

LODDON BULLETIN

Thriving communities where everyone is welcome and all have the opportunity to live, work and create experiences



First report card on Council Plan

Developing a document as important as the Council Plan 2025-2029 is one thing, but how do we show what we are doing to deliver on its aims?

The answer is in a report card that holds Council to account.

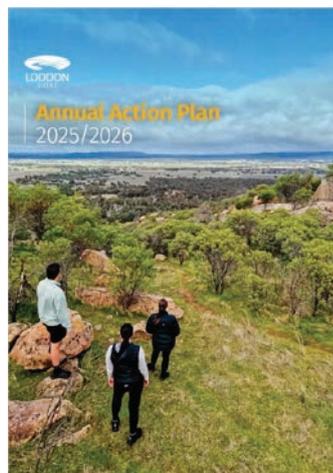
The 2025/26 Annual Action Plan outlines Council's actions for the current financial year, and sets out the actions Council is delivering to progress the Community Vision 2035 and Council Plan 2025-2029.

Together these plans reflect what our community values most and the direction it expects Council to take.

The Plan details the actions Council has undertaken and continues to deliver throughout 2025/26 to contribute to the achievement of the strategic objectives in the Council Plan. Each action identifies Council's role and the expected quarter of delivery. For the current year, it shows that 69 of 71 actions are either complete or in progress, with the other two expected to begin in the final three months of the financial year.

Loddon Shire Mayor Dan Straub said he encouraged all residents to read the Annual Action Plan – it's available on the Council website.

"It shows the community what we are doing to deliver the outcomes that matter most to you," he said.



MARCH 2026

FEATURED IN THIS EDITION

Annual Action Plan
released

Connect@Loddon a
success

Mayoral column

2026 Council Meeting dates

Animal registrations due

What's On — Tourism and
Events update

Australia Day awards wrap

Anzac Day in Loddon Shire

Healthy Loddon Campaspe
update

Connect@Loddon a success

Loddon Shire residents got two great chances to have their Council-related questions answered recently.

Council staff hit the road in February-March to Kelly Park in Pyramid Hill and Nolens Park in Boort for two Connect@Loddon events.

Connect@Loddon is Council's online engagement platform (you can visit it via our homepage or the QR code) where we seek feedback on various projects.

But at the in-person sessions, residents were able to chat with staff on anything relating to Council's business and services, and many took advantage of the opportunity.

The initiative will go to other venues in future.



Community members and Council staff at the Connect@Loddon session at Pyramid Hill on Wednesday, 18 February.

A message from our Mayor

Hello everyone and welcome to the first edition of the Loddon Bulletin for 2026.

This year shapes up as being a busy one for Council in general, but we've already had a busy start to the year.

Firstly, I'd like to congratulate all the winners (and everyone nominated) of the 2026 Loddon Shire Australia Day awards.

You have all played your part in making Loddon Shire such a great place to live, and on behalf of all our residents I can't thank you enough.

There are profiles of all our winners on Pages 4 and 5 of this edition of the Bulletin and I'm sure you'll agree with me there is an extraordinary level of commitment to our communities from all our winners.

I'd also like to thank the community groups responsible for organising each of the eight events in our shire on 26 January. Without you, these great events just wouldn't happen.

Council has also been busy out in the community ourselves recently, with the Connect@Loddon project bringing Council officers and the public face-to-face at Pyramid Hill and Boort last month. We've had a lot of positive feedback from these sessions and most importantly staff have been able to provide answers to questions community members have asked. The good news is, we will roll out these sessions to other parts of the shire in the coming months.

Looking ahead, we've got some great community events coming up in the near future - one of our joint winners of the Community Event of the Year at the Australia Day awards was the Rheola Charity Carnival, and we're all looking forward to the 153rd running of this remarkable event at Easter.

We're also busy developing the annual budget and you can have your say on this via the Connect@Loddon platform on our website (scan the QR code on the front page of the Bulletin to go to the website, or contact Council on 5494 1200 if you wish to submit it in hard copy).

I look forward to seeing you there as well as at one of the Anzac Day events held throughout the shire on Saturday, 25 April.

There is more information about those on the back page of this Bulletin.



