



Murrumbidgee
COUNCIL

ANNUAL

REPORT

2020-2021





Acknowledgement of Country

We would like to show respect and acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land, of Elders past, present and emerging, and extend that respect to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Photo: proud Wiradjuri girl and 2021 Darlington Point Public School captain Armani Coe delivering the Acknowledgement of Country at the official opening of the Darlington Point Boat Ramp on 3 March 2021. Armani provided a moving Acknowledgement in Wiradjuri language. We thank Armani for this special contribution and applaud her commitment to sharing her language and culture.

Front cover: Kizzie Moore pictured with the incredible mural which graces the walls of the Council Chambers at Jerilderie. The mural is titled 'Coming Together', and was created for the 2000 Olympic Games, where it was hung in Parliament House to provide a visual welcome to visitors and wish them peace and safe travel. The painting, measuring 8 metres wide by 4 metres high, features various Aboriginal design elements, including the Eaglehawk, which is the Barundji/Barkindji totem, as well as a white feather to symbolise safe travel. It was created by four Barundji/Barkindji artists: Elsie Black, Gertrude Gittins, Eileen Ballangarry and Sos Hawkins. These women can trace their family back at least 700 years as direct matriarchal descendants of the tribe.

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How to read this document

This report is prepared in accordance with the Local Government Act 1993 and Local Government (General) Regulation 2005, and includes a copy of the Council's audited financial reports (Attachment A).

It is structured around the five themes identified in the Community Strategic Plan that guide all of our operations and activities. We have provided a snapshot of the activities we have undertaken in the last year to progress each of these important themes.

1. Our Community - where we live.
2. Our Natural Environment - living sustainably.
3. Our Infrastructure - building a better future.
4. Our Economy - creating our own opportunities.
5. Our Leadership - embracing the future.

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Murrumbidgee
COUNCIL



Welcome



It is a pleasure to present the 2020-2021 Annual Report for Murrumbidgee Council.

The year has in many respects followed the pattern of the last, with the continued threat of COVID-19 and the ensuing challenges arising from the Public Health Orders and State border closures.

In saying that, the fact that our community has to date remained relatively unscathed from the insidious virus is indeed a blessing and testimony to the diligence of our community in following the public health protocols. This has been made easier in no small part by our enviable rural lifestyle, where we enjoy abundant space, fresh air and a strong sense of community.

We've seen this sense of community time and time again, and while it has been a difficult time for us all, community spirit has been invaluable in giving us the strength and tenacity to face our challenges. Community events provide the perfect platform to bring our community together and it was a great shame that many of these were cancelled. However, it was particularly pleasing that our youth events could go ahead, with Colour Runs, Autumn Music Festivals and Foot Golf all very successful. We thank the NSW Government and Murrumbidgee Primary Health Network for supporting these events.

While community spirit is one of the enduring characteristics of our community, agriculture is undoubtedly the backbone of our economy. Fortunately, we have enjoyed another terrific season this year, which was very welcome after the ongoing drought we suffered through. A bumper year agriculturally has such positive flow-on effects for our whole Council community. Inherent in this is the supply of water, and we have continued our advocacy in the available water space. Its impacts are far reaching - environmentally, productively, economically, socially and culturally - our lives, our livelihoods and our liveability depend on it.

We have also continued our ambitious capital project expansion program. Unfortunately, this has been hindered by COVID regulations, particularly as some contractors stem from border communities in Victoria. The construction of the new Jerilderie Early Learning Centre is an example of this.

Despite these delays, it has been an incredibly successful year with the completion of many major infrastructure projects. Most notably, these include the \$1.96 million upgrade to Jerilderie Swimming Pool Complex and the \$1.1 million Boat Ramp and Floating Pontoon (officially opened by Member for Albury Justin Clancy MP and Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Premier Steph Cooke MP, respectively). It was disappointing that COVID restrictions derailed the planned opening of the \$460,000 Streets as Shared Spaces Project at Fig Tree Park in Darlington Point - a project that has completely transformed this part of Darlington Point by

activating the space with striking public art and historical storyboards and also improved walking and cycling paths.

We had also hoped to celebrate the official opening of the entire Coleambally Sporting Precinct redevelopment costing over \$2 million, however, the project was beset by frustrating delays that hampered its completion. Thankfully, the new junior change rooms and amenities block at Coleambally's Number 2 oval was finished and in use by junior AFL teams. The official opening of this stage of the project was enjoyed at the first home game of the junior season, where we were joined by a nostalgic line-up of life members, along with current players and officials.

Complementing the extensive building program, was the expenditure on roads with \$2.9 million spent in the financial year, including Oaklands Road and Bolton Street.

Our capital works program is largely funded through grants, which this year accounted for \$14 million in revenue (also including contributions). While the NSW Government is a key contributor, this amount is also supported by investment from the Australian Government, including the \$1 million grant through Round 2 of the Drought Communities Programme. This followed on from \$1 million last year and allowed us to tackle a broad range of small scale projects, particularly in the area of public art. These projects were all identified by Council after seeking suggestions from the public on suitable projects. The showpiece is the magnificent mural painted by Ling that graces the external wall of the Jerilderie Swimming Pool.

Improving our telecommunications access has been another focus of our operations and it was a great pleasure to join with Telstra and the local Rural Fire Service to switch on the new Mobile Base Station at Bundure. Likewise, we were thrilled with the news of the \$1.2 million grant from the Australian Government to boost internet and mobile data throughout our Council area. This joint project is also supported financially by Field Solutions Group, Nokia, Altina Wildlife Park, Cavaso Farming, Cotton Australia and Coleambally Irrigation. We thank all of these organisations and the Australian Government for embracing this exciting project.

In closing, thank you to our Councillors, staff and community. All of the tremendous things we are achieving is a team effort. Thank you for helping to drive our organisation and to build a sustainable Council that will service and grow our community now and into the future.



Ruth McRae
Mayor

John Scarce
General Manager





Our VISION

Our Purpose

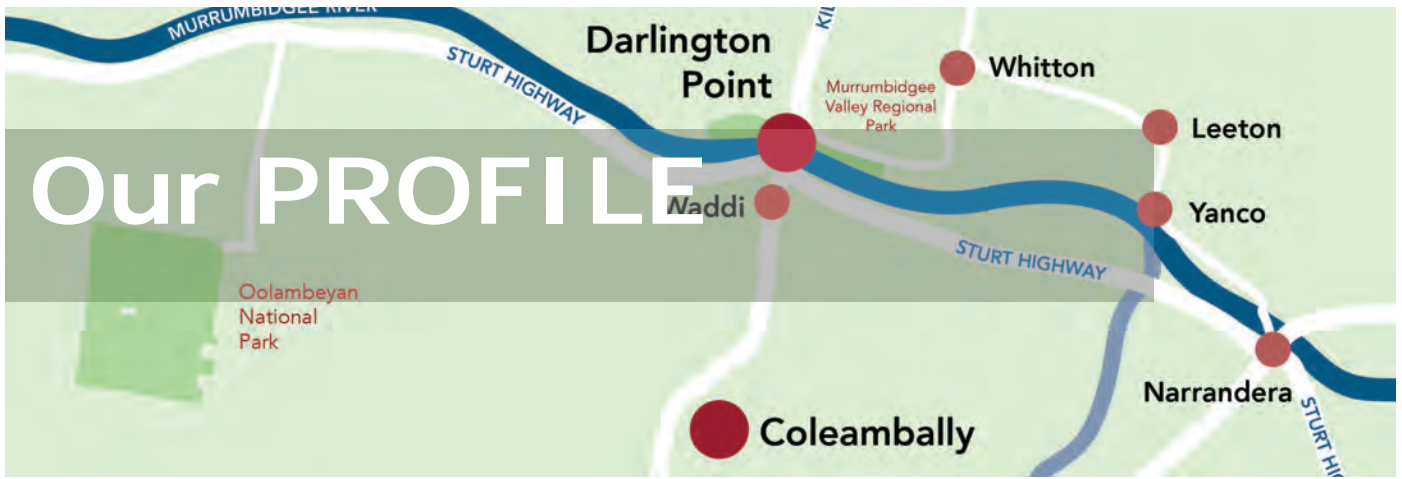
We aim to deliver quality services to create a friendly and welcoming community.

Our Community Vision

We strive for a community built by innovative and reliable services.

Our Values

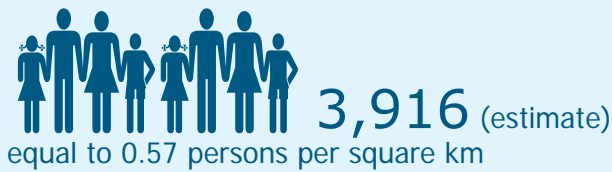
Creativity, quality, tradition and energy.



Our PROFILE

The following graphics provide a snapshot of our community, taken from the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016 Census and the National Institute of Economic and Industry Research 2020 data.

