

RFS Annual Report for Councils 2016/17

COPY

From: Tahlia Aramini <Tahlia.Aramini@rfs.nsw.gov.au>

council@carrathool.nsw.gov.au <council@carrathool.nsw.gov.au>, admin@griffith.nsw.gov.au <admin@griffith.nsw.gov.au>, mail@hay.nsw.gov.au <mail@hay.nsw.gov.au>, council@leeton.nsw.gov.au <council@leeton.nsw.gov.au>,

To: mail@murrumbidgee.nsw.gov.au <mail@murrumbidgee.nsw.gov.au>, jerilderie@murrumbidgee.nsw.gov.au <jerilderie@murrumbidgee.nsw.gov.au>, coly@murrumbidgee.nsw.gov.au <coly@murrumbidgee.nsw.gov.au>, council@narrandera.nsw.gov.au <council@narrandera.nsw.gov.au>

Cc: Kevin Adams <Kevin.Adams@rfs.nsw.gov.au>, Jason Wall <Jason.Wall@rfs.nsw.gov.au>

Date: 03/07/2017 10:30 AM

Good morning all,

See attached - Please forward to appropriate staff.

Thank You



Tahlia Aramini | District Administration Officer | MIA District
NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

MIA District 200 Wakaden St Griffith NSW 2680

P 02 6966 7800 **F** 02 6966 7878 **E** tahlia.aramini@rfs.nsw.gov.au

www.rfs.nsw.gov.au | www.facebook.com/nswrfs | www.twitter.com/nswrfs

PREPARE. ACT. SURVIVE.

RFS Disclaimer:

This email message, and any files/links transmitted with it, is intended only for the addressee(s) and contains information which may be confidential. If you are not the intended recipient, please notify the sender and delete this email and any copies or links to this email completely and immediately from your system. Views expressed in this message are those of the individual sender, and are not necessarily the views of the NSW Rural Fire Service.

Attachments:

- Annual Council Report MIA District 2016-17.pdf





MIA DISTRICT

ANNUAL COUNCIL REPORT

2016/17

Executive Services

Pre Season Captains and Group Captains meetings were held from 5th to 14th September 2016.

A combined Post Season Meeting was held on 7th April 2017. This included volunteers from the MIA local government areas of Carrathool, Griffith, Hay, Leeton, Murrumbidgee and Narrandera.

The Bushfire Management Committee (BFMC) met twice. A Pre Season meeting was held on 14th September 2016 and the Post Season on 19th April 2017.

Liaison Committee meetings are only held as required, no meeting was held in 2016/17.

The Bush Fire Danger Period for 2016/17 ran from 1st October 2016 until 31st March 2017. No major incidents occurred within the district.

Infrastructure Services

Tankers

For the 2016/2017 financial year the MIA District received the following vehicles:

- A New Personnel Carrier for Hay HQ (Hay)
- A New Personnel Carrier for Goolgowi (Carrathool)
- A New Personnel Carrier for Darlington Point (Murrumbidgee)
- A New Category 1 Tanker for Coleambally (Murrumbidgee)
- A 2nd Hand Tanker for Bunda North (Carrathool)
- A 2nd Hand Tanker for Colinroobie (Narrandera)

We are still waiting on a Category 1 tanker for Carrathool Shire Council.

A number of vehicles have been reallocated around the district, and a number of vehicles older than 25 years have been disposed of.

Stations

Stations at Gogeldrie (Leeton) and Maley (Murrumbidgee) are now complete, council has issued occupancy certificates and these Brigades have moved in.

Maley Station had electricity connected. Works are underway to have electricity connected at Gogeldrie (Leeton), Colinroobie and Gillenbah (Narrandera). These will be completed in the next reporting period.

The bulk storage facility and amenities at Griffith Airport has commenced. The base is complete and the slab will be poured prior the end of this financial year. This build will be completed in the next reporting period.

Sandigo Station has had the DA approved and the build will commence in the next reporting period.

We are currently in negotiations to have stations built at Cararbury (Murrumbidgee), Widgee (Griffith), Gunbar (Carrathool), Area C (Hay) and Euroley (Leeton).

Airbases

Containers and Quick Fill pumps have all been installed at the airbases in Hay, Hillston and Narrandera. These Air Bases are fully operational and Hillston and Narrandera were utilised during the 2016/17 bushfire season.

Fire Investigations

There have been 4 structure fires investigated. Investigators also attended several grass fires, however determined that investigations were not warranted.

Membership Services

Training

Courses offered to volunteer members included:

- Basic Fire Fighter
- Village Fire Fighter
- Advance Programs Introduction
- Crew Safety Welfare
- Navigation
- Hydraulics
- Wildfire
- Crew Leader Supervision
- Crew Leader Village
- Crew Leader Wildfire
- Crew Leader Fast track
- Conduct Briefings & Debriefings
- Rural Fire Driver
- First Aid Application
- Trim/Cross cut Felled Trees
- Live Fire Instructor
- Communication Centre Assistant
- Community Safety Assistant

A total of 7 courses have been completed to date. There is a further 9 courses scheduled for the remainder of 2017.

Membership

A total of 124 new volunteers have joined the MIA District, since July 2016.

Around 90% of new volunteer's are attending a Basic Fire Fighting course soon after joining and 85 volunteers have resigned from the MIA District since July 2016, with 1 passing away.

Medals

A Medal Presentation was held in Griffith in September 2016 for volunteers in Leeton & Murrumbidgee local government areas.

There were 15 National Medals and/or clasps presented. There were 74 recipients receiving long service medals, being presented with 78 medals/clasps, with a combined total of 2,486 Years of Service.

Operational Services

Bush Fire Risk Management Plan

The new MIA District Bush Fire Risk Management Plan was endorsed by the MIA BFMC in April 2016 and has been forwarded to the NSW Bush Fire Coordinating Committee (BFCC). The BFCC have acknowledged receipt of the new plan and we are waiting for their approval. To date the BFRMP has not been approved, this is due the

local government mergers of Murrumbidgee Shire and Jerilderie Shire's. Once this is finalised the BFRMP will then go through the approval process.

