It has been three years in the making, but the Bridgewater Public Caravan Park and foreshore reserve has officially been opened. Minister Peter Walsh opened the precinct, which was completely restored after flood waters destroyed the area in 2011.

The two separate projects received generous funding, with the foreshore project funded through the Local Government Infrastructure Project, $100,000, and the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal contribution of $124,000 from the Percy Baxter Trust, while the caravan park received Flood Recovery Funding from the Department of Primary Industries, $3.3 million.

Loddon Shire Council Economy and Community Director Bryan McEwan said the projects would have a large economic benefit to the region.

“The flood recovery project will provide the Bridgewater community, visitors and tourists alike, with an inviting, accessible and functional recreational area adjacent to the river,” he said.

“The projects will result in an increase in tourist numbers to the region, resulting in a very significant increase in tourist ‘bed nights.’”

Mr McEwan said the development would benefit the whole region, with visitors expected to stay longer in the new caravan park.

“Visitors will also visit neighbouring towns including Inglewood, especially with its unique offering of antique shops, tourist attractions and access to a supermarket.”

Along with visitors, it is expected locals will take full advantage of the transformation, with a family friendly environment and easy access to water activities including skiing, fishing and canoeing.
Mayor Holt re-elected to lead Loddon Shire Council

Loddon will continue to be led by Mayor Gavan Holt, after the November Statutory Council Meeting saw him re-elected.

“armany of our local communities in bringing about positive and stimulating change."

“My fellow councillors bestowed upon me the great honour of being elected Mayor for 2014/15,” Cr Holt said.

“In making this decision, the Council has asked me to lead this great organisation and this vibrant community for a further 12 months.”

Cr Holt was elected as Mayor in front of friends, family and the wider Loddon community at the Wedderburn Senior Citizen Centre.

“This is my sixth term as Mayor, so I know what I am in for,” he said.

“I’m certainly grateful that Loddon has such a strong and committed team of Councillors and staff to work with our local communities in bringing about positive and stimulating change.”

Council seeks feedback on roadside weeds

Loddon Shire wants your input on the question of roadside weeds and pest animals, in order to start a process which, it is hoped, will identify the best ways for Council and the community to battle these menaces together.

As an initial step, Council is keen to hear from residents about which weeds are of particular concern and how we can best help landowners meet their legal obligations.

Some possible ways this could happen would be through Council providing information on landowner obligations under the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994, developing simpler processes for Works within Road Reserve Permit applicants, working together on control or identification programs or helping with training, equipment or funding.

The feedback received through this initial consultation phase will help Council shape its future approaches to roadside weed and pest animal management around the Shire.

At the same time, Council is keen to collate information on problem weeds, both on roadsides and private property. Residents are asked to report the location and extent of such weeds by completing a “Weed Notification” form, available from the Shire website.

For more on landowners’ legal responsibility for weed control, plus a list of declared weeds in the North Central Catchment area, go to www.depi.vic.gov.au

To speak with one of Council’s designated project officers, please call Lauren Lloyd or David Fry on 5494 1200. For submission forms or weed notification forms, go to www.loddon.vic.gov.au

In an associated, but separate, development, a new Loddon Weed

Message from the Mayor

I sit at my desk and write this message as December comes upon us and Christmas rushes near. I think back and ask myself “Where has 2014 gone?”, and then I think about all that has happened and all that has been achieved within the Loddon community over the last 12 months, and I am overcome by a sense of enormous satisfaction and pride.

Our community has achieved some great outcomes during 2014, and this Council, with the assistance of the state and federal governments, has delivered some very impressive community facilities. None of this would be possible without the enormous effort that comes from the voluntary organisations and individuals in our community, and it is to these that I want to offer a special thanks in this Christmas period. It is the volunteers of our community, the individuals who give up their evenings and give up their weekends to do so much, that makes the Loddon community such a vibrant group of people.

I take this opportunity to wish everyone a happy and safe Christmas and New Year period, and for those who are going on holidays, I wish you an enjoyable break, and look forward to catching up with you upon your return. To the students of our municipality who have completed their studies, I hope that the examiners look upon your work kindly, and that you get the rewards for the hard study that you have put in throughout the year.

It was a great honour to be re-elected as Mayor of the Loddon Shire for 2014/15, and I look forward to serving the Loddon community with all my energies for the coming 12 months. Once again, I wish everyone a happy and enjoyable Christmas break and ask that everyone stays safe in the holiday period.