Population



First Nations people

PEOPLE IDENTIFYING AS ABORIGINAL OR TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS



7.4% of our population

Age structure



- 0-14 years: 20.5%
- 15-24 years 11.1%
- 25-64 years 37.1%
- 55-64 years 13.8%
- 65 years + 17.3%

Born in Australia

81.4% of our population



Median Weekly Income (household)



\$1,197

Speak English at home



97% of our population



Our PROFILE



Gross Regional Product (GRP)

\$0.27 billion
(NIEIR 2020)

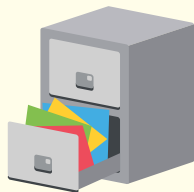


Impact from COVID (by most affected sector)

1. Accommodation and Food Services - lost 31 jobs
2. Manufacturing - lost 16 jobs
3. Construction - lost 3 jobs

Local businesses

678 (ABS 2020)



(ABS 2021)



Employed residents

2,015 (NIEIR 2020)
(= 3% unemployed)



Dwelling structure

93.3% live in a separate house



THE THREE LARGEST INDUSTRIES BY EMPLOYMENT:

AGRICULTURE: 48% OF THE WORKFORCE

MANUFACTURING: 8.1% OF THE WORKFORCE

EDUCATION AND TRAINING: 6.2% OF THE WORKFORCE

Our COUNCILLORS

The Murrumbidgee Local Government area (LGA) is divided into three wards, with three Councillors elected to represent each ward. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor are elected by the Councillors. Our Mayor throughout the year was Cr Ruth McRae, and Deputy Mayor was Cr Robert Black.

The Councillors make decisions about what happens across our LGA and ensure decisions adopted are implemented. During 2020-21, there were eleven Ordinary Council meetings and three Extraordinary Council meetings.

Ordinary Council meetings are generally held the fourth Tuesday of each month,

alternately in Darlington Point and Jerilderie. However, COVID restrictions meant some meetings were closed to the public, but available for viewing on our Facebook page.

The meeting schedule, agendas, business papers and minutes are available on Council's website or at any Council office.



JERILDERIE WARD



RUTH McRAE, Mayor



GAILA SMITH



FAITH BRYCE

MURRUMBIDGEE EAST WARD



ROBERT BLACK, Deputy Mayor



PAT BROWN



CHRISTINE CHIRGWIN

MURRUMBIDGEE WARD



ROBERT CURPHEY



PHILLIP WELLS



GAVIN GILBERT



Our FOOTPRINT

Our community includes:

- ◆ A population of 3,916 people
- ◆ 3 townships of Coleambally, Darlington Point and Jerilderie, and surrounding rural localities (or part) of Argoon, Bundure, Carrathool, Coree, Four Corners, Gala Vale, Logie Brae, Mabins Well, Mairjimmy, Nyora, Oaklands, Steam Plains, Waddi and Yamma, encompassing an area of 6,880 km².
- ◆ 3 offices, 3 depots
- ◆ 122 machines and vehicles
- ◆ 1,721 kms of roads
- ◆ 1 library, 1 mobile library
- ◆ 3 waste depots and 950 bins per week
- ◆ 10 halls and facilities
- ◆ 9 amenities blocks
- ◆ 2 skate parks
- ◆ 3 sporting ovals
- ◆ 2 sporting complexes
- ◆ 3 swimming pools
- ◆ 1 river, 1 lake, 1 billabong
- ◆ Nature trails and walks
- ◆ 3 cemeteries
- ◆ 1 saleyard

Our COMMUNITY



Where we live

Our key strategies in supporting all members of the community are:

- ✓ Building and supporting a diverse community.
- ✓ Protecting and embracing cultural identity and heritage.
- ✓ Creating community opportunities and equitable access to Council and community services and programs.
- ✓ Enhancing health and well-being.
- ✓ Creating a safe community.

Highlights for the year are:

Community grants

We proudly provide grants under the **Murrumbidgee Council Community Grants Program**. There is a total of \$20,000 available, with the maximum for each grant of \$2,000.

Congratulations to the recipients for 2021:

- ◆ Coleambally Bowling Teams - \$2,000 – Shade covers
- ◆ Coleambally Darlington Point Apex Club - \$2,000 – Annual dinner – mental health focus
- ◆ Coleambally Golf Club - \$2,000 – Chairs
- ◆ Coleambally Quilters - \$1,299 – Stick vacuum
- ◆ Coleambally Volunteer Rescue Association - \$2,000 – Upgrade rescue truck lights
- ◆ Cypress View Lodge - \$2,000 - Water pressure system to supply internal fire sprinklers
- ◆ Darlington Point Men's Shed Inc - \$2,000 - Purchase of Thicknesser - spiral head cutter
- ◆ Darlington Point Primary School - \$1,701 – Breakfast Club
- ◆ Jerilderie Fishing Club - \$2,000 – Learn to Fish Day
- ◆ Jerilderie Sports Club - \$2,000 – Five sets of bowls

We also administer the grants through the **Coleambally Solar Farm Community Fund**, sponsored by Coleambally Solar Farm and Neoen, who provide \$20,000 each calendar year to support local projects that benefit and strengthen the region.

Of these funds, \$10,000 is distributed to the Murrumbidgee Community Experimental/Demonstration Farm and a further \$10,000 is distributed to projects through an open and competitive program.

Congratulations to the successful recipients for the 2021 program:

- ◆ Coleambally Preschool Association Inc - \$2,000 – Nature based play space
- ◆ Country Education Foundation of Coleambally-Darlington Point Inc. - \$2,000 Education grants
- ◆ Darlington Point Public School P&C Association - \$2,000 – Intensive swimming program
- ◆ St Joseph's Primary School Jerilderie Parents & Friends Association - \$2,000 - Echuca Day Trip – Twisted Science and Paddlesteamer Experience
- ◆ Tirkandi Inaburra Cultural & Development Centre - \$2,000 - Sporting equipment and promotional brochure

Australia Day

A warm congratulations to the recipients of Australia Day awards in 2021:

COLEAMBALLY

Citizen of the Year: Elaine Clarke

Event of the Year: Coleambally CanAssist Fashion Parade

Cultural Award: Coleambally-Argoon CWA

Sporting Team of the Year: Coleambally Cricket Club 2nd grade nomads

Sportsperson of the Year: Michael Hodgson
 Sub-Junior Sportsperson of the Year: Lucy Bolton
 Environmental Award: Lions' Club of Coleambally
 Lifetime Achievement Awards: John Stuckings and John Smith

DARLINGTON POINT

Citizen of the Year: Maria Teusner
 Junior Citizen of the Year: Dylan Goodsall
 Event/Group Achievement of the Year: Gavin and Tammy Gilbert, Riverina Redneck Rally

JERILDERIE

Citizen of the Year for 2021: Bill Ferris
 Young Citizen for 2021: Aron Birch
 2021 Sportsperson of the Year: Chelsea Winn
 Little Aussie Awards (nominated by the schools): Kizzi Moore (St Joseph's Primary School) and Logan Eldridge (Jerilderie Public School)

The Australia Day Ambassador was Mark Warren and he attended the events in Coleambally and Darlington Point.

Thank you to the Australia Day Committees for Coleambally and Jerilderie and the Townlife Committee for Darlington Point for supporting and coordinating the events.



Coleambally Australia Day Front (L-R) Elaine Clarke, Gail Hibbert CWA, Ambassador Mark Warren, Phillip Turtle Nomads. Back (L-R) John Stuckings, Chris Hardy Lions, Ruth McRae, Sue Hardy CanAssist, Shawn Giddles Nomads and John Smith.



Darlington Point Australia Day ceremony (L-R) Allan Strachan, Ambassador Mark Warren, Mayor Ruth McRae, Maria Teusner (front), Gavin and Tammy Gilbert and Dylan Goodsall.





Pictured at the Australia Day ceremony at Jerilderie (L-R) Aron Birch, Logan Eldridge, Ruth McRae, Kizzie Moore, Bill Ferris and Chelsea Winn.

Citizenship ceremonies

We take great pride in our role in conferring Citizenship ceremonies on behalf of the Australian Government. Our Mayor, Cr Ruth McRae, had the pleasure of officially conferring Australian Citizenship for five people throughout the year:

Mr Joseph Lia – 30 September 2020

Mrs Amelita Carpio, Mr Maiwand Rasooly and his two sons Rehan and Subhan – 4 March 2021

Congratulations to all these new citizens on reaching this amazing milestone.

Drought Communities Programme

Council received a second instalment of \$1 million as part of this Australian Government program which was aimed at stimulating the local economy. Projects included in Round 2 were:

- ◆ Beautifying the towns of Darlington Point, Coleambally and Jerilderie - particularly through public art, including the stunning mural on the external wall at Jerilderie Swimming Pool.
- ◆ Upgrades to the three public swimming pools, including disabled access and BBQ facilities.



Pictured at their citizenship ceremony L-R: Maiwand, Rehan and Subhan Rasooly with Mayor Ruth McRae, 4 March 2021.

- ◆ Enhancing Christmas with new decorations in each of the three towns.
- ◆ Continuing the employment of the Drought Support Officer to focus on community engagement and well-being activities in the Council area, as well as providing assistance to drought affected businesses and families.
- ◆ Developing an Adverse Event Plan (mandatory component of the funding).

Commemorative events

We take great pride in joining the community at commemorative events, such as Anzac Day, Remembrance Day, graduations and presentations. These include attending the Tirkandi Inaburra RFS Cadet Graduation for the 7 graduates who completed the RFS Secondary Schools Cadet Program.



Pictured at the Griffith Regional Art Gallery, (L-R) front Lorna Wigham, Barb Freer, Kim Patten, Verona Harrison, June Weymouth, Gai Moore and Kerri Weymouth. Back Ray Wholahan.

