Day Awards.

Congratulations to all our award winners – including Lois Lockhart and Betty Murphy who were the very worthy recipients of the Citizen of the Year Award.

A much-respected identity within the Tooleybuc and Goodnight communities, Lois was recognised for her outstanding contribution to a number of committees, groups and bodies within the Greater Wakool Ward area.

Betty has worked on various committees of the Murray Shire for 23 years and is representative of the volunteers that small rural communities rely on. Betty impresses all with her enthusiasm and dedication to the Mathoura community.

The Young Citizen of the Year Awards went to Callum McNab, Laura Domialle and Holly Butt.

Callum has been very dedicated towards youth programs and support networks in our local area, particularly Tooleybuc, while Laura has shown strong leadership, volunteering and involvement in our community. Holly was also recognised for her leadership and community involvement, both in sports and at school.

Brady Threlfall received the award for Sportsperson of the Year, while Young Sportsperson of the Year was awarded to Dylan-Jack Weaver, Lachlan Arkinstall, Jemika Cooper and Ebony Pollock.

Burrumbuttock Hay Runners and The Bunnaloo Campdraft Club Inc. were named Community Events of the Year.

The Moulamein Community Burrumbuttock Hay Run delivered hay, stock feed, dog food, pamper packs and other supplies to farmers and families in the Ilfracombe community during the long-running drought.

The Bunnaloo Campdraft Club Inc transformed a rough piece of disused land in Bunnaloo into an excellent Campdrafting site over a short period of time.

Moulamein Art and Craft Council, which brings arts, photography and craft tuition to Moulamein and its surrounds, was the recipient of the Arts/Cultural Award.

Community Group of the Year went to the Apex Club Echuca/Moama, which has raised more than $29.5K with its 18 active members giving around 719 hours.

Joining in with this year’s festivities were our Australia Day Ambassadors Tracey Mann and Jarryd Byrne.

Tracey is a Logie and AFI award winner, has been on the Australian screen and stage for more than 40 years. Jarryd has won multiple awards nationally and internationally for Latin and ballroom dancing, singing, acting and as a choreographer.

More photos on back...