Bushfire Hazard Reduction

Hazard reduction works were carried out in spring in various areas of the MIA District. RFS State Mitigation services carried out mechanical hazard reduction works in residential interface and strategic infrastructure areas. RFS volunteers conducted hazard reduction burns in residential interface areas and other strategic locations across the six local government areas..

Fire Permits

A total of 1731 fire permits were issued in the MIA District, which comprised of 236 in Carrathool, 702 in Griffith, 46 in Hay, 343 in Leeton, 263 in Murrumbidgee and 141 in Narrandera.

Community Engagement

The MIA District Community Engagement Team (MIA CET) is coordinating various community engagement activities within the District. This financial year we have completed 42 activities. The activities range from school & day care visits to shows/field days and community group talks. The MIA CET has conducted 10 school and day care centre visits with the students learning about home safety. From Stop, Drop, Cover & Roll, to how to make a 000 call, and what information they will need to give when making a call. Thanks to the dedicated team of volunteers who take their time to provide this community service to the communities that they live.

Community Protection Plans

Community Protection Plans have been prepared by the RFS and endorsed by the MIA Bush Fire Management Committee for Darlington Point and Barellan.

Incidents

	Total Incidents	Fire & Explosion	MVA	Hazard Condition	Service Call	Good Intent	False Alarm	Other
Carrathool	73	56	9	1	3	3	1	0
Griffith	178	129	11	6	0	3	27	1
Hay	45	36	7	0	0	1	0	2
Leeton	94	68	5	1	0	4	16	0
Murrumbidgee	63	42	8	2	4	4	2	1
Narrandera	82	58	8	3	5	3	3	2
Total MIA	535	389	48	13	12	18	49	6



For further information regarding this report, please contact Kevin Adams on **02 6966 7800** or email mia.zone@rfs.nsw.gov.au



SPONSORSHIP PROPOSAL

Dear Potential Sponsor,

The Riverina Redneck Rally invites you to become a sponsor for our **2nd Annual “Riverina Redneck Rally 2018”**.

Our first Car Rally which was held on the 18 March 2017 raised an amazing amount of **\$123,614** for Country Hope. Which is a Riverina/ Murray based organisation that offers support to children diagnosed with cancer and other life threatening illnesses.

The primary source of funding for Country Hope is from corporate sponsors and community fundraisers. Due to the fact that they receive no Government funding like a lot of the larger support groups.

This is the reason why we decided to make Country Hope the sole beneficiary of all our fundraising efforts.

After our very first Rally we became the largest fundraiser that Country hope has ever had and we are aiming to try and double this amount on the second rally.

The Riverina Redneck Rally competitors are to raise funds to aid Country Hope. Once teams are accepted they must raise a minimum of \$2500 to be eligible to participate in the rally. All of the teams entered went above and beyond this figure on the last rally with the highest amount from one team being \$12100 raised.

The first rally attracted **30** car entries. And this year we have set our target has been raised to **85** car entries which has filled in the first 3 weeks of advertising. And we have another 30 cars on the waiting list to get into the rally.

This we feel is due to the amazing coverage that we received via Television News reports, Radio interviews, Newspaper and Facebook sharing.

Your Sponsorship will help ensure the success of this exciting event. Which in its first year has become one of the largest fundraisers in the Riverina/ Murray region. And the only event of its kind for this region also.

Attached is more information on this exciting event and its sponsorship levels.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns regarding this event.

Gavin Gilbert – Event Director

0439255448

Email – riverinaredneckrally@gmail.com

Website – www.riverinaredneckrally.com.au

Facebook – Riverina Car Rally



GOLD SPONSORSHIP \$5000

- Promotional materials supplied by your company placed in participant goody bags as well as handed out to communities we will be visiting
- Company Logo displayed on t-shirts for rally
- Company Logo prominently displayed on rally website with a link to your own website including Rally Facebook page
- Company Logo placed on all cars alongside Country Hope logo
- Promote your business during any televised/ radio/ newspaper interviews

SILVER SPONSORSHIP \$2500

- Promotional materials supplied by your company placed in participant goody bags as well as handed out to communities we will be visiting
- Company Logo displayed on rally website with a link to your own website
- Promote your business during any televised/ radio/ newspaper interviews

BRONZE SPONSORSHIP \$1000

- Promotional materials supplied by your company placed in participant goody bags as well as handed out to communities we will be visiting
- Company Logo displayed on website as a supporter

Promotional Materials to be supplied by sponsors for goody bags and handouts

Alison Coe

From: Bernard Star <Bstar@colyirr.com.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 15 August 2017 3:00 PM
To: Alison Coe
Subject: Rates on McGuinness Reserve

To Whom it May Concern,

Coleambally Landcare Group has been charged with the conservation management of the former McGuinness Reserve.

This block is owned by the crown and is managed for conservation purposes only with no commercial benefit. Coleambally Landcare has a membership of 26 and is a not for profit organisation. We would appreciate if council could consider a waiving of rates on this block.

Thanks in advance.