- ◆ Three storytime sessions each week.

More resources were added throughout the year, including large print and audio collections, non-fiction, junior fiction and DVDs.

As a member of the Western Riverina Library Service, our community has access to resources from all of the libraries throughout the Western Riverina region. This includes digital facilities where you can listen, read, watch and learn at home or on the go.

Coleambally and Darlington Point residents can borrow with the Mobile Library, which visits weekly. Unfortunately the service was unavailable at some stages during the year due to COVID regulations.

Artistic pursuits

Council funded the following courses:

- ◆ Curatorial Crash Course, Saturday 27 March at Jerilderie.
- ◆ National Portrait Gallery Curator and Artist Talk, Saturday 27 March at Jerilderie.

We also actively promoted art events that were being held in the community, including the “Bringing Back the Plains Wanderer From the Brink” Art Exhibition at Jerilderie and the Yarruwala Wiradjuri Cultural Festival at the Griffith Regional Art Gallery. The exhibition featured works from the MAKE art group from Darlington Point.

Seniors Services and Activities

Services were again impacted by restrictions within the NSW Public Health Order.

Coleambally and Darlington Point residents were provided by Murrumbidgee Council and included:



At the Jerilderie ANZAC 2021 Service Jerilderie Public School Captains Zara Williams and Logan Eldridge.

Library services

Despite the restrictions of the Public Health Order, the staff at Jerilderie Library continued to make resources available through home delivery and ‘reserve and collect’ service.

Activities (which were unfortunately impacted by COVID restrictions at stages throughout the year) included:

- ◆ Knitting on Thursday mornings. The group donated some blankets to the Jerilderie Hospital.
- ◆ School holidays movie for primary aged children.

- Weekly Senior Get-togethers (respite) at Coleambally.
- Meals on Wheels - available Monday to Friday.
- Home Modifications and Maintenance.
- Community Transport (Bus) and assistance with non-emergency transport using (Council vehicle). We purchased a new vehicle to use for non-emergency transport. We are facing a shortage of volunteer drivers.
- Community safety campaigns, such as the joint campaign NSW Government, Fire & Rescue and NSW Fire Service 'Stay out of harm' fire safety in the home, Tradie Safety Week and Asbestos Awareness Week.

Youth activities

Council celebrates Youth Week with the following events:

Colour Runs

Free community events - youth aged 12-24 years received a bonus entry pack:

- Darlington Point - Friday 16 April 2021
- Jerilderie - Sunday 18 April 2021

The colour runs were funded by Murrumbidgee Council and the NSW Youth Week grants through the NSW Department of Community and Justice.

Summer Bashes

Summer bashes were held at the swimming pools in each of our towns. They featured inflatable slip 'n' slide, music, sausage sizzle and games.

- Coleambally - 30 January 2021
- Darlington Point - 26 January 2021
- Jerilderie - 16 January 2021

Services available to Jerilderie residents - provided by Berrigan & District Home & Community Support Services: Meals on Wheels - every Wednesday, Home Maintenance and Modification, Community Transport, Social Support, Domestic Assistance and Personal Care.

Supporting Community Campaigns and Initiatives

We support and promote many community awareness campaigns throughout the year. Examples are:

- Fortnightly visits of the OzHarvest Mobile Food Market at the Council office at Darlington Point. The market provides a free bag of fresh fruit and vegetable to anyone in need.
- Mental health campaigns, including RUOK? Day.



Everyone had a great day at the Foot Golf at Jerilderie.

These events were funded through the Australian Government Drought Communities Programme.

Foot Golf

- ♦ Jerilderie - Monday 28 September 2020
- ♦ Coleambally - Wednesday 30 September 2020

Foot golf is a combination of football (soccer) and golf. It is played the same way as golf, except players use a soccer ball instead of a golf ball, and the ball is kicked rather than struck with a club.

The foot golf events were funded by NSW Youth Week (Department of Communities and Justice) and Murrumbidgee Council.

Autumn Festivals

Free music events were held in each town with funding received from Murrumbidgee Primary Network through the

Australian Government's PHN Program and Empowering our Communities Program:

- ♦ Darlington Point - Sunday 11 April 2021
- ♦ Jerilderie - Sunday 18 April 2021
- ♦ Coleambally - Sunday 9 May 2021

Local Community Champions Youth Project

A \$100,000 grant was made using funding through Round 3 of the NSW Government Stronger Country Communities Fund. Champions Youth Project - providing \$100,000 funding This is an exciting project where the Petaurus Education Group works with local school students to deliver a range of learning and curriculum experiences, resources and initiatives to connect with land, water, productive farming, sustainability and cultural issues at the local and state-wide level.







Our NATURAL ENVIRONMENT



Living sustainably

Our key strategies in undertaking a guardianship role to ensure and enhance the environment's long term sustainability through appropriate practices and management are:

- ✓ Protecting existing regional natural environment for future generations.
- ✓ Exploring and promoting alternate, sustainable energy sources and practices.
- ✓ Maintaining a balance between growth, development and environmental protection.
- ✓ Protecting and managing waterways and catchments.
- ✓ Valuing and conserving our native flora and fauna.

Highlights for the year are:

- ◆ Providing a parking space at the rear of the Jerilderie Civic Hall for an electric Vehicle Fast Charging Station (funded by NRMA and the NSW Government).
- ◆ Controlling and eradicating priority weeds throughout our area is an important part of our work. Ways we do this are:
 - Using the 8 metre boom spray and a Quikspray 30 metre hose reel for handgun work.
 - Mapping weed infestations through GPS units linked to a GIS mapping program.
 - Being an active member of the Murray and Riverina Weeds Action Program (WAP). This program helps develop partnerships to effectively target weeds, identify and stop new weeds early and increase community involvement in weed management.
 - Participating in the Red Guide Post Program, where red guide posts are placed at known locations of high risk priority weeds such as Parthenium weed, Chilean needle grass, Serrated tussock and Coolati grass sites.
- ◆ Supporting the community through the mice plague by providing education on dealing with the issue and government assistance that is available. Regular inspections of all food shops were undertaken to consult with food vendors the plague proportions and impacts the infestation was taking on their business. Advice was given to food vendors in assisting with the control and mitigation of the rodents.
- ◆ Reducing water consumption in the township of Jerilderie by introducing permanent raw water restrictions. These restrictions were adopted at the December 2020 Council meeting after a successful trial. This has been accompanied by regular promotion and education of the need to use water wisely.
- ◆ Implementing the LED Streetlight Conversion Project in May 2021 where Essential Energy converted over 500 streetlights from older HID technology to LED. This work will be funded in the 2021-22 budget with \$285,000 to complete the bulk upgrade. The costs are expected to be recouped within a period of 8.42 years. This will deliver savings of up to 49% in energy consumption - equivalent to 22 cars off the road annually. This means:
 - Less greenhouse gas emissions.
 - Savings in maintenance and energy.
 - More uniform and reliable lighting, creating safer public places for the community.
- ◆ Preparing the draft Land Use Strategy to provide a clear direction to achieving Murrumbidgee's medium to long-term and rural growth needs.
- ◆ As a member of the RAMJO Riverina Waste Group, we work with other councils to develop cost-effective resource recover and waste reduction programs. The group's mission is to help residents in our communities reduce waste, improve sustainability and save money. The Community Recycling Centres (CRC) at Coleambally and Jerilderie Waste Depots (landfills) are part of this and we are working to making these facilities operational.

- ◆ Preparing the draft Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan and confirmed flood related development controls. This Study was funded through financial assistance from the NSW and Commonwealth Governments through the Natural Disaster Resilience Program.
- ◆ Moving to the NSW Planning Portal for the online lodgement of Development Applications, Construction Certificates and Complying Development. The online system allows developers and residents to access planning services and information anywhere and anytime.

Throughout the year we received 55 applications for development, totalling \$12,210,479. We also received one application for a subdivision. More information is available in Appendix B.



Heidi Bryce (front) and Kelly Tyson from the Planning & Environment team offer an advisory service for people looking to lodge applications for development.