*Loddon Shire Mayor
Cr Dan Straub.*

Council Meeting dates 2026

Ordinary Council Meetings are held monthly at the Council Chambers, Wedderburn at 3pm.

The schedule of dates for Ordinary Council Meetings for the rest of this year is:

Tuesday 24 March

Tuesday 28 April

Tuesday 26 May

Tuesday 16 June

Tuesday 28 July

Tuesday 25 August

Tuesday 29 September

Tuesday 27 October

Tuesday 24 November

Tuesday 15 December

Animal registrations due

Please keep an eye out in the mail for your annual animal registration renewal notices - these are due by 9 April.

It is a legislative requirement that Council must ensure all dogs and cats are registered with Council under the Domestic Animals Act 1994.

Funds go to a broad range of Council functions including the pound facility and the educational programs for responsible pet ownership.

For example, any lost or wandering dog that is registered is returned to its owner on the first day free of charge.





UPCOMING EVENTS

MARCH

1 MARCH 2026

Boort Pacing and Trotters Cup

📍 Boort

8 MARCH 2026

Flavours of Loddon

📍 Bridgewater

8 – 9 MARCH 2026

Minelab Wedderburn Detector Jamboree

📍 Wedderburn

20 MARCH 2026

Festival of Small Halls

📍 Tarnagulla

21 MARCH 2026

Logan Car Show

📍 Logan

29 MARCH 2026

Eddington Vintage Sports Car Club Sprints

📍 Eddington

APRIL

6 APRIL 2026

Rheola Charity Carnival

📍 Rheola

MAY

16 MAY 2026

Wedderburn Annual Swap Meet and Market

📍 Wedderburn



AUTUMN BUCKET LIST

SIP THE SEASON: Autumn is the perfect time to taste the Loddon Valley's bold reds and crisp whites. Wander through boutique wineries, toast the season, and savour the flavours of the region's vineyards.

GOLD AND ADVENTURE: Book a personalised tour and strike gold! Participate in a gold prospecting experience with the Gold Nugget Hunter or enjoy a scenic canoe adventure with Bendigo Water Sports.

RIVERSIDE RETREATS: Grab a picnic from Bridgewater Bakehouse and unwind by the Loddon River. Autumn's crisp air and golden light make it a perfect spot for relaxing outdoors.

VINTAGE VIBES: Step back in time and visit Inglewood's vintage and collectable shops. From quirky curios to nostalgic treasures, it's a playground for discovery and delight.

PEAKS, PANORAMAS AND TRAILS: Hit the walking and cycling trails across the region. Reward yourself with epic views at Terrick Terrick National Park, Pyramid Hill, and Kooyoora State Park. Scenic farmland, forests, and panoramic lookouts make it a photographer's dream.

CONNECTION AND COUNTRY: Experience the stories and traditions of the Djaara people on a cultural tour at Kooyoora State Park. Discover cultural knowledge, connection to Country, and the rich history and traditions that have shaped this landscape for thousands of years.

For a full list of events and experiences:

www.visitloddonvalley.com.au



Play Outdoors IN THE LODDON VALLEY

This Autumn take time to rediscover your own backyard across the Loddon Valley and Bendigo Region through adventure, creativity and connection.

Unleash a sense of play and adventure with scenic trails, local events and outdoor fun, showing the kids the kind of childhood you had while creating new family memories along the way. Discover great local dining, vintage finds with nostalgic charm and plenty more to enjoy close to home – embrace the season, support local businesses and create lasting memories in our beautiful region.



Loddon Valley

Loddon Shire honours Australia Day award winners

Monday, 26 January saw many Loddon Shire residents gather at one of eight community-run events across our shire to celebrate Australia Day.

A major part of the celebrations are the awarding of Loddon Shire Australia Day awards, and it was no different in 2026, with the Citizen and Young Citizen of the Year, Community Group/Event of the Year (three recipients this year) and Ward Citizens of the year in each of the five wards also honoured.

Loddon Shire Mayor Dan Straub congratulated all the award recipients.

“We rely so heavily in our shire on volunteers to make things tick, and yet again we have an outstanding list of recipients for our awards,” he said.