Bernard Star

President

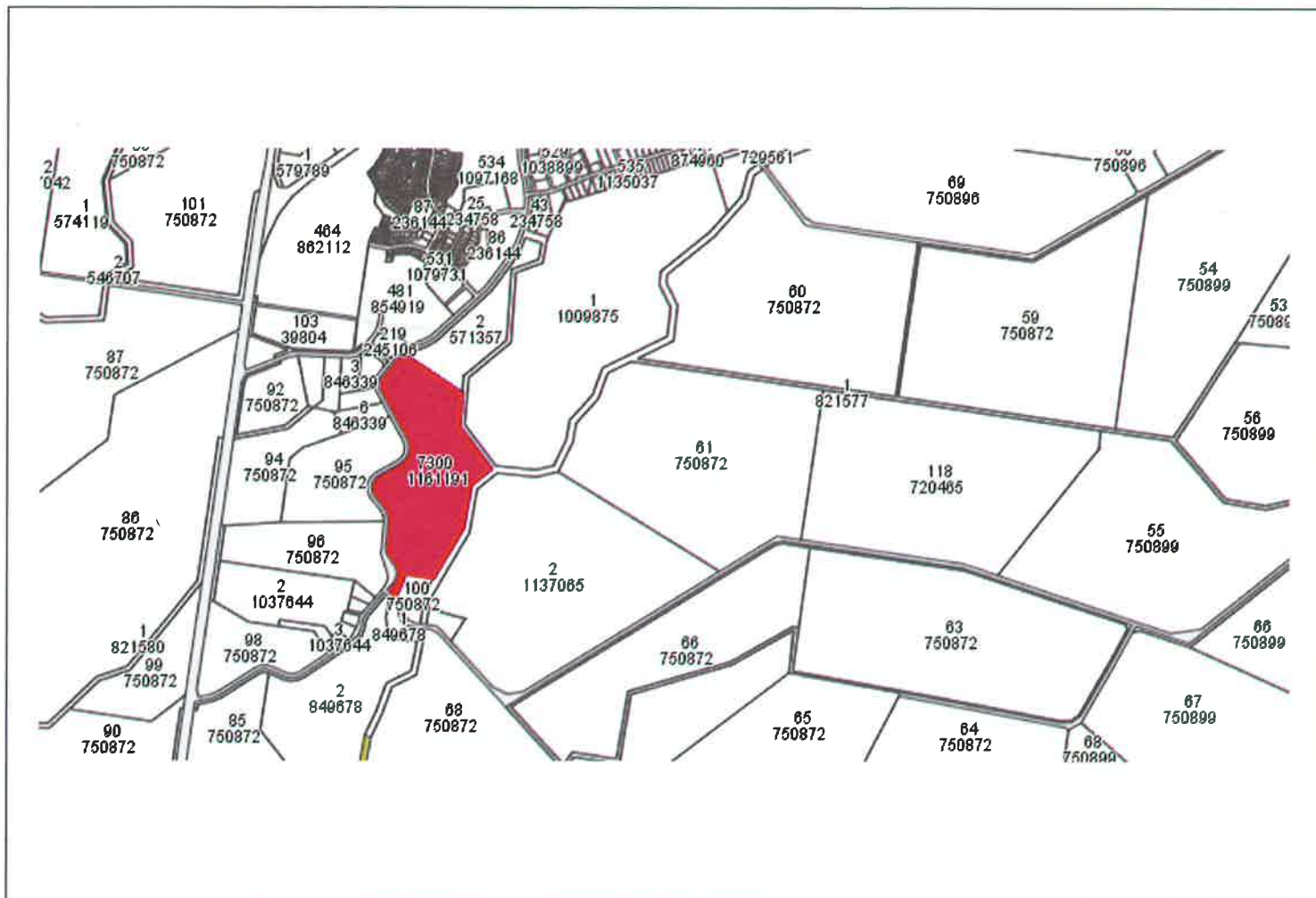
Coleambally Landcare Group Inc





Feature Report of Kidman Way COLEAMBALLY NSW 2707

Created on 14/07/2017



Property Lot: 7300	Assessment No:
Property Section:	Owners: Coleambally Landcare Group Inc
Property Plan: 1161191	Address 1: PO Box 50
Property Address:	Address 2: COLEAMBALLY NSW 2707
Kidman Way COLEAMBALLY NSW 2707	Address 3:

Disclaimer

This information has been prepared for Council's internal purposes and for no other purpose. No statement is made about the accuracy or suitability of the information for use for any purpose (whether the purpose has been notified to Council or not). While every care is taken to ensure the accuracy of this data, neither the Murrumbidgee Shire Council nor the LPI makes any representations or warranties about its accuracy, reliability, completeness or suitability for any particular purpose and disclaims all responsibility and all liability (including without limitation, liability in negligence) for all expenses, losses, damages (including indirect or consequential damage) and costs which you might incur as a result of the data being inaccurate or incomplete in any way and for any reason. © The State of New South Wales (Land and Property Information), © Murrumbidgee Shire Council.



DRAFT Communication Strategy

	Name	Position	Signature	Date
Responsible Officer	Alison Coe	Assistant General Manager – Corporate and Community Services		
Authorised By	Craig Moffitt	General Manager		

Document Revision History	
Date adopted by Council:	
Minute No:	
Revision Number:	
Previous Reviews:	
Next Review Date:	
Review Date:	
Minute Number:	
Review Date:	
Minute Number:	

August 2017

Contents

Communication Principles	3
Key Messages.....	3
Key Stakeholders	4
Consultation with the Community	4
Consultation with Staff	5
Communication Planning.....	5
How Murrumbidgee Council will communicate.....	10
Potential Risks.....	14
Risk Management	14
Communication Evaluation	15

MURRUMBIDGEE COUNCIL

Communication Strategy

Communication Principles

Communicating effectively is an important element of Council operations. Ensuring that the right messages get to those who need to hear it within a timely fashion is a key component of any Communications Strategy. As such, the following principles will apply to all Murrumbidgee Council communications:

- Our communication is planned and pro-active
- Our messages are clear, concise and easy to understand
- We provide our community with an opportunity to express their views and have input into our strategies
- Our internal communications are open and engender trust amongst employees
- We maximise communication effectiveness by using the most appropriate communication channel
- We evaluate the effectiveness of our internal and external communications on an ongoing basis

Key Messages

When Council communicates to the public it is to cover any one of three areas:

- ✓ We are taking a role of leadership (and letting you know what we're going to do about a certain situation)
- ✓ Meeting our commitments (we said we would do this and now we're reporting back to you)
- ✓ We are inviting you, the community to participate in some way

Community and Stakeholder involvement is essential to achieving the outcome of a better informed community, a staff which is actively involved in the change process and two-way communication which is enhanced and encouraged.