- ◆ We qualified for funding through the Regional NSW Planning Portal Grant to purchase computers for our foyers so the community could lodge their applications (staff assistance is available). We received this funding because we demonstrated we are meeting Key Performance Indicator targets.
- ◆ We also began offering a free pre-lodgement advisory service for people planning to submit Development Applications. As part of this initiative, staff provide advice on the steps involved in an application and supporting documents that will be needed.
- ◆ As a member of the Yanco Creek and Tributaries Advisory Council, (YACTAC), we work to build collaborative partnerships to deliver a wide range of natural resource programs and activities. These programs aim to protect and enhance our creek environments and ensure sufficient water resources are provided to keep the creeks flowing and protect our native fish and other aquatic biota.
- ◆ Addressing stormwater issues on Jerilderie Street by constructing a trapezoidal stormwater drain on Cooyong Street in Jerilderie.
- ◆ Providing a community grant of \$2,000 to Darlington Point Landcare to plant trees at the Darlington Point common. Landcare coordinator Andrew Paterson led the project and we thank him for this initiative and also the ongoing maintenance of the trees.
- ◆ Providing a community grant of \$2,000 to Riverina Classic Fishing Competition for the purchase of native fingerlings to release into the Murrumbidgee River. The group releases the fingerlings on a yearly basis at their annual Catch and Release Fishing Competition. We thank the club for their work in this area.
- ◆ Underground Petrol Storage System inspections were handed back to Council from the EPA during the year. RAMJO provided training on how to carry out inspections and report on any potential outcomes that needed addressing. During Covid-19, this proved a challenge also,



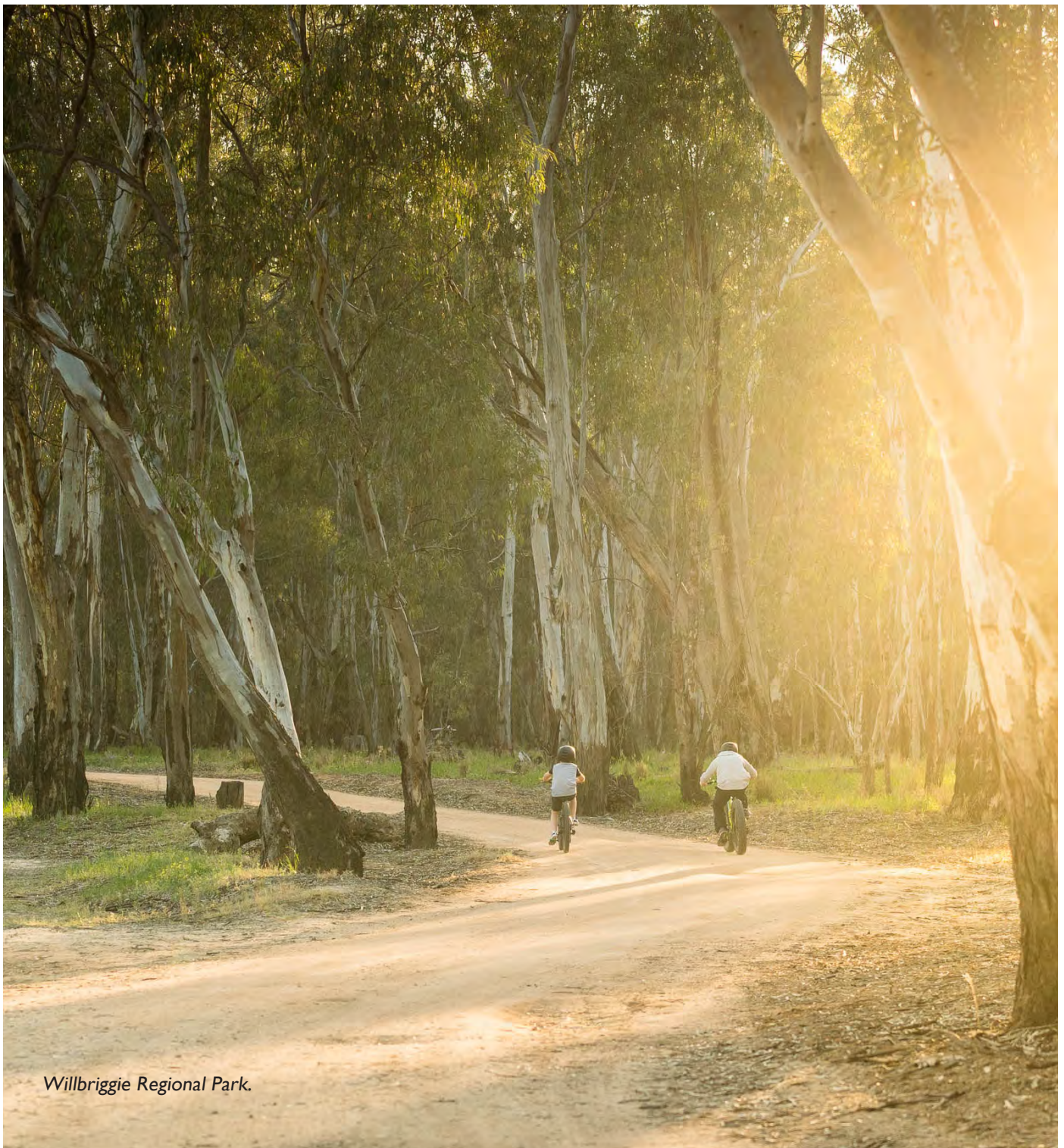
Inspecting the native trees (L-R) Murrumbidgee Council staff Steve Krause and Jason McKenzie with Darlington Point Landcare coordinator Andrew Paterson.

although having very few to inspect and report on this was manageable once lockdown eased.

- ♦ Septic inspections were put on hold and undertaken only when requested or at new installations or amendments.
- ♦ Trade waste inspections were few, with 3 new installations in the LGA. All existing trade waste was inspected in Jerilderie by Monique Aarts and Susie Leeds.
- ♦ One contaminated land issue with the illegal depositing of asbestos due to a house fire was inspected. We worked with and guided the resident to outsource the removal of the remainder of the asbestos and demolition by a NATA accredited removalist.
- ♦ Conducting sample tests of the Council swimming pools once a week or when time permitted.

Public Health Inspections Carried Out

Inspection Type	Amount
Food Inspections	58
Septic Inspections	11
Trade Waste Inspections	12
Cooling Tower Inspections	-
Skin Penetration Inspections	1
UPSS Inspections	7
Council Swimming Pool Inspections/tests	20
Contaminated Land Inspections	1



Willbriggie Regional Park.

Our INFRASTRUCTURE



Building a better future

Our key strategies in ensuring our community is well serviced and connected to well-planned built, social and community infrastructure that's developed and maintained according to community and public safety needs and priorities and partnerships are:

- ☑ Managing our assets responsibly and sustainably.
- ☑ Ensuring our Council buildings and facilities meet community safety needs.
- ☑ Providing our community with open spaces to be active.
- ☑ Maintaining and improving transport infrastructure.
- ☑ Ensuring local utilities and communications infrastructure and connectivity meets future needs.

We have continued with the expansive program of capital infrastructure across the Council area. Highlights for the year are:

Completed in 2020-21

- ♦ Resealing program across the Council area: Resealing: Kidman Way, Willows Rd, Wilson Rd, Main Canal Rd, Oaklands Rd, Morundah Rd, Boerema Rd, Gilbert Rd, Four Corners Rd, South Coree Rd, Jimmy Cull Rd, Brolga Pl.
- ♦ Resheeting program: Harveys Well Rd, North Coree Rd, Old Corowa Rd, Four Corners Rd, Elliott Ln, Colombo Creek Rd, McGrath Rd, Gaston Rd, Wood Rd, Rolfe Rd.

Coleambally

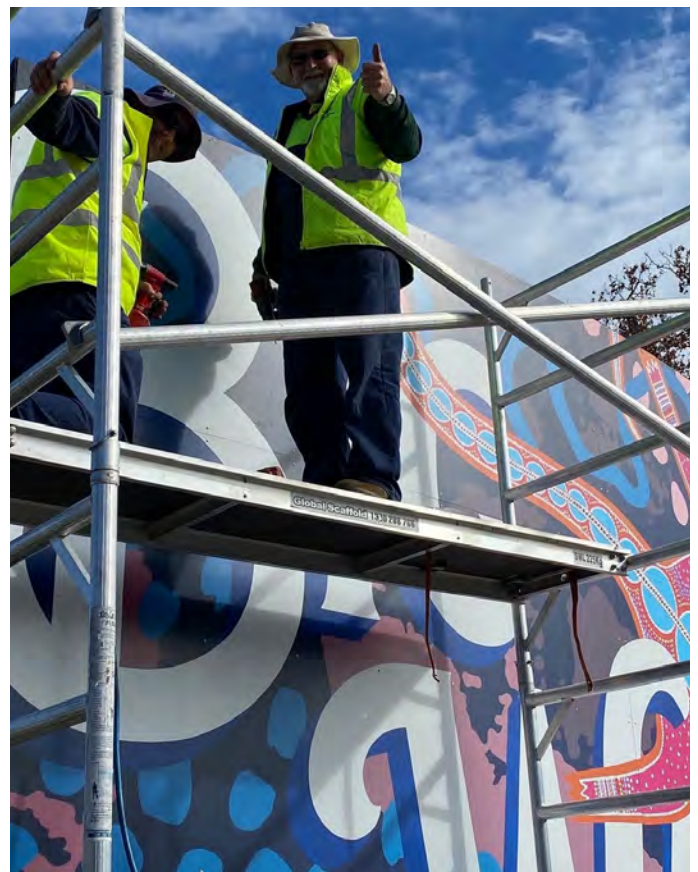
- ♦ Drought funding Round 2: Town Revitalisation Project (John McInnes Square, public art, solar lighting, town seating, Christmas decorations). Funded by the Australian Government Drought Communities Extension Programme.
- ♦ Town entrance statements (Wiradjuri Walk project)
- ♦ Junior Change Rooms at Coleambally No. 2 Oval.

Darlington Point

- ♦ Boat Ramp and Floating Pontoon - \$1.1 million project located on the Southern side of the Murrumbidgee River, opposite the Darlington Point Riverside Caravan Park and adjacent to the Darlington Point flood levee bank. Contractor: Comdain Infrastructure. Funded by: \$450,000 grant through the NSW Government's Boating Now Program, with the remainder funded by the NSW Government's Stronger Communities Fund. The project was officially opened by Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy

Premier Steph Cooke and Mayor Ruth McRae on 3 March 2021.