Cr Gavan Holt
Mayor, Loddon Shire

For more information, contact Anthony Gallacher on 0447 095 501 or email facilitator@lpln.org.
Inglewood Train Station choofs along

The Inglewood Train Station will receive the finishing touches to its restoration and refurbishments at the end of the month.

The finishing touches will be applied to the Inglewood Train Station later this month as the restoration and refurbishments come to an end.

VicTrack appointed contractor Ducon Construction to restore and refurbish the goods shed to create enclosed office spaces, a community open space, meeting areas, a kitchenette and toilet facilities along with a store room.

The external platforms surrounding the building are being restored, with a disability access ramp already installed.

The work has included internal and external demolition, restumping, reroofing, rendering, termite investigation and peppercorn tree removal.

Work is scheduled to be completed by the end of December, with a formal hand over to tenants early next year.

Inglewood and Districts Health Service, Goldfields Choir and Workspace Australia will occupy the building.

In addition to funding refurbishments of vacant railway buildings, the Community Use of Vacant Rail Buildings Program will assist community groups with rent and utilities to next June.

The program complements VicTrack’s work under its heritage and maintenance programs to restore heritage railway buildings for community and commercial uses.

Pools open for the summer

Council’s five swimming pools are set to come to life over the summer months.

Wedderburn, Inglewood, Boort and Pyramid Hill pools are already open, with the Mitiamo pool scheduled to open this Saturday, 6 December.

The pools will remain open until the Labour Day long weekend on Monday, 9 March.

The Loddon Shire public swimming pools will open if the forecast temperature is above 23 degrees, which is based on Echuca and obtained from the Bureau of Meteorology at 6pm the previous day.

This will ensure Council can open pools for longer periods on hotter days when the demand is greater.

All pools will be closed on Christmas Day.

Pool opening hours are at the discretion of management and may vary, depending on weather and maintenance.

For further information please visit Council’s website at www.loddon.vic.gov.au.

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Season ticket: $103
Casual: $8.50
Non-swimmer: $8.50

Family: $62
Adult: $3.30
Child: $1.10

For further information please visit Council’s website at www.loddon.vic.gov.au.
Loddon Shire Council shines a light on the importance of energy efficient and environmentally friendly methods, as it joins the Lighting the Regions Project.

Council is part of a consortium of 16 local governments across north, west and central Victoria about to commence the replacement of 23,000 mercury vapour street lights with energy efficient Light Emitting Diodes (LEDs).

The $11 million project which covers almost half of Victoria includes an investment of more than $5 million from the Australian government, through the Community Energy Efficiency Program.

The project will save 180,000 tonnes of greenhouse and in excess of $50 million across the consortium of councils.

Locally it will save Loddon Shire Council residents in excess of $1.4 million over the next 20 years.

Loddon Shire Council will replace more than 500 street lights with energy efficient alternatives, saving more than 70 per cent in running, maintenance and replacements costs.

The cost saving lights will see a 77 per cent reduction in running costs.

With current lighting costs in the order of $80,000 per year, the savings generated by this project will be significant.

The sheer size and scope of this endeavour has meant that for a project Loddon Shire Council previously estimated would cost its ratepayers in excess of $400,000, will now cost less than $130,000, an immense saving for Loddon.

Lighting the Regions Project in Loddon will commence in mid-December.

Ratepayers in Loddon Shire are reminded that those who decide to pay in full have a deadline of 16 February 2015.

People who are paying by instalments have until 2 March 2015 to lodge the third instalment of the current year’s rates and charges.

A courtesy letter will be forwarded in mid-January to all ratepayers who are paying in full. This will be an opportunity for ratepayers with multiple assessments to check the letters against rate notices to ensure none have been missed.

The Victorian Fire Services Property Levy was added to rates notices last year, and is an on-going charge.

Previously, Victoria’s fire services were funded by contributions from the state government, metropolitan councils and a levy collected by insurance companies.

Now, the levy has been removed from insurance premiums and is being collected by councils, on behalf of the State Revenue Office, through their rates notices.

Rate payment options are listed on the back of the rates notice and include online payment at www.loddon.vic.gov.au, BPay, at your local post office, in person at the Wedderburn and Serpentine Loddon Shire Council offices, or by direct debit or via mail.

For more information, contact the Wedderburn office on 5494 1200.

