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AND MORE...
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Moama Office
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Moulamein Office
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Annual report on display

Murray River Council's 2017 – 2018 Annual Report has been released; a document which provides an overview of council's services, performance, governance and finances for the year. The report showcases many of the achievements that have occurred over the year which support the development of our communities, along with an overview of council finances and performance. A full version of the annual report is available on council's website and a printed copy can be reviewed at our customer service centres.

Message from the Mayor

It will be no surprise to anyone to learn that more than 40% of our Council area's economy is driven by agriculture. And that agriculture is a very diverse range of activity from dry farming (wheat, canola, sheep and cattle) to irrigated crops including rice, nuts and, yes, even cotton. And then there's dairying, and horticulture, feedlotting and a host of others.

The combination of very low rainfall and little or no water available for irrigation has placed enormous stress on the viability of this sector, with flow-on effects to the communities directly dependent on them. And the ongoing implementation of the Murray Darling Basin Plan gives little hope that the situation will change significantly in our favour.

That is why we as a Council are working with a number of bodies to get the best possible outcome for our farmers. We cannot allow the backbone of our economy, the viability of our farming enterprises or the health of our communities to be further eroded.

At the same time, we are working to strengthen other parts of our economy, to bolster other economic drivers. Two of these areas are tourism (which employs around 20% of our community) and industry, particularly industry that adds value to or supports the agricultural sector.

Successes in both these areas in recent times are encouraging. Data on tourism activity is showing a significant upswing as more people are attracted to the Murray River. Our partnership with Echuca Moama Tourism is reaping great rewards, particularly in boosting overnight stays. One important challenge is to spread this growth into more of the smaller communities in the Council area.

In the industry space, we are delighted to see examples of innovation and value-adding occurring across the region, from micro-abattoir development to solar farms. The economic development team within Council is working hard with a variety of projects, large and small, to bring more industry and jobs to our communities.

It's all about securing our agricultural base and strengthening the other legs of our economic stool. Stay tuned for updates as we head into 2019.

And on that note - to our community and on behalf of everyone at council, I wish you, your family and loved ones a safe and happy festive season.

It's been a great pleasure to be part of a committed and hard-working group of Councillors over the past twelve months and I look forward to continuing our work together to move this council towards a strong and vibrant future.

Merry Christmas!

Best Regards
Cr Chris Bilkey
The major projects

With design, tender and now construction works kicking along, there has been a lot of action happening on our Major Projects! Check out the progress on a couple of these projects below.

Mathoura Picnic Point

Picnic Point Reserve is a 2 hectare area located 10km’s east of Mathoura, at the end of Picnic Point Road on the banks of the Murray River.

This project includes upgrade works at the North and South Beaches, inclusion of a playground within the reserve and general landscaping to bring it all together....and thanks to a great collaboration between the committee and council we can report that the works are now complete! There’s new concrete paving, electric BBQ’s, playground equipment, new picnic tables, bench seating, furniture and tables along with a beach shower.

The completion of this project will ensure this influx of tourists is met with attractive surrounds and facilities, encouraging them to return again and again. It will be a great spot for the locals too!

Tooleybuc Mensforth Park

Mensforth Park is located north of the historic bridge crossing, between the highway and the river and is an attractive place for people to stop and enjoy the natural surrounds.

The Tooleybuc Piangil Action Group initially coordinated the project with the view to enhance Mensforth Park and its settings. This will encourage more traffic to stop and enjoy the town, as well as provide recreational activities for the local community.

The works will include upgrades to the Bridge Keepers Cottage, upgrade to the playground area and the development of a walking and bike track that would include seating, exercise stations, signage and sculptures.

So where’s it up to?

The concept designs have all be completed so next up is the call for tenders for the works to get underway!

LIKE US ON FACEBOOK

Keep an eye on updates or community information via our Facebook Page: Murray River Council.
Watch our councillors in action
If you’re interested in coming along to a council meeting, check out the details of our 2019 meeting dates. There are varying times and locations... so pop along if you’re free!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<td>Tues 22</td>
<td>6:00pm</td>
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<td>FEBRUARY 2019</td>
<td>Tues 26</td>
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<td>SEPTEMBER 2019</td>
<td>Tues 24</td>
<td>1:00pm</td>
<td>Mathoura</td>
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Venues:
Barham: Riverside Reception Centre 15 Murray Street
Mathoura: Multi-Function Room, Mathoura Visitor and Business Centre, Cobb Highway
Moama: Tatalia room, Upper level, Rich River Golf Club, 24 Lane, Moama
Meet the council – round 2!

Development, tourism and health were again some of the key topics raised during Murray River Council’s recent round of ‘meet the council’ events.

Council’s Mayor, General Manager and other councillors have been taking another tour around the municipality, giving residents the opportunity to meet them in person and raise ideas or concerns.

Mayor Cr Chris Bilkey said it was important to visit all towns and villages to ensure they are being kept up to date, feel connected with council and can flag any important issues.

“The meet the council sessions have again provided a great opportunity for us to listen first-hand to the issues and priorities of our residents.”