- ♦ Wiradjuri Walk project - Made possible with a \$460,000 grant through the NSW Government Streets as Shared



Staff members (L-R) Tom Bryce and Rod Watts erecting the "Big Water" mural at Darlington Point. The mural is part of the Wiradjuri Walk project.

The \$1.96 million upgrade to Jerilderie Swimming Pool complex was completed in November 2020 and officially opened by Member for Albury Justin Clancy and Mayor Ruth McRae on 10 March 2021.

The upgrade saw the replacement of the 25 metre pool, the toddler and baby pool area. The new complex is a major improvement on the old one that was aged and no longer met health and safety requirements.

The project was funded by the NSW Government's Stronger Country Communities Fund (Round 2) and Stronger Communities Fund.



Spaces Program. Much of the work was centred around Figtree Park in Darlington Point. The aim of the project was to preserve and promote Darlington Point's history and culture, while also connecting our urban spaces, promoting visitation and activating the town and community. Elements of the project included:

- Public art created by Kerri Weymouth, Bohie Palacek and the Waddi MAKE Art group.
- Historical photos and storyboards in public spaces.
- More clearly defined walking and cycling trails around Fig Tree Park. These now join up with the 1.8 km Goanna Walking Track, which is a natural path meandering beside the river through river red gum and black box forests, and finishing at the mystical 'Bunyip Hole'.

- New fencing, new bins and slope correction on paths to improve the accessibility, amenity and usability of Figtree Park.
- New entrance statements in each town.
- ♦ Darlington Point Sports Facilities upgrade - This project involved extensive improvements to the Darlington Point Oval change rooms: adding female change rooms (funded by NSW Government Stronger Country Communities Fund Round 1 and Stronger Communities Fund), upgrading the existing toilets, kitchen and men's change rooms and further renovations of grounds and equipment (funded by Stronger Country Communities Fund Round 2, Stronger Communities Fund and contribution levies provided by the Darlington Point Solar Farm project). This project was completed in August 2020.



- ◆ Lions Park amenities block and display - Project cost: \$580,712. New purpose built toilet block and display area for historic items. The new amenities also provides storage facilities for the local Lions Club. Contractors: Architect - Steven Murray, Construction - Adaptive Interiors. Funded by: NSW Government Stronger Communities Fund. This project was completed in August 2020 and was officially opened by Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Premier Steph Cooke and Mayor Ruth McRae on 3 March 2021.
- ◆ Drought funding Round 2: Town Revitalisation Project (public art, solar lighting, town seating, Christmas decorations). Funded by the Australian Government Drought Communities Extension Programme.
- ◆ Shire Hall upgrade and restoration - external repairs.
- ◆ Museum upgrade.

Jerilderie

- ◆ Yamma Hall upgrade - new toilets and upgraded kitchen. Funded through NSW Government Stronger Community Funding.
- ◆ Swimming Pool upgrade - Project cost: \$1.96 million project. Funded by: NSW Government Stronger Country Communities Round 2 and Stronger Communities Fund. Completed in November 2020. It was officially opened by Member for Albury Justin Clancy MP and Mayor Ruth McRae on 10 March 2021.
- ◆ Racecourse grandstand roof - Project cost: \$67,800, funded by the NSW Government Crown Lands Stimulus Funding \$67,800. Officially opened by Member for Albury Justin Clancy MP, Mayor Ruth McRae and President of the Jerilderie Race Club Des McRae on 10 March 2021.
- ◆ Lake Jerilderie Bank rehabilitation - \$188,366 was allocated to the project through the NSW Government Stronger Country Communities Fund, Round 3.
- ◆ Drought funding Round 2: Town Revitalisation Project - solar lighting, town seating, Christmas decorations, new clock, public art, upgrade to windmill. Funded by the Australian Government Drought Communities Extension Programme.
- ◆ Town entrance statement (part of the Wiradjuri Walk Project).
- ◆ Jerilderie stadium studio construction - Project cost: \$225,000. Details: The studio room contains: full length mirrored wall, portable ballet stand, air-conditioning and lighting. Contractor: Kennedy Builders, Funded by: \$225,000 grant from the NSW Government's Sport Election Commitments Program for Female Sports Participation (Office of Sport). The studio room was completed in January 2021. It was officially opened by Member for Albury Justin Clancy MP and Mayor Ruth McRae on 10 March 2021.
- ◆ Bolton Street Reconstruction
- ◆ Oaklands Road Reconstruction
- ◆ New Telstra mobile base station at Bundure - Location: Kidman Way, Bundure. Benefits: New and improved 4G mobile network coverage along the Kidman Way and more consistent data speeds for rural residents and visitors. Jointly funded by Telstra and Murrumbidgee Council (Council contributed \$400,000 through the NSW Government Stronger Communities Fund). Relevant dates: Switched on in March 2021.
- ◆ Electric Vehicle Fast Charging Station (funded by NRMA and the NSW Government).



The official opening of the Lions Park Amenities Block and Display which features the historic 'The Dennis' fire engine (L-R) Mayor Ruth McRae, Darlington Point captains and vice captains, Zane Lyons, Jed Strachan, Starlett Norris, Armani Coe, Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Premier Steph Cooke, Project Manager Ben Nash and Architect Steven Murray. 10 March 2021

- ◆ Replacing the lighting towers and upgrading to LED lighting at Monash Oval. \$158,000 was allocated from the NSW Government Stronger Communities Fund (Round 3).

Other highlights across the whole Council area:

- ◆ Carrying out bulky waste and green waste kerbside collections in all three towns, particularly as an incentive to residents to clean up the yard in preparation for the summer fire season.
- ◆ Managing bush fire mitigation – grading/slashing asset protection zones, fire access trails and other areas such as the levee bank. Council is currently part of two Bushfire Zones and Management Committees: the Mid Murray and the MIA.
- ◆ Running the Rural Addressing Campaign to educate rural landholders on the need to ensure their rural property numbering signage is legible and not obscured. This is particularly important to ensure a property can be found by emergency services. Anyone needing new signage can contact Council and we will replace it at no cost, with the landholder responsible for installing the new sign.
- ◆ Continuing preparation of the Integrated Water Cycle Management Plan - a 30-year IWCM Strategy that addresses the elements of the urban water cycle (water supply, sewage and stormwater) and community expectations. This multi-level approach enables cost-effective integration of these urban water systems in consultation with the local community. Funded by NSW DPIE.

Could your property be found in an emergency ?



Is your rural property number clearly visible so that emergency services can find you? Check yours today.

If your rural property numbers need replacing, contact
Murrumbidgee Council
T: 1300 676 243
E: mail@murrumbidgee.nsw.gov.au



Murrumbidgee
COUNCIL



Turning the first sod at the new Jerilderie Early Learning Centre (L-R) Murrumbidgee Council Mayor Ruth McRae, Member for Albury Justin Clancy MP and Jerilderie Early Learning Centre President Stephanie Girdwood. The spades were decorated by the preschool children and were a magnificent addition to the occasion. 28 May 2021.



- ♦ Managing the annual Transport for NSW Works and Maintenance Program.
- ♦ Managing the Building Maintenance Program valued at over \$220,000. This included routine maintenance, stormwater repairs, painting, pest control and fire equipment servicing.
- ♦ Updating and improving the Asset Management System which includes the Asset Management Policy, Strategy and Plans for the major asset groups of buildings, land improvements, water supply, sewer services, stormwater and drainage and transport infrastructure.
- ♦ Conducting an audit of rubber softfall surfaces in playgrounds across the Council area. It identified a need to replace the softfall at CWA Park Darlington Point, Youth Centre Playground Coleambally and Monash Park playground in Jerilderie with this work to be undertaken in 2021-2022.
- ♦ Continuing liaison with Transgrid on the status of the Energy Connect project which involves the construction of the transmission line between Robertson in South Australia through to Wagga Wagga, with a connection to Red Cliffs in Victoria. A path of about 85 km will run through our Local Government Area.

Scheduled for completion in 2021-22

Coleambally

- ♦ Coleambally Sporting Precinct redevelopment, Stage 2 (completion delayed in 2020-21 due to COVID delays). Details: new player and umpire change rooms and amenities, and upgrades to the existing clubhouse, including the amenities and scorer's box. It will also see additions to the netball change rooms, including upgraded amenities and a gymnasium, upgrades and additions to the youth hall and a new cricket pitch. Funded by: NSW Government's Stronger Country Communities Rounds 2 and 3, Stronger Communities Fund grants. Architect - Steven Murray. Construction: Kennedy Builders Pty Ltd.
- ♦ Bencubbin Avenue reconstruction, Coleambally. Funded by: Federal Government's Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program (\$626,000) and Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program (\$1,008,021) and NSW Government's Stronger Communities Fund (\$750,000). Murrumbidgee Council will also contribute to the project.
- ♦ Channel Nine Road reconstruction
- ♦ Coleambally Community Hall upgrade
- ♦ Brolga Place redevelopment

Darlington Point

- ♦ Amenities block (in front of the cemetery) - this facility will include a Lift and Change facility for disabled users.
- ♦ Mini Skate Bowl - Location: CWA Park (addition to existing Skate Park). Features: flatbanks, roll-ins, high rails, quarter pockets and a mogul blend. Design and construction: Haley Constructions. Funded by: Australian

Government Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program.

