

MAYORAL REPORT

Council Meeting:	17 December 2020
Report Date:	14 December 2020
Author:	Mayor
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It is hard to believe that we have reached the end of 2020. It has been a roller coaster and the ride is one we don't wish to revisit any time soon. Bushfires, COVID19 and its far reaching consequences including Lockdowns, Border Closures, Remote Workforces, dislocated family situations, home schooling and the biggest challenge of all remaining healthy has certainly stretched us all.

Council thanks each and every one of our staff for their commitment to ensuring our Communities essential services have been delivered uninterrupted - for their flexibility in adapting to the working from home rotating roster, and for their diligence in adhering to the Public Health Orders that have visibly shown such leadership.

We have and are still being cleansed and sanitised within an inch of our lives, but this is an ongoing challenge and so continued vigilance must be the order of the day.

Our Communities have seen very visible evidence of investment in infrastructure during 2020. Murrumbidgee Council has been the beneficiary of much opportunistic funding that will ensure generational upgrading that will serve us admirably into the future.

Our greater Regional Network sees us actively involved in advocating for our Council Footprint across many areas - RAMJO has provided the vehicle that sees us well placed to progress our Digital Connectivity, Water Waste, Energy Jobs and Economic Development.

Our engagement with our close neighbours has seen us bring a "local" Tourism Product to the table. The Murrumbidgee Trails is a great foray into Regional collaboration and sees us prioritising our need to be totally focused on being connected and engaged with Destination Riverina Murray, Destination NSW, Thrive Riverina, Newell Highway Promotion Committee, The Newell Highway Taskforce Committee and The Kidman Way Promotional Committee.

I am sure our updated photo gallery will be invaluable in this space. Linking these valuable avenues with Industry, RDA's and Economic Development will place us at the table for opportunity and available initiatives, many of which will be rolling out under the Post Covid stimulus.

Our Aged and Community Services and Health Advocacy has seen limited exposure and ability to proactively advocate and service during 2020. This has drawn criticism, however Council has been guided by Public Health Orders. Bearing in mind all of these clients fall into the "Vulnerable" category, our priority was to minimise any risk at all times.

We have seen some staff join us and some move on during 2020. to those who have recently joined us we look forward to a long and happy association, to those that have or will be moving on we thank you for your service and wish you well for your future.

Some of our Council Family have experienced recent loss and challenging health issues and we have felt for you at this time, we have also been able to welcome new life and that is what sustains us.

We still have water in our Rivers, Creeks, Irrigation Channels and Lakes and while maintaining this is ageing us at the rate of knots, it is a very clear indicator of opportunity and prosperity for our Agricultural Sector which is clearly our key economic driver and speaks so positively to our communities liveability.

Our season's generous return is so very welcome, the growth has also produced a potential high risk of fire, we are all on alert and very mindful of keeping each other safe.

There is a busy and challenging schedule in front of all of us in 2021. Our Roads Maintenance Program will always be a priority being our major asset. The rollout of the Bencubbin Avenue Project will be very welcome and a great boost for Coleambally.

The Town Revitalisation Projects are so exciting and our communities are really enjoying watching the exciting things appearing as we speak.

My thanks to our Councillors, they are our communities voice and play a vital part in informing us as we move forward. I am particularly grateful for Councillor Rob Black's guidance and input during some challenging times.

My thanks also to General Manager John Scarce and his Management Team, as a team we will achieve great things and we will ensure sustainability and longevity.

In a year that has severely limited our face to face interaction with Bureaucracy we are extremely thankful to those elected representatives that have been in our corner doing their best to achieve positive outcomes for us.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas, a Happy New Year and a well earned break. I look forward to working with you all again, refreshed and ready to roll in 2021.

Below is a list of meetings I have attended during the month:

- 30 November 2020 - Jerilderie Revitalisation Mural Panel Meeting – Jerilderie
- 2 December 2020 - YANCO Stakeholder Advisory Group Meeting – Morundah
- 3 December 2020 - Member for Albury Justin Clancy Meeting - Coleambally & Jerilderie
- 4 December 2020 - Darlington Point Floodplain Risk Management Study Meeting - Darlington Point
- 7 December 2020 - "Wiradjuri Walk" Panel review of EOI's - Darlington Point
- 9 December 2020 - "Life on the Sandhills" Art Exhibition Launch – Narrandera
- Darlington Point Public School Presentation Night
- 10 December 2020 - Jerilderie Revitalisation Mural Panel Meeting- Jerilderie
- CWA Xmas Luncheon - Jerilderie
- 11 December 2020 - Jerilderie Photo Shoot for Council Image Gallery – Jerilderie
- Murrumbidgee Council Staff and Councillors Christmas Functions
- Jerilderie, Darlington Point and Coleambally

15 December 2020 - RAMJO Health Sub Committee Meeting - ZOOM Jerilderie

16 December 2020 - Crown Lands Public Hearing re Elliott Park - Jerilderie

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R. K. McRae" with a small dot at the end.

Ruth McRae
MAYOR