Anzac Day was commemorated with multiple services across Loddon Shire.
More than 1000 students and 500 community members attended the shire wide centenary ceremony on Friday 24 April at Serpentine.
The moving ceremony was attended by a number of politicians and five current servicemen and women from the area.
The Honourable Tim Fischer AC, a former serviceman, formerly Australia's Ambassador to the Holy See (the Vatican) and former Deputy Prime Minister of Australia addressed the crowd, speaking about WWI.
The ceremony had students from Loddon's nine schools lay wreaths beside a plaque marking the commemoration of the centenary.
The unique ceremony was followed with an extensive WWI artifact collection compiled for the occasion by Loddon's historical societies and RSL sub-branches.
The extensive collection received wonderful feedback from all who attended, with many asking if the collection would be on display in the future.
Loddon Shire Mayor Gavan Holt said the Serpentine centenary event was the centerpiece of Loddon Shire's commemoration of the centenary of Anzac Day.

“This wonderful ceremony was put together by an amazing number of volunteers from the Loddon community, Whitmore bus line, Goldfields Choir, Eaglehawk Citizen’s Brass Band and Council staff.
“There has also been an amazing contribution in the lead up to the event from Loddon's historical societies and RSL sub-branches who worked with Council”
The commemoration ceremony was followed by the communities of Boort, Bridgewater, Inglewood, Korong Vale, Calivil, Pyramid Hill, Newbridge and Wedderburn holding their own local ceremonies on Saturday 25 April.
“I had the opportunity to join with residents and attend three Anzac Day services across the municipality,” Cr Holt said.
“Each service I attended was unique, with the largest contingency of people attending our Serpentine centenary ceremony on Friday.”
Cr Holt attended the dawn service at Wedderburn and the Wedderburn Korong Vale service where he watched the Bendigo Brass Band lead more than 40 veterans, Vietnam soldiers, descendants of WWII and war widows in the march.
“After the march, I listened to the stories and shared a drink with those who attended the ceremony at the Wedderburn Korong Vale RSL,” he said.
A multicultural fiesta will showcase the richness of the Australian and Filipino heritage, as the Pyramid Hill community combines to offer a taste of each culture. The Pyramid Hill Progress Association is spearheading a fiesta in conjunction with Filipino and other community groups. The fiesta will showcase the food, music, art, sport, drama and dance of the Australian and Filipino cultures.  

Cr Cheryl McKinnon said there had been strong community support and everyone was excited by the idea.

“We want to display and share the Filipinos’ rich and diverse culture and heritage, as well as our unique Australian customs and traditions, with the wider community,” she said.

The event will be held on 17 October at Kelly Park in Kelly Street, Pyramid Hill.

For more information or to get involved, contact the Loddon Visitor Information Centre on 5494 1257.

Loddon Shire CEO John McLinden, Manager Organisation Development Carol Canfield and Customer Service Officer Helen Tankin get ready for the crowds at the Regional Victoria Rural Living Expo.
Loddon Shire Council secured a massive feat when the team from Caravan and Motorhome agreed to feature the region in its magazine and on DVD.

The kudos comes after Loddon Shire contacted the magazine last year, after which the writers, photographers and production crew set up camp at the brand new Bridgewater Public Caravan Park to feature the region.

Using the caravan park as a base, they toured the Loddon, Bendigo, Maryborough and Castlemaine area, returning to the Loddon River each evening. The crew used the footage, photographs and interviews to develop a nine page feature spread in the April publication.

Mayor Gavan Holt praised the efforts of staff and volunteers for their contribution in securing the feature and welcoming the team from the magazine to the area.

“Our tourism department is proactive in sourcing valuable and creditable coverage to promote our wonderful municipality,” he said.

“I want to thank our wonderful volunteers and staff who contributed along with the businesses that went out of their way to assist and help,”

Cr Holt said the Caravan and Motorhome Magazine has a large audience with readers actively looking for places to visit.

“These travellers have the time to take advantage of our local attractions and amenities, spend money at our supermarkets, butchers and local eateries,” he said.

“We have already had bookings as a result of the feature, with those rolling into the Bridgewater Public Caravan Park finding us after reading the magazine.”

Loddon Shire Council is currently investigating a new user-friendly, internet-based mapping site, which will allow residents to view their neighbourhoods and the facilities around them from the comfort of their own home.

The program would also aid those looking to move to the area to obtain information including services and facilities nearby prior to purchasing property.

The system would look similar to Google Maps and would show municipal services, sporting and public facilities, education services, bus stops and routes, health services, recycle and waste management facilities, aerial photography and much more.

The initiative is still in the initial stages and Council is currently working with a company to develop the program.

Further information about the program will be provided closer to its release date, however residents wishing to make suggestions on what type of mapped information they would like included can email Council’s GIS Officer at loddon@loddon.vic.gov.au.

Rich wine country showcased

Loddon’s rich wine country was well represented at the Bendigo Winemakers Festival during the Easter long weekend.

Water Wheel Winery, Turners Crossing Wines and Newbridge Wines all participated in the event, alongside 18 other vineyards, at the Castlemaine Botanical Gardens.

More than 2000 people converged on the gardens, laying down picnic rugs and enjoying a glass of wine in their deck chairs under the beautiful sun.

Water Wheel Winery proprietor Peter Cummings said all the wineries sold wine and everyone had a good time at the event.

Newbridge Wines operator Andrew Simpson agreed, saying the festival had a fantastic crowd which compared with last year’s bumper event.

“It’s a great day which gives people a unique opportunity to come and see all the wineries in the one place,” he said.

Local resident Lynne Habner made the trip to the festival for the second time.

“It was a fun day out, not only because of the wine, but also the fantastic bands and the quality foods;” she said.