- ♦ Splash Park - to be located near the existing Darlington Point Swimming Pool. Funded by: NSW Government Stronger Country Communities Fund Round 3, \$316,528.00 (GST exclusive).
- ♦ Young Street, Darlington Point residential subdivision
- ♦ Shire Hall upgrade and restoration - new kitchen

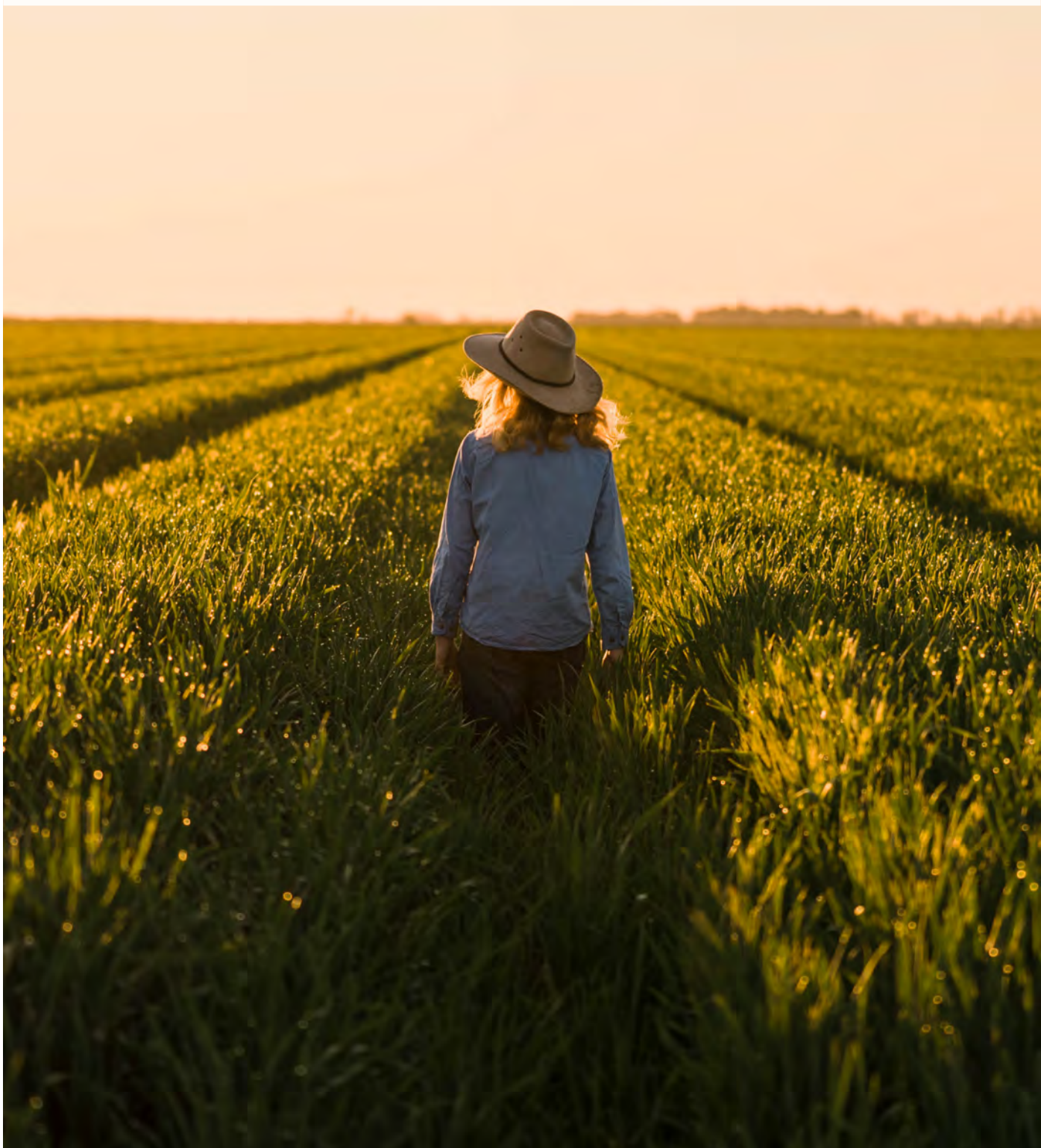
Jerilderie

- ♦ Jerilderie Early Learning Centre - New purpose built early education facility to accommodate both a preschool program and long day care. It will offer 48 places for babies up to 5 year olds and will be instrumental in filling the void in childcare services in the area. Location: It will be built on the site of the old tennis courts at Elliott Park. Funded by: NSW Government Stronger Country Communities Fund Round 2 and Stronger Communities Fund grants, as well as grants sourced by the ELC Committee. Contractors: Construction firm: DeZign. Relevant dates: The first sod was officially turned on the project by Member for Albury Justin Clancy, Mayor Ruth McRae, Jerilderie Early Learning Centre President Stephanie Girdwood on 28 May 2021. It is anticipated the new centre will be finished by January 2022.
- ♦ Luke Park redevelopment - Project cost: \$2 million - Details: upgrade of Luke Park will see the connections enhanced within and outside the park precinct. Elements of the project include a deck extension to connect Jerilderie Civic Hall to increase the open space experiences available and pedestrian and visual connections. Other works will include improvements to the Bush Tucker Trail, the walking trail, public art and signage and cultural heritage awareness elements. Funded by: NSW Government Public Spaces Legacy Program 2020-21.
- ♦ Jerilderie Pump Track - Details: Designed as both a skatepark and pumptrack, it will cater for skateboards, scooters and BMX bikes. Funded by: NSW Stronger Country Communities Fund, Round 3 (\$263,900).

Future years

- ♦ Under the Federal Government's Regional Connectivity Program (RCP), adding new 'true broadband' technology on three existing towers and building two new 45m telco towers along the Newell Highway and Kidman Way. Murrumbidgee LGA Project partners: Federal Government, Field Solutions Group, Murrumbidgee Council, Nokia (technology partner), Altina Wildlife Park, Cavaso Farming, Cotton Australia and Coleambally Irrigation. \$1,242,800 total project cost.
- ♦ Redevelopment of Darlington Point Riverside Caravan Park (\$9 million upgrade, pending funding).
- ♦ Water and Sewerage Treatment works upgrades in each town.
- ♦ Coleambally Sports Precinct - alterations and additions to the existing squash courts, civil works and drainage.

Our ECONOMY



Creating our own opportunities

This theme is based on working with new and existing business and industries to proactively provide regional economic opportunity, development and tourism creating stability and future growth.

We achieve this by:

- ✓ Welcoming and supporting the growth, diversity and productivity of businesses and industries.
- ✓ Promoting and supporting a regional economy and growth.
- ✓ Promoting and developing tourism strategies and opportunities.
- ✓ Supporting community access to education, training and future opportunities.
- ✓ Fostering and developing a resilient, vibrant agricultural sector.

Highlights were:

Economic Development

- ◆ Assisting to establish business chambers in Darlington Point (Business Connect) and Jerilderie (Jerilderie United).
- ◆ Hosting the Women in Business Networking event in Coleambally on 10 March 2021 as part of NSW Women's Week. The guest speaker was Kathie Hayman who gave a virtual presentation. Murrumbidgee Council sponsored the event through a NSW Women's Week grant.
- ◆ Communicating monthly with businesses through the Council communications network,



Pictured at the Women in Business Networking event, (L-R) Murrumbidgee Council Economic and Tourism Manager Kellie Dissegna, Mayor Ruth McRae, President Business Connect Tania Stone and President Coleambally Chamber of Commerce Lynne Stuckings.

including the monthly business e-newsletter, including COVID-19 updates and where to find current information on restrictions.

- ◆ Successfully applying for the Australian Government Regional Connectivity grant to provide high speed internet for our towns.
- ◆ Hosting Small Business Month events – Grant Writing for businesses and Digital Marketing Workshops for Businesses held at Jerilderie and virtually in October 2020.

Tourism

- ◆ Developing the Explore Murrumbidgee Business and Tourism Guide.
- ◆ Installing TASAC (Tourist Attraction Signposting Assessment Committee) brown and white tourism signs for the Ned Kelly Raid Trail in Jerilderie.
- ◆ Producing a new bird walking trail in Coleambally (funded through the Australian Government Drought Communities Programme). Pictures of birds and a QR code for more information have been added to all street signs (as they are named after birds).
- ◆ Updating the tourism image gallery for Coleambally, Darlington Point and Jerilderie and using the images advertising and promotional campaign and publications for our towns.
- ◆ Continuing membership and support for regional marketing activities including Ned Kelly Touring Route, Kidman Way Promotions Committee, Newell Highway Promotions Committee and Thrive Riverina.
- ◆ Launching the Murrumbidgee Trails Visitor Guide and campaign – a joint marketing initiative between Leeton Shire, Lockhart Shire, Narrandera Shire and Murrumbidgee Councils.
- ◆ Running targeted campaigns on Council's social media channels to promote the area post lockdown. This included the Come and Stay Campaign and also the School's Out! Campaign. Both of these campaigns achieved very good engagement.
- ◆ Installing new public art throughout the Council area made possible through NSW Government Streets as Shared Spaces Program and the Australian Government Drought Communities Programme.



Pictured at the Murrumbidgee Trails launch on 18 November 2020 (L-R) Murrumbidgee Council General Manager John Scarce, Mayor Ruth McRae, Deputy Mayor Robert Black and fellow Councillor Gaila Smith.