“I’d like to congratulate each and every one of the winners – and everyone nominated – for their part in making Loddon Shire such a great place to live

and thank them for what has been decades of selfless and tireless service – the essence of great Australians. Along with the winners I congratulate everyone who nominated an individual or group for the awards – the detail in the submissions, largely gained without the nominee’s knowledge, was remarkable.”



Loddon Shire Citizen of the Year Robyn Vella and Young Citizen of the Year Oscar Holt flank Wedderburn Ward Councillor Gavan Holt at the Australia Day celebrations held at Wedderburn.

Loddon Shire Citizen of the Year - Robyn Vella

Whether it’s community service, sporting, cultural or academic achievements, Robyn Vella has been a cornerstone of the Wedderburn and district community pretty much her whole life. Robyn’s achievements would take up more space than we have here but they include 40 years as a netball coach, umpire and vice president as well as coaching and managing hockey teams.

Robyn was a huge part of Wedderburn Neighbourhood House/Wedderburn Community House between 1996 and 2022, including as president for many years, is still a member of the Wedderburn Tourism Committee, a volunteer at the Visitor Information Centre since 2005 and since 2020 has been on the Hard Hill Tourist Reserve Community Asset Committee.

Since 2019 Robyn’s been a member of the Wedderburn Lions Club, a member of the Wedderburn Development Committee, the initiator and a committee member of Wedderburn Walking and Riding Trails and a long serving board member of Inglewood and Districts Health Services.

She was founder and is still a committee member of the Rejoov Salon, a volunteer for mentoring programs, the founder of Loddon Discovery Tours, project manager of the Wedderburn Eucy Stewpot Restoration, founder of the Wedderburn Gold Jamboree, a driving force behind the Wedderburn Open-Air gallery, annual organiser and helper at Wedderburn’s Biggest Morning Tea and much more - a list of achievements that make Robyn truly a worthy recipient of this award.

Young Citizen of the Year - Oscar Holt

This year’s Loddon Shire Young Citizen of the Year is probably best singled out for his determination.

Logan farmer Oscar Holt has been a big part of local football and tennis for many of his 24 years.

Oscar has always been a keen footballer with the Wedderburn Redbacks but faced the adversity of injury for many years, limiting his on-field role. Despite that he threw himself into every other possible part of the club from early morning to late evening on game days – coaching the under-17s for six seasons, running the gate, helping in the canteen, timekeeping and running water.

Not to mention his fundraising activities – Oscar has been a big part of organising social events and fundraisers. He was runner-up in the best-and-fairest for the Redbacks senior side in 2024. As has been said at the club before – “If only we had five of him to go around”.

But Oscar doesn’t rest up in the summer – a keen tennis player who turns out for the Fenton’s Creek team as part of the Wedderburn Tennis Club, he is a dual A-grade men’s singles champion as well as team premiership player. Again, Oscar has served his sport off the court, currently in his second year as president of the Inglewood and District Lawn Tennis Association, as well as helping line the tennis courts on Saturdays and always attending working bees.

Loddon Shire honours Australia Day award winners

Community Group/Event of the Year (joint winner) - Rheola Charity Carniva

Any event that has been held for over 150 years has to be something special.

The 153rd Rheola Charity Carnival is just weeks away and over all of those years its purpose has remained the same – raising funds for the local community while celebrating country tradition and spirit.

More than just a fundraiser, the carnival is a highlight of community life. It brings people together across generations, from returning visitors to those discovering the event for the first time. The event is organised by a dedicated volunteer committee of about 15 members, supported by local sponsors, vendors, and suppliers.

Community Group/Event of the Year (joint winner) - Boort Agricultural and Pastoral Society Show

The Boort Show, the only agricultural show in Loddon Shire, has been trying things to increase the popularity of the event.

This led to the introduction of a Ute Show. In 2025, this was entirely orchestrated by a group of young men aged 17-22 and promoted volunteering, responsibility and gave them a place to hang out at the Show. But there was well and truly something for everyone at the Show. However, what makes it truly remarkable is the galvanising of the number of volunteers needed to run such a large and multi-faceted event – more than 150 volunteers in 2025.

Inglewood Ward Citizen of the Year - Deborah Abbott

“Deb is entirely selfless. She is one of those amazing people who sees a need and just does it without being asked or expected.”

