

MAYORAL REPORT

Council Meeting	23 April 2024
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As I write this report, Easter has been and gone and NSW is in the middle of school holidays. The beautiful Autumn weather sees warmth and sunshine during the day and cool mornings and evenings. Corn and rice harvest are in full swing, and subsequently lots of stubble burning off. Cotton is just commencing. Our roads are busy with holidays and harvest - please be mindful as you travel around.

A large investment of roads funding is being rolled out at present at both the southern and northern entrances to Jerilderie - this much needed generational investment will ensure public safety and provide welcome enhancements to Jerilderie's town entrances. The estimated cost of the works north of the Billabong to the safety gantry is \$4.3M.

As identified in Council's April business paper, there is \$6,957,206 to be spent between 2023-2026 on 21 of our prioritised roads - this money comes to Council through the Regional Roads Repair Fund. Roads are our largest, and by far the most expensive, asset we maintain, and this very welcome injection will make a significant difference.

The Easter break saw much social activity - beautiful weather encouraged many to be out and about. The annual Royal Children's Hospital Good Friday Golf Day in Jerilderie was very generously patronised and the amazing amount of \$24,000 was raised. Congratulations to all involved in this terrific result. Council has many Youth Week activities planned from the 15-24 April including "Read the Play" in Jerilderie, a paintball trip to Wagga Wagga and a roller disco at Darlington Point. Sounds like fun, with much to do for those looking to be out and about.

General Manager, John Scarce, and I convened the inaugural meeting of the Sturt Highway Taskforce, which was hosted by Mayor Dallas Tout and Wagga Wagga City Council. This advocacy body involves LGAs the length of the Sturt Highway (within NSW) and aims to bring visibility and consideration to a length of highway that sees its fair share of accidents and associated trauma. Transport for NSW joined us and gave a presentation on the accident data which is of prime concern. Identified issues included:

- number of overtaking lanes
- fatigue management
- driver education

- emergency services engagement
- economic development
- what, if any, proposed future works
- what, if any, allocated funds

Murrumbidgee Council assumed the Chair and Secretariat for the next 2 years. Our next meeting will be held in Balranald.

The General Manager and I met with Member for Murray, Helen Dalton MP, on Thursday 28 March. Topics raised for discussion, and hopefully some action, were:

- water buybacks
- vacant State Government housing (eg teacher housing in Coleambally)
- Jerilderie MPS ongoing and acute staff recruitment issues
- Ambulance station for Darlington Point
- the embargo on the sale of state owned land
- the overly onerous Biodiversity Legislation

On 8 April the General Manager and I met with Federal Member for Farrer, the Hon Sussan Ley, MP, and again had lengthy discussions regarding the tenuous water issues and the proposed buybacks, economic development in our LGA, and our immediate concerns regarding the Sturt Highway.

On Sunday 21 April I attended the “Yarning Circle” which took place on the banks of the Billabong Creek west of Jerilderie, and was co-ordinated by YACTAC, in conjunction with Many Mobs Indigenous Corporation.

I would like to thank the Lessees of our 3 pools who have serviced our communities admirably over our summer season. Our towns are so lucky to have these Council owned facilities, with access to these enabled by Council voting free entry and our Lessees providing the necessary supervision. I would also like to acknowledge Council’s operational staff who help keep these facilities looking the best they can be.

Meeting wise it was not so busy in April - May looks overwhelming!

28 March - Meeting with Member for Murray, Helen Dalton MP - Griffith

4 April - Sturt Highway Taskforce Meeting - Wagga Wagga

8 April - Meeting with Sussan Ley - Darlington Point

15 April - Teams Meeting – Murrumbidgee Local Health District Chief Executive with LHAC Chair

21 April - “Yarning Circle” event - Jerilderie

R. F. McRae

Ruth McRae, OAM
MAYOR