As the summer months approach, Loddon Shire Council is reminding residents to register for heat wave notifications.

The Victorian Government operates a heat alert system, where the Department of Health notifies local governments about predicted heat wave events.

The Loddon Shire Council activates its heat wave plan in response to the government’s alert system and notifies registered residents by SMS or email.

A heat wave event occurs when the predicted temperatures are likely to be above the “threshold” of heat.

Loddon Shire Council’s threshold is reached when the average of the night-time and day-time temperatures is equal to or above 32 degrees Celsius.

Council urges residents to register for the system, which will help them to avoid heat related illnesses, including heat cramps, heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

To register for the alert system and view information on how best to avoid illness from a heat wave, visit www.loddon.vic.gov.au/Live/Emergencies/Emergency-management/Heatwaves.
Community celebrates Wedderburn centre opening

The $1.75 million Wedderburn Community Centre project has come to an end, with the official opening last month. Minister Peter Walsh conducted the official opening proceedings.

The centre received a makeover, with improvements including on-site parking and refurbished facilities including a new tourism office, interview rooms for visiting services, improved multi-purpose rooms, meeting rooms and consulting rooms for the Inglewood and Districts Health Service.

The centre has already been labelled the community hub, with a number of local organisations taking up residence.

Wedderburn Community House, Loddon Tourism, Centrelink, VicRoads and the Inglewood and Districts Health Service also operate from the centre.

The Victorian Government provided $400,000 through the Regional Growth Fund, the Commonwealth Government supported the project with $851,450, Loddon Shire Council was proud to invest $300,000 with a further $200,000 coming from Inglewood and Districts Health Service and Wedderburn Community House.

The centre is expected to enhance services and boost employment opportunities.

Inglewood set to come Alive

Inglewood will burst to life on Saturday 6 December, with colour and sound filling the town for the Inglewood Alive festival.

Classic cars and motorbikes, market stalls, baby farm animals, and a community garage sale will all feature in the town.

The garage sale will kick off from 8am, while the Lion’s Club market stalls, food and entertainment will begin at 9am in Brooke Street. Children will be entertained with a petting farm, jumping castle and face painting.

There will also be a display of vintage cards from local schools. Inglewood Alive committee member Chris Sharp said the biggest highlight will be the Wimmera Axeman wood chopping competition.

Past president John Coffey will run the furious wood chopping action starting at 10.30am, with three open events, including participants under 18 years of age and a modified chainsaws event.

The fully-fledged competition is open to all registered axemen, with cash prizes made possible through sponsorship from the Inglewood and District Community Bank.

Inglewood’s own Coffey brothers and Shane Maxwell will compete for full honours, competing on their home ground.

Council pushes online presence with a Facebook page

Loddon Shire Council has a brand-new Facebook page.

The page, launched at the September Council meeting in Serpentine has already attracted 140 likes.

Council has established an online presence in order to communicate more effectively and immediately with the Loddon community.

The Shire’s move to beef up its online presence was sparked by comments from the community last year.

The Facebook page, which may become interactive in time, will have the latest in news and events, office closure times, service information and emergency bulletins, often directing people to more information on the website.

To follow the page, visit www.facebook.com/LoddonShire and ‘Like’ the page.
The Council offices in Wedderburn and Serpentine will close at noon on Tuesday, 23 December for the afternoon. The offices will then close from midday on Wednesday 24 December and reopen at 8.15am on Monday, 5 January 2015. The Loddon Visitor Information Centre will be closed on Christmas Day, but is otherwise open every day from 9am to 5pm. For enquiries, phone 5494 3489. The Information Centre will provide information on how best to explore the region with family and friends this summer. Council's Community Care Department will be closed from noon on Wednesday 24 December and will reopen at 8.15am on Monday 5 January 2014. Limited personal care will be provided and clients will be contacted regarding their services for this period.

There will be limited Meals on Wheels provided and clients will be contacted to arrange meals for this period. No home care, respite care or property maintenance services will be offered over this time. For any client service requirement emergencies during this period, call 0427 804 736. Rubbish and recyclable bin collection due Thursday, 25 December, will be moved to Saturday, 27 December. Collections due Thursday, 1 January will be moved to Saturday, 3 January.

There will be no changes to collection scheduled for Boxing Day, Friday, 26 December. All landfill sites and transfer stations will be closed on the following days: Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Year's Day and Australia Day.