

## MAYORAL REPORT

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As we meet, I am sure the State of NSW has taken a collective sigh and is ready to move forward with the intentions of servicing and providing optimism and opportunity for our communities into the future.

Election fatigue is obvious, but it is our job at Local Government level to mobilise - revisit and re-establish existing relationships and networks and actively form new relationships with new representatives at the table

We welcomed the Ministerial visit on Tuesday 21 May 2019.

To have both the Deputy Premier, Hon. John Barilaro and the Minister for Water, Hon. Melinda Pavey, with their relevant bureaucratic support network, at Council was a significant step forward. Minister Pavey spoke frankly about a need to better engage and communicate. Seeking resolution to the current water chaos is both Council's desire and, from Tuesday's meeting, it is obviously the desire of the State Government.

At last there are obvious signs of major project activity and progress. Council thanks those that have been able to gain traction, and are confident that this is the way forward. We have large projects and large amounts of money. Real visibility is confidence building and end-product satisfaction is both beneficial for staff and the community.

I would never have thought one could be SO EXCITED over the completion of a toilet block. However, excited I am...and grateful that it is complete.

RAMJO's innovative approach to better understanding our region's priorities - determined from its Strategic Plan, is a work in progress. 6 strategic pillars were identified and 6 working groups established. Workshops for each pillar have been convened and independently facilitated.

Murrumbidgee Council is part of the Digital Connectivity and the Health Sub Committees.

Our Council area has had some rain - our crops are in and we await follow up rain to ensure the viability of our agricultural base economy.

At this Council meeting we have the opportunity to acknowledge 2 long term employees of Council.

We thank David Tamlyn for his invaluable service to the then Jerilderie Shire Council and his generous and committed efforts in the first 12 months of the newly formed Murrumbidgee Council.

We also acknowledge and thank Lisa Bryce for her 22 years of valuable service.

No one is irreplaceable, but some people's contributions are immeasurable, and there is no doubt that David and Lisa both fit into this category.

Our communities thank you for your generosity and wish you both well for the future.

Below are a list of meetings I have attended since last Council meeting:

30th April - Western Riverina Intermodal Freight Terminal - WRIFT - Launch Leeton

Councillors Smith, Bryce and myself made every endeavour to attend this meeting, however we got lost !!!!

I have since contacted Leeton Shire Council, and at a date that is mutually acceptable we will visit the site. It is a great initiative.

2-3 May - Murrumbidgee Local Health District LHAC FORUM, Griffith

The half-yearly LHAC Forum was convened in Griffith.

Valuable presentations were made by:

- the Aboriginal Medical Service, Mental Health;
- Well Health initiatives and programs;
- Ehealth and Digital promotion projects;
- Primary Health Network / MLHD Collaboration;
- 3 Health Related Pitch Presentations: Ageing, Physical well-being body and mind, and Youth Mental Health Project

5 May - Heritage Darlington Point (HDP) Open Day, Darlington Point

On 5 May, Councillor Smith and I attended HDP Open Day. This small but passionate group ensure a new experience each year. To those of us that are relatively new to Darlington Point it is educational and enlightening - particularly some of the pictorial history.

A poetry session by local Carolyn Touhey was warmly appreciated.

7 May - Budget Workshop Darlington Point

As was communicated at the Workshop, the budget is lean. No surprises and little room for change. A work in progress still creating a financial system for all.

### 8 May - RAMJO Board Meeting, Jerilderie

- Continuing conversation around Police staffing and allocations to the Griffith and Deniliquin / Moama areas.
- Discussion around the acquisition of productive land for the development of Solar Farms and the need for Councils and RAMJO to advocate for a better and “real return”.
- Update and progression of 6 Strategic Working Groups.
- Joint Organisation collective update.
- METAG Meeting - Coleambally.
- Communication and discussion around town entrance signage for Darlington Point:
  - Economic development strategy update;
  - Council Visitor Guide;
  - Federal Governments “Drought Communities Programme”;
  - General Business topics-new State Member and Ian Sneddon Tractor Trek;
  - RAMJO update - further 18 Black Spots to be funded.

