

MAYORAL REPORT

Council Meeting	8 December 2023
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Author:	Mayor
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As the close of 2023 fast approaches, there is much that Council should acknowledge during what has been another very busy and challenging year. The introduction of our 3 stream waste strategy is a real feather in Council's cap. The staff, Councillors and our communities should be truly satisfied with the introduction and the continuing vigilance in this space, aspiring to make it the best it can be.

Our road works - a very large part of Council's core business, continues to be a very busy part of what we do. Large human resources are allocated in this space, and with opportunistic grant money coming into our system much has been done and there is still much to be done - Channel Nine Road, Calrose Road, Four Corners Road and Bencubbin Avenue have all had a large injection of money and it is good to see that Four Corners Road and Bencubbin Avenue seals are finally happening.

Council has received \$7.6 million in flood money to address some of the damage identified across our LGA. This will ensure a continuing program will be rolled out well into 2024/25. With attention firmly focused on completing some of our major projects, visible signs of this happening can be seen at the Young Street residential subdivision in Darlington Point, Brolga Place and Sporting Precinct civil works in Coleambally, the Jerilderie Shared Spaces Project - Civic Hall/Luke Park and the Monash Park netball change rooms. There is a lot happening.

We now have 2 EV charging stations in our LGA - 1 in Jerilderie and 1 in Coleambally. Council staff are actively working to source funding for an EV charger in Darlington Point.

The replacement of the major electrical transformer adjacent to Monash Park in Jerilderie is in progress - this vital electrical upgrade will provide a much needed capacity injection for this precinct. The Jerilderie Football/Netball Club, the Cricket Club and Race Club have all made significant pledges of money to go towards the cost of this project.

Disappointingly, Council's new infrastructure in Darlington Point has been the subject of vandalism on more than one occasion. The longed for lift and change and general toilet facilities adjacent to the Cemetery and the Gum View Cafe have been the target. I urge all community members to be aware and notify the Police if they witness anything untoward - the graffiti and language is disrespectful and offensive.

Our New Residents Meet and Greet were, as a whole, successful. These were happy, social and engaged gathering, and our thanks to the staff and Councillors who generously gave of their time to attend. We live in 3 great communities, and our best ambassadors are our people and our positive word of mouth. The brochure Council has printed is a great resource and I encourage you all to read it and use it to promote where we live.

The last 2 weeks have been incredibly busy. We have attended the LGNSW Conference at Rosehill in Sydney, the Country Mayors' AGM and general meeting at Parliament House in Sydney, the Newell Highway Taskforce Committee AGM and general meeting at Parliament House in Canberra. The latter 2 meetings were very valuable - we had the opportunity to have many State and Federal Members in the room. It is an incredibly busy time of year for all tiers of Government, including Local Government. The pressing issues facing our communities appear to be escalating, assistance and answers appear to be becoming more difficult to achieve and Local Government challenges are far greater than our core business eg the cost of living explosion, the acute housing crisis, homelessness, the uncertainty of the water debacle, our better access to basic health services, our continuing advocacy for better connectivity across all technology medium, and our ability to attract and engage our necessary human resources to make our organisation the best it can be. We view them as challenges - they are not insurmountable.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our staff - our organisation is only as good as the people that work in it. Serving and servicing the public is often a thankless task, and to do it day in day out with a smile and a can do attitude is commendable. I would like to thank the Councillors for their contribution during 2023 - my thanks to Deputy Mayor Rob Black for the support he gives me on daily basis. Council thanks each and every one of our staff who strive to make the Murrumbidgee LGA the best place it can be. My thanks to Julie Conn for her endless reserves of patience, her organisational skills and her ability to make sure I am where I am supposed to be - no easy feat. And lastly, all organisations that are successful require strong leadership. To Council's executive staff, and ultimately our General Manager John Scarce, a big thank you from the Council footprint you oversee. I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Take time to be with the important people in your lives and we look forward to everybody returning refreshed for a productive 2024.

Below are a list of Meetings I have attended in November/December:

22 November 2023

New Residents' Meet and Greet Jerilderie

23 November 2023

New Residents' Meet and Greet Coleambally (thank you Cr Chirgwin for attending on my behalf)

23-24 November 2023

Country Mayors' Association Meeting - Parliament House Sydney

28 November 2023

Western Regional Planning Panel - Teams Meeting - Solar Farm Approvals

29-30 November 2023

Newell Highway Taskforce Committee Meeting - Parliament House Canberra

5 December 2023

St Joseph's Jerilderie Public Speaking Judging
Jerilderie Independent Living Limited Meeting

6 December 2023

Darlington Point Public School Presentation Night

7 December 2023

St Peter's Coleambally Presentation Night

8 December 2023

Council Workshop and Council Meeting Coleambally
Councillors and Staff Christmas Party
St Joseph's Primary School Presentation Night Jerilderie

11 December 2023

RAMJO Water Sub Committee Meeting (via Teams)
ARIC Meeting Jerilderie

12 December 2023

Coleambally Central School Presentation Night
Jerilderie Public School Presentation Night (Cr Bryce Attending)

Best wishes for a happy and safe Christmas and New Year.

R. K. McRae

Ruth McRae, OAM
MAYOR

