

## **MAYORAL REPORT**

Council Meeting:	26 February 2019
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2019 is here and disappearing at an alarming rate. The landscape is still very dry and the outlook is challenging.

Our Council footprint is a story of the haves and have-nots. So, our job at Council is to advocate for access and equity for all.

That is a serious challenge.

Many, many interest groups, many more water meetings, little information and an unbalanced and troublesome landscape, leaves us with an anxious and uncertain playing field.

Council will continue to advocate for all.

The imminent State election campaign trail certainly identifies water as the burning issue. Nobody can give assurance that further impacts are not around the corner.

Council's Strategic Planning Weekend was very valuable. A huge amount of information was gleaned from engaged and honest discussion.

My take on the weekend was that Councillors welcomed the information that was presented by Matt Johnson of Habitat Planning and Kellie Dissegna, Council's Tourism & Economic Development Manager.

Communication, information, structure, process, timelines, education, innovation, industry, accountability, commitment, value and respect were catch words often used and essential to a well-oiled, functioning organisation.

It is my hope that this weekend is repeated again mid-year. It is a very real reflection of the co-operative and collaborative state of play that Murrumbidgee Council aspires to deliver.

My thanks to General Manager John Scarce and Executive Assistant Julie Conn for co-ordinating and facilitating this workshop.

Below are a list of meetings/events that have occurred during January-February 2019:

Thursday 10 January-Extraordinary Council Meeting, Jerilderie  
Presentation of Council's financial statements.

Friday 11 January-Meeting-Cypress View Lodge, Coleambally  
Expressions of Interest to undertake new Management Plan.

Friday 25 January 2019-Australia Day Dinner, Coleambally  
Council welcome to Australia Day Ambassador Ginny Stevens.

Saturday 26 January 2019-Australia Day:

### **Australia Day Breakfast in Coleambally**

- Citizen of the Year - Catherine De Mamiel
- Young Citizen of the Year – Tom Breed
- Lifetime Achievement Award – Lyn Stuckings
- Sportsperson of the Year-Thomas Fattore
- Young Sportsperson of the Year-Phoebe White
- Sub-Junior Sportsperson of the Year-Alana Jones
- Sporting Team of the Year-Coleambally Central School 4 x 50m freestyle Central Schools' Relay Team
- Cultural Award-Country Education Foundation of Coleambally-Darlington Point
- Community Event of the Year-50<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebrations

### **Lunchtime Event at Darlington Point**

Address by Ambassador

Unfortunately no nominations for Awards.

### **Evening Celebration at Jerilderie**

Annual fireworks and music by Lake Jerilderie

- Citizen of the Year-Joy Knight
- Young Citizen of the Year-Mitchell A'Vard
- Sportsperson of the Year-Sienna Burke
- Little Aussie-Abbey A'Vard, Jerilderie Public School
- Little Aussie-Chloe Rorato, St Joseph's School

Council offers congratulations to each of the Award recipients and acknowledges the hardworking Australia Day Committees.

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 29-31 January 2019-Local Industry and Business Open Houses at Coleambally, Darlington Point and Jerilderie.

I attended 2 of the 3 sessions. It was specific in its delivery and I would like to see this level of engagement continue to bring broader content to the table. It was encouraging to have both the offices of Deputy Premier and Cabinet and Regional Development Australia engaged in this process.

Friday, Saturday, Sunday, 1-3 February 2019-Strategic Planning Workshop, Griffith.

As already stated, the first Council workshop of 2019 initiated open and frank discussion.

The 2 presentations were both informative and positive:

- Planning Demystified; and
- Economic Development & Tourism-Status and initial scope.

It is my genuine hope that this level of engagement is a regular form of communication and knowledge sharing.

Wednesday 6 February 2019-Water Update Meeting, Coleambally

Present: Councillor Black, General Manager and myself.

Update and communication regarding accessing and sourcing additional water for Jerilderie Town Water Supply.

Wednesday 6 February 2019-METAG Meeting, Coleambally

This was Kellie's introduction to this industry and business advisory group. She covered off on:

- Growing Local Economies Fund (areas of telecommunications, energy, gas supply, transport networks);
- Council's economic development and tourism strategy creation;
- Updates from RDA, Thrive Riverina;
- Newell Highway and Kidman Way updates;
- Engagement with educational institutions;
- Industry forums.

Friday 15 February 2019-Murray Darling Association Meeting, Leeton

Presentation by Colin Mues, MDBA, (Portfolio-Science and Knowledge, Stakeholder Relations).

Basin Outlook Update

Low rainfall

Very hot 3 months, particularly so in back end of this summer

Hot/dry/low inflows/drought=Murrumbidgee status

Menindee Lakes update

Currently 34 GLs (at full supply 1731 GLs)

MDBA manage until it falls below 480 GLs = Water NSW

SDL Project-reconfiguration of Lakes

- Est budget 2015 - \$4.5 billion
- Productivity Commission Report
- Red, Amber and Green Flags
  - Red-Water resource plans
    - Northern Basin interests (fish deaths)
  - Amber
  - Water Recovery-2750-Green
  - Water Recovery-450 GLs-Red
- Compliance must be addressed and monitored
- Speculation around the agency/regulator for this issue
- MDA Region 9 Chair, Leeton Mayor, Paul Maytom, to facilitate and convene meeting with all Mayors and General Managers as a united Advocacy Group.

Friday 15 February 2019-Internal Audit Risk & Improvement Committee, Darlington Point

A functioning Committee that is finding its feet. A steep learning curve for all at the table.

Monday 18 February 2019-Murray Regional Strategy Group, Deniliquin

Much discussion around their “Pause the Plan” initiative and a call for a genuine, all encompassing, review that acknowledges previous reviews and includes current holistic data.

Tuesday 19 February 2019-Thrive Riverina Board Meeting, Darlington Point

It was my pleasure to provide a welcome to the Thrive Riverina Board.

This is a credentialed, savvy group that has kicked big goals in its short existence. It is the essential feeder group that gives the Riverina prominence in the greater destination Riverina/Murray beast.

As a Council, we must endeavour to remain engaged and supportive of this entity.

Tuesday 19 February, 2019-NSW Farmers-Political Forum Debate, Griffith

The only thing I am sure of is this area and our Council remains very vulnerable in this “Water Debacle Debate”. Well attended by over 300 people. Valuable networking opportunity.

Thursday 21 February 2019-Alternative Letter Gathering

The “Speak Up” collective community based groups-Deniliquin/Finley area-have brain-stormed an idea that mirrors the Ned Kelly story and the Jerilderie Letter.

The angle is that it will liken Kelly’s treatment by the Police to the communities treatment by the water bureaucrats. Stay tuned.

I have had casual meetings with both Austin Evans, MP, Member for Murray on 19 February 2019, and Justin Clancey on 18 February 2019, as part of their familiarisation and community engagement rounds in preparation for the NSW State Election.

Cr Ruth McRae  
**MAYOR**