Tourism promotion on the agenda

Our Economic Development and Tourism Team have some big plans for exciting new promotional material in 2019.

The team recently completed a round-the-council photo shoot, snapping iconic locations and ‘things-to-do’ to ensure there is a great range of imagery to showcase our region.

With these new shots in hand, a brand new visitors guide for Murray River Council will now be produced in 2019 showcasing area features, things to do, events and the finer things on offer!

It will also provide tourism services and local businesses an opportunity to advertise- so stay tuned for more info.

Furthermore, there are also plans to update a tourism website, detailing general listings and things to do right across the council area.

Watch this space.
Celebrating small business

Described as a brilliant night of laughs and success stories, over 80 people from across the Council region gathered in cluBarham to hear what Sam Kekovich and three producers had to say about small business.

In typical Sam style, he danced along a thin line reminding the group of how important laughter is, what it means to be Australian, and that hard-working middle-class Australians make the world go round.

In a nod to local business, the guests were served up a delicious meal of free-range pork grown by Lauren Mathers at Barham’s Bundarra Berkshires.

Lauren was one of the three speakers that took to the stage to talk about small business through their personalised stories as owners.

Peter Kaylock, who is driving Moulamein Grain Co-op’s production of oats for the Chinese market, also joined Lauren on stage. Along with Lachie McKenzie from Growtek who has grown rootstock of over 7 million trees on his farm at Koraleigh that have gone into production around the country.

Council residents from Murray Downs, Moama, Moulamein and Barham were all present for what was a very positive, funny and enjoyable night.

Also in attendance was local Member for Murray, Austin Evans, Mayor Chris Bilkey, Crs Gorey, Cohen, Mathers, Wise and Campbell.

A great initiative from the Economic Development team, supported by NSW Government as part of the NSW Small Business Month.

Be Water Saving Savvy

As we head into the warmer months, residents are reminded that Murray River Council operates under permanent water saving rules aimed at reducing demand and making sure water is used efficiently.

Details are as follows:

Gardens and lawns

Automatic watering system
any day - between 7:00pm and 7:00am

Manual watering system
any day - between 5:00pm and 10:00am

Hand-held hoses with a trigger device
any-day - any time

Paved areas

Impervious areas and vehicles may use hand held hose with triggers only

Public spaces

Public spaces and sports grounds may use existing water savings plan

■ Sam Kekovich, Cr Chris Bilkey, Austin Evans and Lachie McKenzie formed part of the panel for the Small Business Dinner.
Did you know our Community Services Department offers a range of community transport options to eligible clients?

**Transport for older persons**

Frail older persons meeting the My Aged Care eligibility criteria who are 65 years and older or 50 years and over for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

*What's available?*

- Regular trips to access shopping, doctors or other appointment destinations
- Trips to enable you to remain connected socially

**Transport to persons living remotely**

This transport type is not age specific, and is available to people requiring transport, who do not have access to any other transport means.

To access any of the transport options or for more information on eligibility contact your local Home Support Co-Ordinator.

**Interested in being a volunteer driver?**

For many individuals, volunteering provides an opportunity to be involved in activities and programs within Murray River Council. The Community Services Team has an expanding community transport service and are always on the look-out for more volunteer drivers. If this sounds like something you might like to be a part of, contact your local Home Support Co-Ordinator.

**Support to help you with aged care services**

Our community services team can offer support to help you consider what type of aged care service will suit your needs.

The current aged care system offers various types of funded supports that enables people to continue to live at home independently. But working out what you may need can sometimes be tricky. Contact us for general information that may assist you to understand what options are available to suit your individual circumstances.
Meet our new Team Leader

It’s time our community newsletter formally introduced our residents to our Community Services Team Leader, Christine Grant who is based in the West in Barham.

Christine joined the team to help coordinate services across the community services area. And what better way to meet her than a little note from Christine herself...

“I would like to thank the “Cuppa and Chat participants and volunteers for their acceptance of me into their community. Thanks also for the help they have given me in settling into my new role, since August this year.

I hope everyone has a wonderful Christmas and New Year break...then I look forward to participants and volunteers coming back with energy and enthusiasm to the planning day at our first Cuppa and Chat on Tuesday February 5 2019.

I trust next year will see us have some exciting outings and activities to enhance what is already in place. I am especially interested in trying some of the new ideas and suggestions you have given me.

I look forward to 2019 and am expecting lots of fun with you all. And bring your friends...the more the merrier!”

What’s up in Tooleybuc

The Home Support Program in Tooleybuc stayed close to home on a recent social outing.

Their very first stop for the day was a visit to Steve Cole and his wife Li in Goodnight, way out on the very Western end of the municipality.

Steve Cole is a local artist with many talents. He makes sculptures from repurposed machine components and farm machinery, makes his own prints using a press he made himself, draws fabulous intricate drawings and makes jewellery.

They also headed over the Murray River to Piangil to visit Andrew Peace Wines for a tour of their state of the art winery business. Andrew Peace Wines is among the top 20 performing Australian exporters.

CONTACT US

The community service department has permanent locations in Moama, Barham, Moulamein, Mathoura and Tooleybuc. Call 1300 087 004.