Education Support

Council provided support for students residing within the Murrumbidgee LGA through the following scholarships:

- ♦ Monash Bursary – \$2,000 bursary awarded to Simon Toscan.
- ♦ CSU Foundation Scholarship – \$4,000 scholarship awarded to Josie Moore.
- ♦ Murrumbidgee Council Student Scholarship Program – \$1,000 each awarded to Dharian Causon, Jonathan Foster, Olivia Mauger and Millie Rossato.
- ♦ Coleambally/Darlington Point Country Education Foundation Scholarships (funded with a \$1,850 grant through Murrumbidgee Council Community Grants).

We also actively promote educational opportunities, such as the TAFE fee-free courses and other scholarships.

Future directions

- ♦ Developing a New Resident Guide for people who have moved to our three towns or are looking to move.
- ♦ Developing virtual tours through some of the buildings of the Ned Kelly Raid Trail, as well as videos of artefacts (such as the original vault). This will be made possible with the NSW Government Heritage grant (if successful).
- ♦ Developing a tourism video for each of the three towns.
- ♦ Promoting and selling residential land in the Young Street, Darlington Point sub-division.
- ♦ Developing an Investment Attraction Prospectus to encourage economic development and activity within our region.
- ♦ Conducting a bi-annual business survey to all businesses operating in the Murrumbidgee Local Government Area to ascertain economic development gaps and opportunities for our region.
- ♦ Updating the Ned Kelly Trail website and the marketing material for the Newell Highway Promotions Committee (through the regional marketing groups).

*Wine glass or schooner?
This prominent feature of
Coleambally is always a
source of discussion.*





The new public artwork at Fig Tree Park has received fantastic feedback from visitors and locals alike. The showcase of the artwork is the magnificent spiral painting by Kerri Weymouth and Bohie Palacek featuring the history, culture and environment of Darlington Point. The project was funded by the NSW Government Streets as Shared Spaces Program.

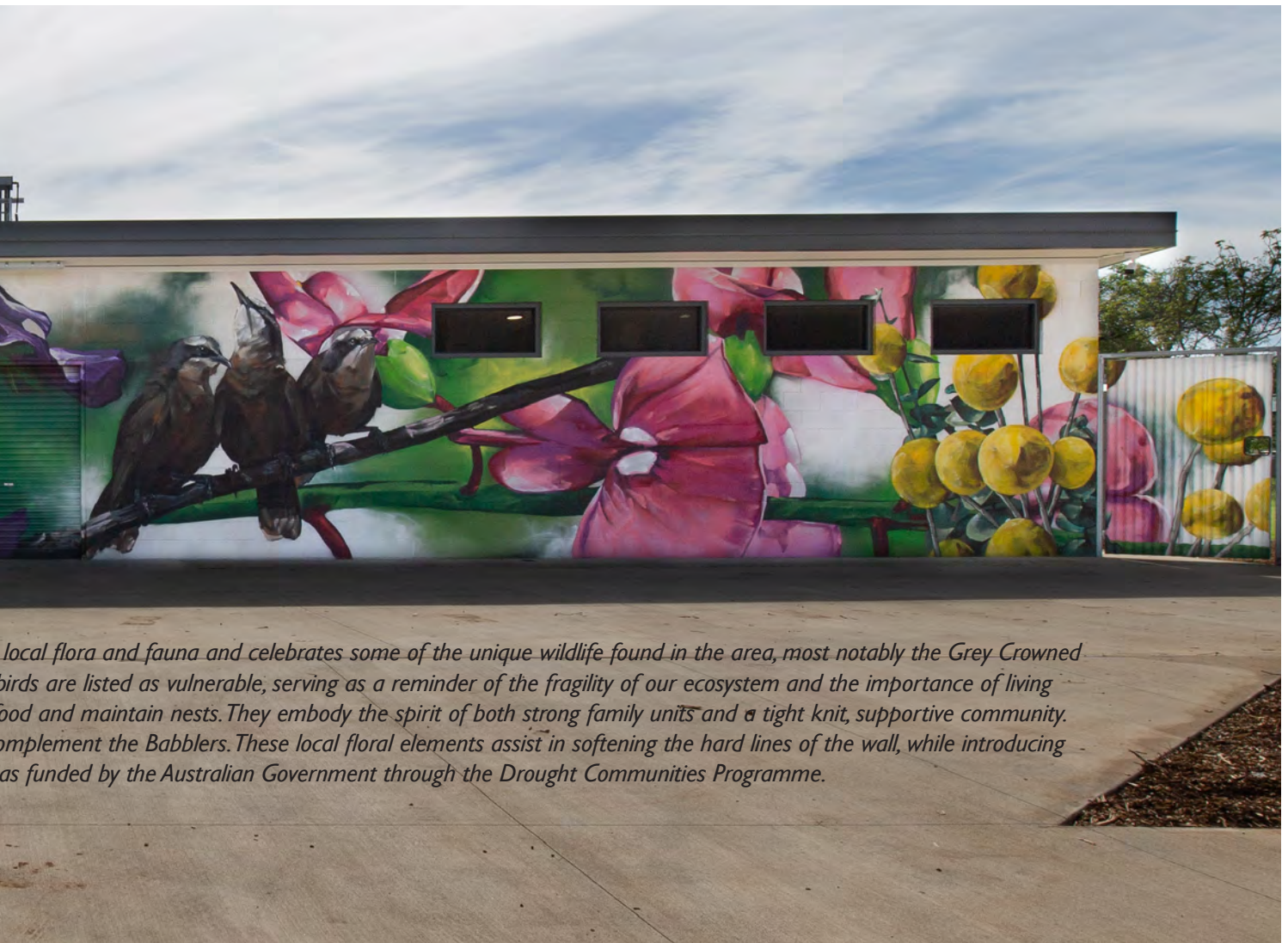




Commissioned by Murrumbidgee Council and created by Ling in 2021, this amazing piece of art reflects on the Babbler and the Darling Pea. Selected as the primary feature is the Grey Crowned Babbler. Found locally, these birds live in harmony with nature and harmony. Grey Crowned Babblers typically live in family groups, working together to forage for food. The imagery of the Darling Pea (Slender Swainsona) and Billybuttons aka Drum Sticks (Pycnosorus Globosus) combine strong colours, blending the organic shapes, and pushing the Babbler imagery into the foreground. This project was a success.



In front of the new mural, (L-R) Cr Faith Bryce, Mayor Cr Ruth McRae, Murrumbidgee Council Executive Assistant and mural coordinator, Julie Conn, Member for Farrer Sussan Ley MP and Cr Gaila Smith, 3 May 2021.



local flora and fauna and celebrates some of the unique wildlife found in the area, most notably the Grey Crowned birds are listed as vulnerable, serving as a reminder of the fragility of our ecosystem and the importance of living food and maintain nests. They embody the spirit of both strong family units and a tight knit, supportive community. complement the Babblers. These local floral elements assist in softening the hard lines of the wall, while introducing as funded by the Australian Government through the Drought Communities Programme.



Our LEADERSHIP



Embracing the future

This theme is centred around making sure we lead the community in achieving sound, future-focused outcomes for the whole of the Council area through ethical practices and good governance.

We achieve this by:

- ✓ Demonstrating transparent leadership through accountability and community representation.
- ✓ Engaging with future community leaders.
- ✓ Investigating funding, services and programs that strengthen communities in the region.
- ✓ Promoting Council as an 'Employer of Choice' through relationships.
- ✓ Cooperating and collaborating with other Councils to achieve a strong voice.

Highlights:

Demonstrating transparent leadership

There are many aspects of our operations, strategic directions, events and activities that we make sure the community is aware of and have the opportunity to provide feedback on.

Keeping the community engaged and informed through regular communication across a variety of channels is a key focus of ours. We have worked hard to build a strong connection with the community as a whole and the various sub-sections within it. This is guided by the Communications Strategy, the Media and Communications Strategy and the Code of Conduct.

With the continuing restrictions on room capacity, Council meetings were again available by live stream on Facebook. This was well received by the community, with people taking the opportunity to watch the meetings who would possibly have never attended a Council meeting in person.

Communicating about COVID has been a significant part of our work. This includes messages about public safety, availability of Council services, Public Health Orders (particularly for NSW, but also for Victoria if it affects our community) and the vaccination campaign.

We also play an important part in supporting campaigns of network organisations that our Council is part of, for example, joint tourism networks, RAMJO, etc.

Additionally, we use our communication channels to get the word out about the amazing events and activities our

community groups and organisations are involved with.

Our communication channels include: the quarterly community newsletters (distributed to all addresses in the Council area), monthly e-newsletters (500 subscribers), media releases (average of 4 per month), social media, direct mail-outs/letter drops, posters, Council's website, forums and word of mouth. Our social media presence continued to grow with our Facebook reach growing by 20.3% over the previous year and our Instagram reach growing by 64.2%.

Integrated Planning and Reporting

Local councils have important statutory obligations through an Integrated Planning and Reporting process. The central plan that guides Council's activities was developed in 2017 and is called the Community Strategic Plan (CSP).

The CSP was developed through extensive community input. It identifies the community's priorities and how these will be achieved. It is a 10 year plan. As we are due for Local Government Elections on 4 December 2021, the plan will be reported on by the outgoing Council and then reviewed by the incoming Council.