External

- Our focus is providing residents with real value for money.
- We will build community partnerships to deliver the best possible outcomes
- What Murrumbidgee Council does today shapes our community's long term future
- We listen to our community – they have a real role to play in shaping their local government
- We rely on our community to help us focus on what is important to ensure we do first things first.

Internal

- All Murrumbidgee Council employees are valued, respected and accountable for their performance.
- We are committed to listening, learning and responding to staff
- Council leaders are visible and accessible.
- Conversations with staff are a priority
- We encourage, acknowledge and celebrate success
- We place a high value on trust in the organisation

Key Stakeholders

To assist in determining which method of communication is best implemented, it is important to take the following steps:

- ✓ Identify all groups and individuals who may be affected by this change
- ✓ Assess the level of impact this change will have on each group and individual
- ✓ Develop/select a two-way communication process
- ✓ A consultation process has been included
- ✓ Determine the key messages that need to be delivered and how they will be delivered

It is important to remember that not all methods of communication will effectively get the right message to the right people, which is why it is often preferable to utilise a number of mechanisms.

Consultation with the Community

The level of community consultation should correspond to the potential level of community impact or concern, and should be tailored to the nature, complexity and impact of the issue, plan or policy.

Community consultation may range from

1. Exchange of discreet information between individuals or stakeholders.
2. Dissemination of information across the wider community
3. Obtaining general community feedback and information
4. Interrogating, engaging or partnering the community.

These levels of consultation form a spectrum of community involvement from providing information through to actively involving the community in Murrumbidgee Council's decision-making.

Consultation with Staff

Consultation is the best means of getting staff on-board with the change. This will allow them the opportunity to understand the new vision of the Council and where it is going, and it will allow staff to have their say.

To ensure consultation is effective, all staff that will be affected by the change will be provided with an explanation of the proposed change and provided with a copy of the issues paper (once it has been agreed to by Manex).

Consultation can take place with an individual staff member, or group of staff and, where they so choose, representative(s). Depending on the circumstances of each case a range of methods of consultation may be pursued, such as:

- Forming a Working Party to examine the proposed changes and make recommendations on them, especially where staff may not have been involved in the initial planning phase. Where a working party is formed, a timetable for its discussions will be provided
- Personal meetings with possibly affected staff, and, where they so choose, their representatives

Communication Planning

Good communication is not an accident. There are seven universal truths which underpin good communication. These are the guiding principles against which communications will be evaluated:

1. Communication must, in general, be *planned*,
2. Opportunistic media should focus on social media platforms eg. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and utilise images, videos etc at local events.
3. Messages should be *clear* and *concise* – which means short catchy posts with links back to Council's website.
4. Communication is a *two-way* responsibility – this allows for Council to not only get the message out but receive ongoing input from the community to provide feedback.
5. There must be opportunity for *feedback*,
6. Communication must be *open* and *transparent*,
7. Channels of communication must be *appropriate* to the recipient(s) – to this end, Council will ask the community how it wishes to receive regular and ad hoc information.
8. Communication needs to be *monitored* and *evaluated*.
9. Over-communication is preferable to under-communication and repeat messages are OK.

Communications Plan Overview		
Purpose	Reasoning	Process & Responsibilities
Media Relations/Publicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media engagement is planned wherever possible Acknowledge the value of the media as a means of communicating with our key stakeholders Strengthen our relationship with the media, dealing with them in an open, honest and pro-active manner Deliver clear, consistent messages to our stakeholders Ensure both Murrumbidgee Council and media representatives have a clear understanding of appropriate communication channels and procedures Provide a briefing sheet with background and key points 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrator and General Manager actively work on building strong, professional and effective relationship with media at all levels, including newspapers, television and radio - think first, "Would people want to know about this? Should people know about this?" Media releases are distributed on a regular basis, highlighting achievements of council – Releases should be sent when the answer to the questions above is "yes" Staff responsible for communication to pro-actively identify positive publicity opportunities and prompt work units and Manex The General Manager and Administrator are well briefed to be Council spokespeople on issues Media database covers all mediums and is continually updated
Community Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure statutory obligations are met Ensure those affected by Council decision have the opportunity to be involved in the decision making process Ensure community is provided with the information it requires to participate in a meaningful way 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Know the project Map the stakeholders Define the issues Find the right type of engagement to fit the project/issue/event – ensure activity is time & venue appropriate for target audience. Develop a community engagement plan

Communications Plan Overview

Purpose	Reasoning	Process & Responsibilities
Internal Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure staff are well-informed about the changes in their workplace • Encourage the use of clear, concise and easy to understand language throughout the organisation • Build understanding, commitment and loyalty among staff • A common sense of purpose is engendered through keeping people informed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Council documents are written in clear, easy to understand language. Training is provided where appropriate • Ensure all staff are able to hear about their workplace in their workplace before they read it in the newspaper or on social media • Put communications and key messages on Manex agenda – this will ensure that decisions made at a Manex level are appropriately communicated to staff. • Work with Manex to actively identify successes and acknowledgements • Ensure key messages are communicated throughout the organisation • Expand Intranet for effective use as an internal communications tool • Deliver better communication results for outdoor staff. For example, attaching important internal emails to payslips, key messages information sheets to be read at weekly toolbox talks. Alternatively, develop and SMS system to advise all staff when critical communication has been issued and/or place printed information in work vehicles, staff pigeon-holes, notice boards, sign-on points.