■ A few members of the Tooleybuc Home Support gang tasted a delightful drop at Andrew Peace Wines on one of their recent social outings.
Project spotlight

Here are some snaps of the Natural Disaster Flood Restoration Works along Aratula Road South. Council received a grant of $1,681,573 from the Australian Government for flood restoration works for local and regional roads. The works are being delivered by a contractor appointed by Council as required under the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements. The works are on course to be completed ahead of schedule.

Heritage project on the cards for Mathoura

Murray River Council will soon commence work on a project to help tell the story of the timber industry in Mathoura thanks to funding under the NSW Government’s Heritage Near Me program.

Council was awarded $30,000 to deliver the ‘Preserving and promoting the heritage of the red gum timber industry’ project developed by Council staff in partnership with the community.

The project will consist of:

• Design and installation of a Timber Heritage Timeline Walk
• Design and printing of the Timber Heritage Timeline brochure
• Potential display of various tools and equipment used throughout the years in the red gum timber industry
• Design and set up of the Timber Heritage website resource
• Production of a short video, including oral histories and footage of the forest and relevant tools and equipment
• Promotional activities and tools to raise awareness of the project.

Drought Hub

With 98 percent* of the state declared a drought effected area and with farmers still feeling the effects of one of the driest winters on record, access to assistance and information continues to be vital.

The NSW Government has a one-stop online destination for information on services and support available to primary producers, their families and communities to manage drought conditions and the affects.

On the site you’ll find a comprehensive list of drought assistance available in NSW, both financial and that of support and advice.

Head to www.droughthub.nsw.gov.au to get the most up-to-date-drought relief information.

(* as per NSW State Seasonal Update at November 2018)

Our Christmas/New Year closures

Council’s Offices, Libraries and Depots in Barham, Mathoura, Moama and Moulamein will be closed for the Christmas New Year period from close of business Friday 21 December 2018.

The Moulamein Business Centre will be open for business on one day during this period on Thursday 27 December from 9.30am-1pm.

All locations will resume normal operating hours from Wednesday 2 January 2019.
Last month we promoted Asbestos Awareness Month, which provides timely reminders to us all about the dangers.

But it’s something we need to be mindful of all year round...don't play renovation roulette!

If you are thinking about renovating, you must be aware of asbestos and how to safely manage it in and around the home.

Importantly, if you suspect you have asbestos in your home...Don’t cut it! Don’t drill it! Don’t drop it! Don’t sand it! Don’t saw it! Don’t scrape it! Don’t scrub it! Don’t dismantle it! Don’t tip it! Don’t waterblast it! Don’t demolish it! And whatever you do... Don’t dump it!

If left undisturbed asbestos generally does not pose a health risk however if you are considering doing renovations or home maintenance, you should visit asbestosawareness.com.au to learn where asbestos can be found in the home and how best to manage it.

Most people can’t tell whether building materials contain asbestos just by looking at them. Asbestos can be under floor coverings such as carpets, linoleum and vinyl tiles, behind wall and floor tiles, in cement floors, internal and external walls, ceilings, eaves, garages, around hot water pipes, fences, extensions to homes, outdoor toilets and backyard sheds – it could be anywhere.

Many wrongly believe that ONLY fibro homes contain asbestos. Asbestos products can most likely be found in ANY Australian home built or renovated before 1987 even brick, weatherboard, fibro and clad homes.

Think smart, think safe, think asbestosawareness.com.au – it’s not worth the risk!

Professional removal and handling procedures by must be in place when dealing with Asbestos.

Celebrate Australia Day

To celebrate Australia Day on January 26, a number of local community breakfasts will be held across the council area.

- **Echuca/Moama**, Aquatic Reserve
- **Barham**, Riverside Park
- **Moulamein**, The Triangle
- **Wakool**, Wakool Hall
- **Tooleybuc**, Mensforth Park
- **Koraleigh**, Koraleigh Recreation Reserve

Keep an eye out locally closer to the date for times and details.

Australia Day award winners will also be announced in early January...thanks to all those who nominated our worthy local heroes!
Notice of temporary closure: Mathoura Visitor and Business Centre

The Mathoura Visitor and Business Centre will be closed from 17 December 2018 to 2 January 2019 while repairs are carried out to the concrete floor of the building, caused by flooding earlier this year.

Customers are advised that DHS, Bendigo Bank and Library services will not be available during this period.

Customer service and council transactions will still be available through the Mathoura Administration Office, located in Conargo St. Refer to the article inside this edition for our Council opening hours over the Christmas and New Year period.

Moama Lions Club Traditional Carols by Candlelight

Sunday 16 December 2018
Kerrabee Soundshell Moama.
Lions BBQ from 5.30pm
Carols 6.30pm start
Programs and Candles available
0427 405 016 or facebook.com/moamalionsclub

Barham Koondrook Lions Club Christmas Mardi Gras

Monday 24 December 2018
Lions BBQ from 5.30pm
Lions Christmas Raffle
....and a visit by Santa
Keep an eye out locally for extra details!