A volunteer fire fighter with the Bridgewater Fire Brigade, Deb commits large amounts of her personal time to keeping the Bridgewater Fire Station looking neat and tidy.

She also voluntarily helps maintain the local Primary School and keeps her eye on some elderly residents, often seen putting out or bringing in their bins.

Tarnagulla Ward Citizen of the Year - Brian Baker

Brian is a great advocate for local issues, often meeting with politicians and company representatives to discuss important matters. He is a wealth of local knowledge. He is also closely involved with the Laanecoorie Hall, being elected to the committee in 2011.

He has been a member of the Woodstock West Fire Brigade and an active serving fire fighter for 56 years as well as holding key roles with the Laanecoorie Branch of the Victorian Farmers Federation and the Victorian Young Farmers Club.

Community Group/Event of the Year (joint winner) - 2025 Lexus Melbourne Cup Tour Bridgewater on Loddon

The race that stops a nation certainly stopped Loddon Shire in September 2025.

About 500 people attended the events, organised by Bridgewater on Loddon Development Inc. The tour included Inglewood and Districts Health Service, Memsie Homestead, an exhibition of waterskiing on the Loddon River, the Water Wheel Winery, the Bridgewater Recreation Reserve, and a sold-out gala dinner. Many community groups and businesses not only supported the event by attending but also by helping in the organisation.

Boort Ward Citizen of the Year - Sherryn O’Flaherty

Sherryn has been involved with the Boort Debutante Ball over the past five years as both an organiser and trainer, volunteering her time to ensure a continued opportunity for the young people of Boort and district to be involved in this long-standing tradition.

But Sherryn’s commitment to her community doesn’t end with the Deb Ball.

She’s a key volunteer at the Boort Hockey Club, as well as Boort Parkrun and Vice President of Boort District School Parent’s Club where she is also more than happy to volunteer at events to benefit students.

Terrick Ward Citizen of the Year - Helen Stevens

Helen’s love for history has seen her dedicate the most part of the last 40 years to the Pyramid Hill and District Historical Society, with most of that time as Secretary or Archivist or both. She has been an active member of St Thomas Anglican Church Mothers Union, taught Sunday School, and was organist for the Sunday services, a regular visitor at the Bush Nursing Hospital and Aged Care Hostel, played the piano or the organ for the annual Anzac services and other local events and a Cub leader.

Wedderburn Ward Citizen of the Year - Bruce Hargreaves

Bruce started as a track attendant as a teenager with the Wedderburn Harness Racing Club and rose to become Club President – a role he has held for the past 10 years. His leadership extended to the Donaldson Park complex, where Bruce played a key role in its development and now serves as Chair of the Donaldson Park Complex Community Asset Committee, as well as the Wedderburn Engine Park and Market Square Community Asset Committee.

Your Councillors



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Cr Nick Angelo
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Cr Miki Wilson
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Anzac Day 2026 events in Loddon Shire

Anzac Day will be commemorated throughout Loddon Shire on Saturday, 25 April.

Details of events were still being finalised as this edition of the Loddon Bulletin went to print, but you can see where these commemorations will be held by visiting our website - either scan the QR code on the right or visit <https://www.loddon.vic.gov.au/Our-Council/Ceremonies/Anzac-Day>.



Healthy Loddon Campaspe update

Support Our Own. Choose Locally Grown campaign

Healthy Loddon Campaspe, in partnership with local growers and retailers, is leading the Support Our Own. Choose Locally Grown. campaign.

The campaign promotes Loddon Campaspe-grown produce, including fruit, vegetables, grains, dairy, and lean meat and alternatives, with the aim of increasing awareness and encouraging people to choose locally grown produce.

Why support locally grown?

- Your produce will be fresh and tasty.
- Locally grown produce is no more expensive than produce grown outside of our region.
- You will enjoy eating with the seasons.
- Local growers, stores, and our local economy benefit.
- You are helping to reduce food miles.
- Eating fruit, vegetables, grains, dairy and lean meat (or meat alternatives) is great for our health.

Keep an eye out for the campaign which launches this month.



Loddon Shire Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land comprising the Loddon Shire Council area. Council would like to pay respect to their Elders both past and present.



Loddon Shire Council

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Office hours: Monday to Friday 8.15am to 4.45pm (except public holidays)

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