Communications Plan Overview		
Purpose	Reasoning	Process & Responsibilities
Community Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure statutory obligations are met • Ensure those affected by Council decision have the opportunity to be involved in the decision making process • Ensure community is provided with the information it requires to participate in a meaningful way 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know the project • Map the stakeholders • Define the issues • Find the right type of engagement to fit the project/issue/event – ensure activity is time & venue appropriate for target audience. • Develop a community engagement plan
Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure Council's website reflects the organisation and provides regularly updated information • Ensure Council's website has update contact details 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designate clear areas of responsibility regarding technical and visual aspects of website administration • Develop overall visual design of website homepage • Prepare website style guidelines • Incorporate linkages to Council's social networking/engagement tools
Social Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media engagement is planned wherever possible • Deliver clear, consistent messages to our stakeholders • Provides a forum for engaging the community in on relevant issues • Increase access to information external to Murrumbidgee Council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff responsible for communication to pro-actively identify positive publicity opportunities and prompt work units and Manex • Links to media releases are distributed on a regular basis. • Promote positive outcomes for the community

Communications Plan Overview

Purpose	Reasoning	Process & Responsibilities
Advertising	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inform community about Council's decisions, events and operations• Invite public engagement on relevant issues• Use advertising to broaden the appeal of Council's brand• Ensure all advertising adheres to Council's corporate branding standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure all advertising conforms to Council's consistent style and standards• Encourage the use of clear, easy-to-understand language where possible. Edit unwieldy language where appropriate• Seek advertising opportunities for Council that offer strategic value• Utilise online methods i.e., webpage, Facebook to promote Council activities

How Murrumbidgee Council will communicate

Please note – Murrumbidgee Council’s delegated media spokespersons are the Mayor and General Manager

Method- (what channel will Council use?)	When will this be employed?	Why will this method be used?	Who will be the audience?
Council meetings	Monthly	To provide consistent, approved content to the public	Internal & External
Annual Report	Annually	It is a statutory requirement and it is an effective method by which Council summarises its activities for the year	Internal & External
Council/Community Plan	4-yearly with annual review	Statutory requirement	Internal & External
Website – also Home Page Feature and Home Page Introduction	Ongoing	This method is a contemporary and effective method of communication that will become more popular as the NBN is rolled out.	Internal & External
Surveys and evaluations	As required	Provides a means for anonymous contributions	Internal & External
Customer Service – counter enquiries and phone calls	Daily	An essential (mandatory) method by which Council interacts with its community and key stakeholders	Internal & External
Letters	As required	To be used for specific project based activities eg., roadworks, capital programs, events	Internal & External
E-mail direct to stakeholders	As required	To provide important and sometimes complex information on a regular basis	Internal & External

Method- (what channel will Council use?)	When will this be employed?	Why will this method be used?	Who will be the audience?
Phone	Ongoing	When information is needed in a short space of time and a two way conversation will assist in progressing the matter	Internal & External
Public Exhibition of documents	As required	Statutory requirement	Internal & External
Customer Service Centre foyers for displays/posters/brochures	As required	For community events and non – serious matters	Internal & External
What's On	Ongoing		Internal & External
Fact sheets for media, councillor and staff briefings developed into handouts for resident meetings	As required	To get across an important message and remove ambiguity "Council is in control of the content"	Internal & External
Create new corporate identity	As soon as possible	To create pride in the workforce, generate community cohesion through a shared image	Internal & External
Mission Statement	As soon as possible	To create a united direction for the Council and generate community cohesion through a shared vision	Internal & External
Using the signature panel on Council emails to promote a matter/event	As required	Cost effective and has the potential to reach a large audience	Internal & External

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION			
Method- (what channel will Council use?)	When will this be employed?	Why will this method be used?	Who will be the audience?
Direct contact between Council and residents/business etc	As required	It is an effective method of communication which can be adapted for the situation. Often this method provides written confirmation of agreed actions or commitments.	External
Rate notice and booklet	Quarterly	Statutory requirement	External
Public meetings/forums/events	As required	This method allows effective face to face forums and active listening	External
Media releases	As required	To reach a broader cross section of the community	External
Responding to media requests	As required	To facilitate Council's ability to state a position on a matter that the media are pursuing	External
Community newsletter	Monthly	Cost effective and reaches a large audience	External
Staff carrying out their jobs and being "observed" by the community	Daily	This method has the ability to create confidence in the community's understanding of work our staff do and also to undermine the confidence that the community may have in staff	External
Mail outs	As required	To provide important and sometimes complex information on a regular basis eg., Levee Bank project	External
School newsletters	As required	For community events and non – serious matters	External
Advertisements	As required	Statutory requirement	External
Display area, posters, brochures	As required	For community events and non – serious matters	External
Debtor accounts – include message/flyer	As required	To create public awareness of a change in policy or promotion of events	External
Community Information Register	To be developed	An opportunity to create a flow of information and allow input into Council planning and implementation processes	External
Direct letters from Council database	As required	Cost effective and reaches a large audience	External
State and Federal member communication	As soon as possible	To provide important and sometimes complex information on a regular basis	External

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION			
Method- (what channel will Council use?)	When will this be employed?	Why will this method be used?	Who will be the audience?
Staff meetings	TBC	To provide important and sometimes complex information in an arena that allows for the free flow of information to and from the organisation	Internal
Toolbox Talks	Weekly/6 weekly	To provide important and sometimes complex information in an arena that allows for the free flow of information to and from the organisation	Internal
Department meetings	TBC	To provide important and sometimes complex information on a regular basis	Internal
Face-to-face with staff	As required/ongoing	To provide important and sometimes complex information on a regular basis	Internal
Regular <u>ALL OF</u> staff gatherings	As required	To provide important and sometimes complex information in an arena that allows for the free flow of information to and from the organisation	Internal
Consultative Committee	Bi-monthly	To provide important and sometimes complex information on a regular basis	Internal
Staff Bulletin	Weekly/fortnightly	To provide important and sometimes complex information on a regular basis	Internal
Direct messaging to staff	As required	To provide important and sometimes complex information on a regular basis	Internal

Potential Risks

- Opposition from residents of former Shires eg. Residual feelings in relation to merger.
- Councillors/Staff not aware of requirements/permissions around media coverage and social media comments/posts.
- Opposition/negative comments from residents due to lack of relevant and timely information.
- Staff hear more rumour than fact and act as ill-informed transmitters throughout the community.
- Council viewed as an “alternative” to traditional media advertising/promotion.