“We were very impressed by the consistent high quality of wines offered by the wineries in the region.

“The festival is a great way of reminding us how many producers there are in our area.”

Council’s Manager Tourism Robyn Vella said each of Loddon’s wineries displayed the Loddon Official Visitor Guide.

“ar these businesses whole-heartedly want to bring people back to Loddon to explore our trails, eat in our venues and stay in our accommodation facilities;” she said.

“It’s wonderful to have the support of local businesses to help drive our tourist numbers and bed nights in the region.”

Newbridge Wines were one of the vineyards that represented the Loddon municipality at the Bendigo Winemakers Festival.
Youth Advisory Council

Council has joined with the Shire's four high schools to pilot a program which will allow Loddon's youth to help make informed decisions within the municipality. Boort District P-12 School, East Loddon P-12 School, Pyramid Hill College and Wedderburn College each appointed two Year 11 students to form the Youth Advisory Council.

The representatives will meet with Councillors, Council officers and their principals on a regular basis. The group will consult with the Shire on a range of issues and the students will have an opportunity to develop an insight into how Council operates including its processes, budgets, compliance procedures and decision making processes.

Mayor Gavan Holt said the program was a fabulous way to engage with youth on current Council initiatives.

Laps towards active lifestyle

The Inglewood Swimming Pool took a dive towards encouraging a healthy lifestyle, introducing an active pilot program during the summer season.

The program, Lap to Loddon, was run in conjunction with the pool’s management contractor Unified Community Sport and Leisure and aimed to encourage locals to take a dip in the water more often.

The initiative received a fantastic response attracting 14 participants.

The program challenged the locals to pick a swimming distance, either the Inglewood to Newbridge swim (22.2km), or Inglewood to Bulla Bull Creek (3.5km), and complete the distance over multiple visits to the pool.

The 22km leg is equivalent to 655 pool laps or 904 laps if you swim across the pool, while the 3.4km distance is 106 laps of the length of the pool or 208 when swimming across the pool.

The participants gave Loddon Shire Council great feedback about the program, and after such a wonderful response, the Shire will consider implementing the program at all of its pools next season.

A big congratulation to Joan Bradley who completed the Inglewood to Newbridge and back (44.4km), Barry Norman who achieved the Inglewood to Newbridge leg, and Merilyn Chamberlain, Chris McEwan, Joan Bradley, Win Fuller, Mavis Needs, Sharelle Iverson, Pat L’Huillier, Karen Trevaskis, Brenda Jones, Zelma Dowling, Anne Manguson, Jane Kelly and Jill McFarlane for participating in the 3.5km distance.

Our new citizen

Stephanie Guy, of Bridgewater, was awarded Australian citizenship during a special ceremony held at the Serpentine Council Chambers.

Stephanie was born in the UK and moved to Australia in 2010. Stephanie and her husband Anthony decided to make Loddon Shire their home after falling in love with the area and moving to Bridgewater five months ago.

Mayor Gavan Holt awarded Stephanie with her citizenship.

“Congratulations again Stephanie, on your citizenship,” he said.

“My fellow councillors and I wish you all the best for your future life here.”
Residents are urged to join the fight against one of the biggest threats to the future of our orchards in Loddon Shire and our Victorian fruit farmers: backyard fruit fly.

Outbreaks occurring across Victoria are a direct threat to Loddon's farming future, with fruit flies already being captured within our municipal boundaries.

Council is asking all of its residents to be proactive in an effort to protect the farming industry.

The consequences to farmers with a fruit fly problem are considerable, with all fruit requiring fumigation at the farmer’s expense, which is then coupled with the inability to sell produce as a premium organic product.

Mayor Gavan Holt said the added cost for fruit farmers to produce the fruit along with the lower dollar value obtained when sold, would considerably hurt the farming industry.

“Prune trees so you can reach all fruit each tree produces.”

“Pick all ripe fruit before it falls to the ground.”

“Collect any fallen fruit.”

“Seal all fruit and veggies that are not going to be used in a black plastic bag and leave in the sun for a new days before disposing of it in the bin.”

“Do not compost rotten fruit.”

“Cut down unwanted trees.”

“If fruit fly becomes a problem within our municipal boundaries, there is no doubt that it will impact on our economy,” he said.

“There have already been reports of these pests within our Council boundaries.

“We need to be proactive, work together and eradicate fruit fly before it becomes a problem for our orchards.”

Cr Holt urges residents not to become complacent.

“We have fruit producers in our municipality and this could be a massive problem for them,” he said.

“I encourage everyone to provide the assistance you can by doing a few simple things at home.”

Residents are asked to monitor their backyard fruit trees for fruit fly. If trees are no longer required, residents are asked to remove them.

“Looking after fruit trees in your backyard will look after the industry.”

“How can you help?

- Prune trees so you can reach all fruit each tree produces.
- Pick all ripe fruit before it falls to the ground.
- Collect any fallen fruit.
- Seal all fruit and veggies that are not going to be used in a black plastic bag and leave in the sun for a new days before disposing of it in the bin.
- Do not compost rotten fruit.
- Cut down unwanted trees.
Residents looking to lodge a planning permit application are encouraged to talk to Loddon Shire Council staff first, in order to improve turnaround times and efficiencies.

Residents who talk to staff first can obtain a comprehensive checklist and an overview of the application process. Talking to staff will ensure Council receives all the information required to evaluate the permit without going back to the applicant for more information, which would hold up the process.

Council is also aware of instances across the municipality where people have been unaware they required a planning permit to undertake some activities.

Erecting a shed, removal of native vegetation, works to a heritage building and opening a business all require a planning permit.

For more information, contact Council’s Wedderburn office on 5494 1200.