### 9 May - Regional Tourism Meeting, Arian Park

- Address from Richie Robinson EO Destination Riverina Murray on the Phase 1 data;
- Relating to the “ Go with the Flow” initiative ( included in ED&T Managers Report;
- Phase 2 is about to be initiated and the monetary commitment needs to be discussed.

The Executive of Thrive Riverina will see positions vacated due to end of tenure, some active networking is seeking to address this issue.

Lengthy discussion around the Canberra Markets Experience - it’s value and the business feedback from those involved

### 11 May - St Peter’s Debutante Ball, Coleambally

It was great pleasure to be asked to officially open the St Peter’s Debutante Ball in Coleambally. The 11 debutantes and their partners presented themselves beautifully and acquitted themselves admirably in the dancing stake.

Congratulations to the organising committee, families, friends and the community for a wonderful night, supported enthusiastically by all.

### 13 May - Griffith Police Meeting - Superintendent Peter O’Brien, Griffith

Much discussion regarding Regional Police workforce and recruitment issues. Darlington Point and Coleambally are now at full-strength. Discussion around drug use, drink driving ,domestic violence, social,media abuse, unregistered vehicle use, farm theft and community policing .

Superintendent O'Brien to be replaced in 6 weeks - will touch base when his replacement arrives.

#### 16 May - RAMJO Health Sub Committee Workshop, Jerilderie

One of the 6 identified strategic pillars of RAMJO is Health. Murrumbidgee Council is the lead Council in facilitating this group.

Aged Care, Mental Health, Child and Maternal Health, Transport- Community and Ambulance, Aboriginal Health, access and connectivity to remote resources, and education and procurement of qualified all health related professionals were some of the many topics covered.

Key findings and a priority list / action plan to be developed.

#### 19 May - The Jerilderie Show 'n' Shine and Market Day & Inaugural Art Exhibition

It was my pleasure to officially open the Inaugural Art Exhibition on Sunday 19 May 2019. There was a great display of many different artistic mediums.

My sources tell me that up to 10 artworks were sold, with over 400 people viewing the Exhibition over the week.

A huge thank you to Ros Lockhart for championing this Art Exhibition. A note of thanks also to Anabel Lugsdin and the Tidy Towns Committee for helping to man the Exhibition.

Congratulations also to Colin Sweeney, Lisa Brackenrig and the whole Tidy Towns Committee for ensuring the day's success.

#### 21 May - Extraordinary Council Meeting, Jerilderie

Meeting facilitated to discuss the Draft Delivery Program 2019-2023 and Operational Plan 2019-2020.

Ratifying Staff Recognition Policy to proceed to public exhibition.

Ministerial Visit - Deputy Premier Hon John Barilaro, Water Minister Hon Melinda Pavey, and Member for Albury Justin Clancy. As noted in my opening remarks, a ten strong detail including personnel from NSW Water, DOI Water, and relevant advisors and support staff, spent an hour meeting with Council, YACTAC and members of the community.

#### Key messages

- Genuine engagement and consultation
- improved communication - regularity, transparency, 2 way
- less bureaucracy, less shifting of the goal posts
- water chaos needs to be solution driven with measurable outcomes

22 May - Meeting with Helen Dalton, MP, Member for Murray, Darlington Point  
Meeting covered areas where Murrumbidgee Council considers we need immediate and ongoing advocacy: Police, Education, Health, Water, Roads, all connectivity.

Suggested genuine collaboration with Member for Albury would be advantageous.

Suggested also that future Media Releases have a balanced and informed focus.

22 May - Meeting with Regional Development Australia - Riverina

General Manager John Scarce and I met with Rachel Whiting EO, Melanie Renkin Research Officer and Chair Richard Allsopp to listen to the proposal they have as to why we should align ourselves with RDA Riverina as opposed to RDA Murray.

Historically, the previous Councils have had affiliation with both.

It is Government's request that we affiliate with one only. There is a fee attached and the proposal support and mentoring which would be valuable. We will discuss further at Council meeting.

23 May - Cancer Council's Biggest Morning Tea, Jerilderie

The annual Biggest Morning Tea was once again hugely successful. It is amazingly well supported by business houses and the community. This annual event raises over \$2000. A fantastic result. Congratulations to all concerned.