Risk Management

Potential Risk	Mitigation options
Opposition from residents of former Shires eg. Residual feelings in relation to merger.	Strong promotional activities with focus on key benefits and aspirational messaging. Creative and innovative methods for communication – not just reliant upon traditional media. Develop relevant and engaging fact sheets and promotional materials. Maintain strong media relations. Targeted information for key stakeholders and interested parties by Councils.
Councillors/Staff not aware of requirements/permissions around media coverage and social media comments/posts.	Council and Staff to be kept abreast of current issues. This information will form the basis of Councils’ stance on the matters. Education process undertaken to inform Councillors and Staff of media delegations within the organisation. Councillors and Staff to be informed of social media obligations.
Opposition/negative comments from residents due to lack of relevant and timely information.	Communication and engagement is planned early wherever possible. Relevant and engaging information is provided within Council’s communication mechanisms, ie web site, community newsletter, Facebook etc.
Staff hear more rumour than fact and act as ill-informed transmitters throughout the community.	Clearly and widely communicate key Council messages. Implement the Internal Communications Action Plan.
Council viewed as an “alternative” to traditional media advertising/promotion.	Set clear guidelines for what Council “promotes” on its official communications platforms.

Communication Evaluation

- Prepare a monthly publicity report analysing the positive, negative and neutral media coverage of Council. Report to highlight the key issues as identified by the community.
- Prepare monthly Social Media report to highlight top posts, visitor comments and engagement levels.
- Media monitoring to be undertaken internally and utilizing the Department of Premier and Cabinet clipping files (while available).
- Weekly/fortnightly review to be undertaken of Web Page content for accuracy and currency.



Community Engagement Framework

	Name	Position	Signature	Date
Responsible Officer	Alison Coe	Assistant General Manager – Corporate and Community Services		
Authorised By	Craig Moffitt	General Manager		

Document Revision History	
Revision Number:	1
Previous Reviews:	
Next Review Date:	
Date adopted by Council:	
Minute No:	
Review Date:	
Minute Number:	
Review Date:	
Minute Number:	

August 2017

Contents

Community Engagement Framework3

Introduction.....3

 What is community engagement3

 Aim of framework.....3

Principles and practice of Community Engagement4

 Principles.....4

 Role of Council representatives.....5

 Organisational capacity building and training5

Community Engagement Spectrum6

 How and when we will engage?.....7

 IAP2 Australasia "Community Engagement Model" 20148

 What engagement methods will we use?9

 Engagement Matrix10

 Establishing engagement timelines and budgets11

 Reporting back and evaluation.....11

Community Engagement Framework

Introduction

Effective community engagement not only provides Council with an opportunity to strengthen its relationship with the community, but provides for sound investment in better decision making by ensuring decisions are informed of community needs and aspirations. When done in a meaningful way, it contributes to building trust between the community and Council, and also raises the quality of, and strengthens representative democracy while building community capacity.

What is community engagement

Community engagement is a planned two-way process by which specific, identified groups of the community are given the opportunity to provide input that enhances decision making processes on issues that may impact on their well-being or interests. Murrumbidgee Council, in adopting this framework, will establish identified means as to how it will engage the community on a range of issues and in a number of different ways. In so doing, its intention is to work within the International Association for Public Participation Spectrum and has adapted this to the local community context.

Community engagement strengthens the trust between the community and Council by providing a platform for the community to have their voices heard, their views considered and acknowledged, and they're informed of, and involved in, issues which may impact on their lives.

Aim of framework

This framework has been developed to assist Council in undertaking community engagement activities with its diverse community. The framework aims at developing a consistent approach to community engagement, providing guidance on when and how to undertake engagement activities and what steps and processes should be considered. Specifically, the aims of this framework are to:

- Ensure community views are understood and considered when developing Council plans, strategies, policies and service delivery.
- Ensure the community has the opportunity to participate in the conduct of Council through inclusive and equitable engagement practices.
- Strengthen community connectedness by creating opportunities for the community to get involved with, and have their say on, matters which are important to them.
- Improve the relationship and level of trust between the community and Council by ensuring the community is informed about and involved in Council activities.
- Enhance the coordination, planning and promotion of Council's community engagement activities.
- Strengthen feedback and communication from Council so the community knows when and how their input has been considered to inform decisions.

While the framework aims at developing a consistent approach to community engagement across Council, some engagement and consultation activities may be the result of statutory requirements that specify the manner in which Council is to give notice, consult or engage with the community.

Principles and practice of Community Engagement

Principles

In accordance with the IAP2 Quality Assurance Guidelines and its adopted Core Values, Council's approach to effective community engagement will be:

1. Timely
 - Engagement with the community is planned during the project planning stages to maximise the level of influence the community is able to have.
 - The timing of community engagement activities avoids events such as school holidays and religious festivals.
 - Community engagement occurs preferably during the scoping and identification of issues.
2. Sincere, respectful and meaningful
 - Genuine opportunities are created for the community to participate in issues of significance to the community.
 - The purpose of the engagement is clear and members of the community are informed on how their involvement will influence the decision-making process.
3. Inclusive and accessible
 - All members of the community have a right to participate in the development of decisions that may impact on their lives.
 - Several methods of community engagement may be required to ensure engagement activities are responsive to community needs.
 - Consideration is given to engaging with community members of different cultures and faiths, abilities and family or working commitments.
4. Responsive
 - Council will actively engage with, and listen, to the diverse range of needs and expectations of the community.
 - Council commits to considering community feedback in an open and transparent manner.
5. Provision of information and feedback
 - Information about the project will be easily and freely available to enable participants to be fully informed when providing input into community engagement activities.
 - Information will be provided in 'plain English' and avoid using specialist terms, jargon or acronyms. Special consideration will be given to the differing literacy and education levels in the community, and translated materials provided when relevant.
 - Feedback is provided to participants at all key stages of the project. Community engagement activities are documented and minutes/ notes provided to those who participated within 20 business days.
 - Updates and final outcomes for community engagement projects are published on Council's website and where appropriate *Hume Pride* and other mediums.