All other plans sit underneath the CSP, namely:

- ◆ Delivery Program (4 year plan) - how the community's priorities and wishes in the Community Strategic Plan will be achieved.
- ◆ Operational Plan (annual) - The activities within a financial year to achieve the actions in the Delivery Program.

- ◆ Resourcing Strategy, made up of the following:
 1. Long Term Financial Plan (10 year plan) - how Council affords to meet current and future needs (ensuring we are financially sustainable).
 2. Workforce Management Plan (minimum 4 years) - human resourcing requirements.
 3. Asset Management Plan (minimum of 10 years) - accounting for and planning for all our existing assets (including their condition) and future community assets as proposed in the Delivery Program.

Our activities are reported to the community through the:

- ◆ Annual Report - summarizes our performance and achievements in the preceding financial year. It tracks the implementation of the Delivery Program and Operational Plan and also includes some information required by the Local Government regulations.
- ◆ End of Term Report - details our achievements in implementing the Community Strategic Plan over the previous four years.

Engaging with future community leaders

We continued to promote opportunities for our youth to contribute ideas to future events. We also actively promote

opportunities for youth to become involved in regional and state led committees and taskforces.

Actively pursuing Government funding

We continued to have success in securing Government funding to support the ambitious capital expansion program. Revenue from grants and operations totalled \$14 million in the 2020-2021 financial year, which was a decrease of 6% on the previous financial year. More details are provided about the projects undertaken in the section on “Infrastructure”.

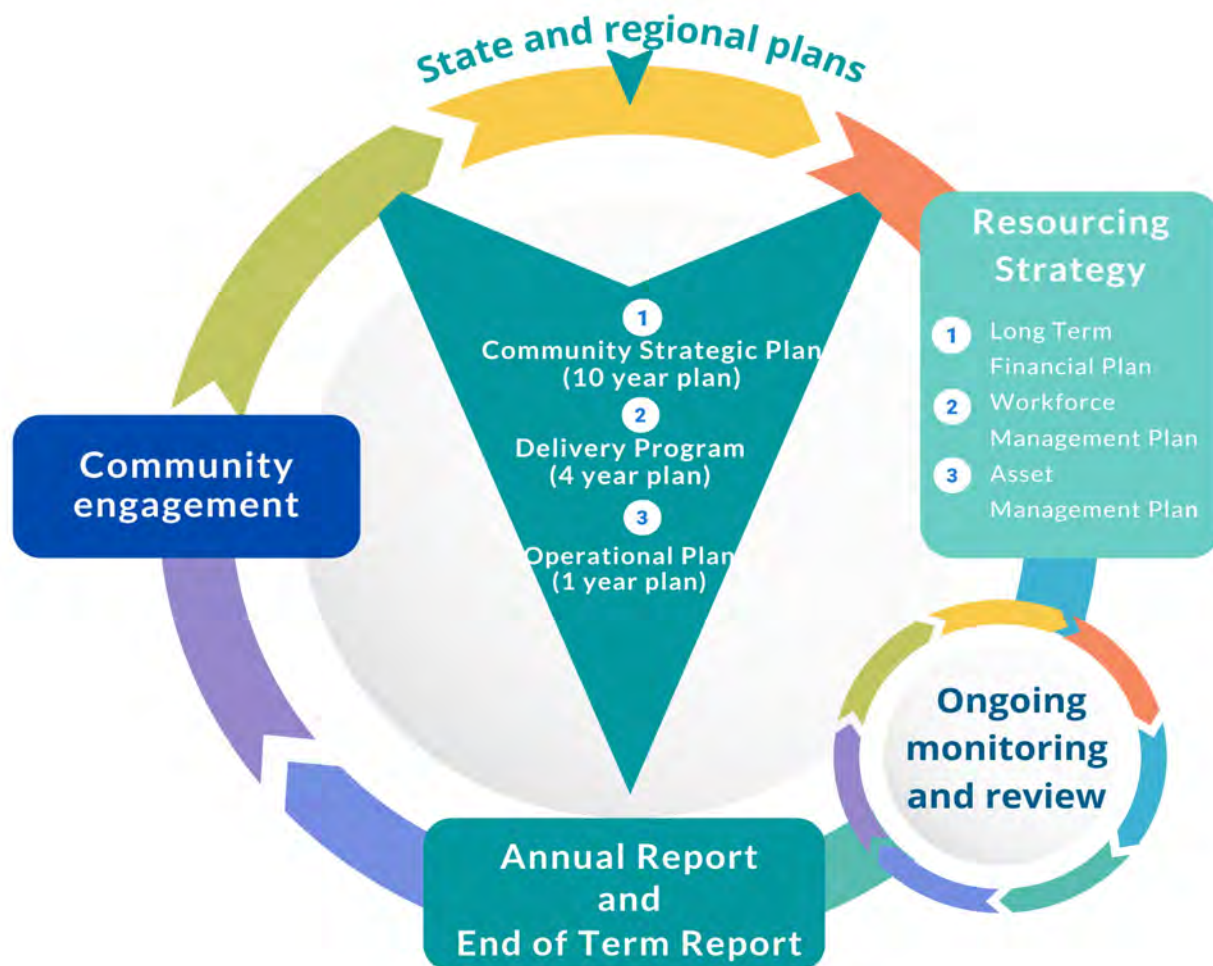
Advocacy - NSW Rural Health Inquiry

A submission was made to the Inquiry into Health Outcomes and Access to Health and Hospital Services in Rural, Regional and Remote NSW. In the submission, we strongly pushed for better health outcomes and access to health and hospital services for our rural community. We emphasised the disadvantage our communities face in accessing specialist services.

Advocacy - Inclusion in the border bubble during COVID

We worked extremely hard, with strong representation from Member for Albury Justin Clancy MP, to have our Council area included in the ‘border bubble’ with Victoria. We thank Mr Clancy for his support as we have a strong reliance and relationship with many different organisations and services in Victoria.

The Integrated Planning and Reporting Cycle



Advocacy - Water

Throughout the year we have continued to push for a better deal for our community with the Murray Darling Basin Plan. Mayor Ruth McRae is a member of the SDLAM Stakeholder and Advisory Group Yanco Creek and Tributaries Advisory Council (YACTAC).

Collaborating with others

We have continued to play an important part in the Regional and Murray Joint Organisation (RAMJO), which comprises: Albury City Council, Berrigan Shire Council, Carrathool Shire Council, Edward River Council, Federation Council, Griffith City Council, Hay Shire Council, Leeton Shire Council, Murray River Council, Murrumbidgee Council and Narrandera Shire Council.

Through RAMJO, we collaborate on strategic planning, priority setting, advocating, engaging with Governments and key stakeholders. This enables the organisation to facilitate infrastructure development and ensure the long term sustainability, well-being and liveability of the region's communities.

Key priorities for the organisation are: water security, energy security and affordability, transport connectivity, digital connectivity, better health services, waste management and industry, workforce and jobs.

We also utilise regional tourism organisations to leverage our promotional activities. This includes the newly established Murrumbidgee Trails network, which is a collaborative campaign by Leeton Shire Council, Lockhart Shire Council, Narrandera Shire Council and ourselves. We are also members of the Newell Highway Promotional Committee, Thrive Riverina and the Kidman Way Promotional Committee.

Other external committees we are involved in relate to the environment, bushfire management, water, libraries, arts and community development. The full list is available in Attachment B.

Positioning Council as an Employer of Choice

We are one of the biggest employees in the Murrumbidgee Council area. Ways we position ourselves as an employer of choice are:

- ♦ The ability for staff to have flexible work arrangements.
- ♦ Nine day fortnight for staff.
- ♦ We have a strong commitment to professional and personal development through training. Each staff member has an Annual Training Plan to ensure they have the means to access career development. Performance appraisals are undertaken annually where staff work with their supervisor to identify training needs for the coming twelve months. The training opportunities not only build on our capabilities in delivering quality services and business excellence, they also address emerging changes in the operation of the organisation. This includes study leave, reimbursement of study costs, reimbursement of travel and accommodation, reimbursement of stationery.
- ♦ Strong commitment to workplace health and safety and risk management.

A restructure is currently being developed. It is planned to formally adopt this structure in the 2021-2022 financial year.

Our workforce (as at 30 June 2021)

Previous years are shown in small print.

Total employees: 89
31 females and 58 males

June 2020 Total employees: 85 - 31 females, 54 males

June 2019 Total employees: 92 - 33 females, 59 males



Full-time employees: 76
19 females and 57 males

June 2020 Total part-time/casual: 13 - 11 females, 2 males

June 2019 Total part-time/casual: 14 - 11 females, 3 males



Part-time/casual employees: 13
12 females and 1 male
(includes 1 casual)

June 2020 Total full-time: 74 - 18 females, 56 males

June 2019 Total full-time: 78 - 22 females, 56 males



Senior management: 8
4 females and 4 males

June 2020 - 4 females, 4 males

June 2019 - 4 females, 4 males



Organisational structure

We have offices and works depots in Coleambally, Darlington Point and Jerilderie. There is also a library at Jerilderie. We are a major employer in the area, with a total of 87 staff.

Mr John Scarce is the General Manager. In January, Mr Tom Dimec joined Council as Director of Infrastructure. Council is currently undertaking a restructure, which proposes two new managerial positions, namely Director of Community, Planning & Environment and a Chief Financial Officer.

A summary of the organisational structure can be seen in the diagram below.