6. Privacy and confidentiality

- People's privacy and confidentiality will be respected before, during and after community engagement activities have taken place.

Participants' personal information will remain confidential and will be managed in accordance with the Council's *Privacy Management Policy* which adheres to the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 and the Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002.

Role of Council representatives

Community engagement sessions aim at providing opportunities for the community to give input into decision making processes. Council staff, consultants and Councillors who attend or facilitate engagement sessions are there to provide background information, listen and assist the community in providing input. Council representatives and staff should refrain from being participants in the process or express either their professional or personal opinions, as this may hinder or skew the input provided by the community. Internal engagement activities should be provided where possible to allow staff input into processes.

Organisational capacity building and training

In order to assist in the implementation of this framework, learning and development opportunities on community engagement practices will be encouraged across the organisation. By promoting these opportunities, Council will continuously build the capacity of the organisation to deliver community engagement by providing staff with the appropriate skills and knowledge to plan for, manage and facilitate engagement activities.

Community Engagement Spectrum



	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Engagement Goals	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
Promise to Community	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.
Examples of how we will do this	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advising the community of a situation or proposal. • Informing on a decision or direction or Council. • Providing advice on an issue. • Fact sheets, websites, information sessions • No response is sought or required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertaking market research to identify needs or issues. • Seeking comment on a proposal, action or issue. • Seeking feedback on a service or facility. • Written submission, focus groups, surveys, public meetings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involving the community in discussion and debate through workshops. • Adopting encouraging participation through meetings/ sessions. • Involving at different times in the planning process. • Community members of S355 Committees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing a structure for involvement in decision making, eg, working party or advisory group. • Enabling ongoing involvement in all stages. • Allocating responsibility for achieving outcomes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliberative processes to understand community attitudes and issues to a broad scale issue or project and may consider trade off scenarios eg Citizen juries • Local Government elections • Delegated decisions

© IAP2 - IAP2 Spectrum for Public Participation

INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION

How and when we will engage?

When commencing a project, consideration will need to be given to determine the level of impact any decision may have on the community and stakeholders. The following guide will help determine the level of impact. Generally speaking, the higher the level of impact, the greater the level of community engagement.

Level 3	Criteria (one or more)	Possible examples
<p>There is a high level of impact or risk (perceived or real) on the community as a whole, or a section of the community.</p> <p>There is potential for any decision to create controversy and/or have varying levels of acceptance within the community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant impact on attributes that are considered to be of high value to the community (e.g. lifestyle or physical environment) Likely to have a high level of interest and/or be the source of controversy or conflict across Murrumbidgee Council or local area High levels of complexity in the issue being considered Likely to impact on vulnerable sections of the community There is a loss or significant change to any service or facility provided by Council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long term Financial and Community Plans Closure of Council service or facility Review of Community Strategic Plans Proposals from other tiers of government that significantly impact the community Major change to HACC service Significant natural event outside Council's control
Level 2	Criteria (one or more)	Possible examples
<p>There is a medium level of impact or risk (perceived or real) on the community as a whole, or a section of the community.</p> <p>It is likely that the decision will be accepted by the majority of the community impacted, however the decision may be an inconvenience for some sections of the community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There may be some impact on attributes that are considered to be of high value to the community or a section of the community (e.g. lifestyle or physical environment) Some sections of the community concerned are likely to have a high level of interest Potential for some controversy or conflict across Murrumbidgee Council or individual communities within the Council area There is a medium to low level of complexity in the issue being considered There is some loss or change to any service or facility provided by Council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redevelopment of a facilities such as sporting, recreational or leisure venues Redevelopment of a local playground
Level 1	Criteria (one or more)	Current examples
<p>There is a low level of impact or risk (perceived or real) on the community as a whole, or a section of the community.</p> <p>It is likely that the decision will be widely accepted by the community and seen as having positive outcomes or being required.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No negative impact on attributes that are considered to be of high value to the community (e.g. lifestyle or physical environment) Low level of interest across and/or low to no risk of controversy or conflict across Murrumbidgee Council or local areas. Only a small change, or enhancement to any service or facility provided by Council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upgrade of local playground or park – such as new equipment or landscaping Extension of operating hours for a service Local street or streetscaping upgrades Introduction or changes to a local program

When considering the level of impact, it is important to factor in existing knowledge about the community. It is also important to review existing information including Community Strategic Plans, Operational Plans and local media coverage to determine not only the impact but who may be potential stakeholders in the engagement process. This information will assist in determining the level of engagement Council will undertake in accordance with Councils endorsed Community Engagement Spectrum. This, when measured against the IAP2 Australasia "Community Engagement Model" 2014 below will help to determined roles and responsibilities within the engagement process.



Organisation Leads / Organisation Acts	<p>Organisations lead engagement and seek input to shape the policies, projects and services for which they are responsible. This is a familiar and traditional approach to policy development, project management and service delivery.</p> <p>Engagement is used to both inform the community about the proposed policy, project or propositions and to provide some input to the shape or execution of the policy, project or proposition.</p> <p>Final decision making sits with the organisation and its governors and the organisation is responsible for its action.</p>
Organisation Leads / Community Acts	<p>Organisations can lead the conversation with communities and individuals take responsibility for action.</p>
Community Leads / Organisation Acts	<p>A community leads in this profile to identify, highlight and propose the action required to solve a problem or take an opportunity. To achieve the desired action requires the response of a focal organisation. The community alone cannot achieve the desired result and therefore advocates to motivate the organisation to act.</p>
Community Leads / Community Acts	<p>Communities can lead the conversation and have responsibility for the action.</p> <p>Communities in a range of areas, from sport and recreation to community well-being, environmental action and education, are able to support, design, resource and deliver their own programs, services and activities. Community organisations and NGO's need to engage with community members to gather support, build understanding and commitment and to deliver the session.</p>
Shared Leadership And Action	<p>Leadership and actions can be shared, where communities and organisations participate and contribute to the decisions, and also lead and take responsibility for action towards the outcomes.</p> <p>This collaborative arrangement shared decision making, management and responsibility for delivery required to meet shared outcomes.</p>

What engagement methods will we use?

Determining the level of impact for each stakeholder group will allow you to identify what levels of participation you should be considering for your project. Not all stakeholders will require the same levels of engagement and engagement methods should be selected carefully based on the needs and demographics of each group.

There are many reasons why people don't get involved with Council engagement activities. Consideration should be given to the types of engagement activities being planned to ensure they are inclusive and maximise the potential for participation.



Some of the main reasons people do not participate include:

- Lack of information and awareness of the issues
- Perception that their input will not make a difference
- Lack of follow-up with issues raised in the past
- Not knowing how their input has been used in the past
- Intimidating or inappropriate engagement methods
- Language or cultural barriers
- Accessibility – venue, time, holidays, disability access etc.
- Time of day – not all people are available to attend activities in the middle of the day due to work and/or family commitments

Once the level of impact and the level of participation have been selected, you will need to ensure you select the appropriate methods and tools to engage the community.

Although not an exhaustive list, the following matrix will assist staff in identifying what tools or methods could be used.

Engagement Matrix

Level of participation & method/tool	Level of impact		
	Level 3 (high)	Level 2 (medium)	Level 1
INFORM			
Personal telephone contact			
In person meeting			
Written correspondence, mail out			
Fact sheets, brochure, community newsletter			
Notice or advertisement in paper			
Media release			
Information sessions/briefings			
Social media			
Email – community contacts			
Website – information/updates			
Banners/posters/signs			
CONSULT			
Telephone survey			
Written survey (paper based or online)			
Written submission			
Public exhibition			
Focus group sessions			
Public meetings			
Feedback form			
Social media			
Online discussion forum			
INVOLVE			
Meetings with key stakeholders			
Meetings with other target community groups, e.g. parents, youth, aged, disabled, various CaLD groups			
Workshop sessions			
Site tour/meeting			
Public Art session			
Community forum/debate			
Community reference groups			
Section 355 Committees			
COLLABORATE			
Community summit			
Expert reference groups			
Community reference groups			
Joint Advisory Committees			
EMPOWER			
Citizens Jury			
Ballot			
Legend	 Strongly desirable	 Desirable	 Maybe appropriate

Establishing engagement timelines and budgets

Timelines and budget for community engagement will vary from project to project and will be dependent on a number of factors, including the level of impact, level of public participation required and the community engagement tools and techniques chosen for each stakeholder group.

Consideration will also need to be provided to any legislative requirements and timeframes which may impact on the project. A guide to planning for the engagement process is included with this document as Attachment A. *(NB: CURRENTLY INCOMPLETE – awaiting finalization of the Organisation Structure)*

Generally speaking, the higher the level of impact and more stakeholders you have, the more time and resources will need to be allocated to community engagement. Therefore it is essential that a community engagement plan is developed before commencing the project and should be included in the overall plan and budget for your project.

Early engagement is recommended for Level 3 projects, especially where the project is dealing with complex issues, requires community education or capacity building or is of a contentious issue.

Projects at this level will often need a period of informing the community about the issues at hand, before consulting, involving or collaborating.

An important factor in determining timeframes will be key community events such as school holidays, religious festivals and other major events. Where possible these should be avoided in order to maximise the ability for people to participate.

When considering budget and resource allocation, the type of engagement tools chosen will be a significant factor. Each tool requires different levels of practitioner skill, time and budget. For controversial projects, it may be necessary to use an independent facilitator to ensure a balanced and unbiased approach and provide a greater level of credibility and confidence with the community. This independent facilitator may be an external consultant, or another Council staff member who has the required skills and is not directly involved in the project or responsible for putting forward Council's position on the topic being considered.

Reporting back and evaluation

Providing feedback and reporting to the community is essential to ensure ongoing engagement with the project and with future projects.

When developing your engagement plan, identify at which points throughout the project you will be providing feedback or reporting on progress.

To facilitate feedback, it is important that a record is kept of the key themes, ideals and suggestions to come from the engagement activity as well as establishing a means of communication with participants once the session is completed.

This will require the person responsible for the activity to record the names and contact details of participants in accordance with Murrumbidgee Council's Privacy Management Policy. To assist this process, a sign in sheet forms part of this document and is Attachment B.

To assist with providing feedback the following steps should be undertaken:

- Offer to capture contact details of all stakeholders and community members who would like to be involved or participate in an engagement process.
- Ensure that contact details are kept up to date throughout the project.
- Detail how and when each stakeholder group will receive feedback during the project and after completion.
- Ensure that feedback is accessible to all stakeholders.
- Keep contacts informed of key project stages and send details of any relevant upcoming engagement activities or details of Council reports for comment.
- Ensure the privacy and confidentiality of individuals are maintained at all times.

When reporting on the final outcomes of the project:

- Define how the final outcomes will be documented and circulated.
- Provide feedback to participants on how their information was considered in the development of the final outcomes.
- Where appropriate, ensure project outcomes are reported on Council's website and through other mediums.

To ensure that Murrumbidgee Council's Community Engagement process continue to be effective and relevant for the local communities, it is important to evaluate each session.

For all major projects, or those identified as having a Level 3 or Level 2 (where relevant) impact, a summary evaluation should be prepared on the community engagement undertaken. This summary should include information concerning the project, the community engagement process and the key outcomes. Once completed, this evaluation should be provided to Manex to inform future engagement activities of the Council.

The summary evaluation should also be made accessible to the community, particularly those who participated in the community engagement activities, via Council's website and other mediums as appropriate. An evaluation template has been developed for the use of Council staff involved in community engagement activities which directly involve the public at the Consult, Involve and Collaborate levels as is included as Attachment ##.