

Annual Report 2013/2014



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BACKGROUND

Annual Report

The Annual Report finalises Council's reporting requirements for the financial year.

The report follows the adoption of the Council Plan, the strategic document that guides Council's activities over a four-year period, and the Annual Budget, which resources Council's activities for the financial year.

The Annual Report contains information as required under the Local Government Act 1989 (Act) and Local Government (Finance and Reporting) Regulations 2004 (Regulations), Council's audited Financial and Standard Statements for the financial year and Council's Performance Statement for the financial year.

Information required by the Act and Regulations includes details of Councillors and senior staff, services provided by Council, contact details of Council and major highlights for the year.

Our Vision

2013-2017 Council Plan

In 2013, Council engaged a facilitator to work with Councillors, senior officers and members of the community to assist in preparing the 2013/2017 Council Plan.

The ideas and philosophies contributed by those involved led to a restatement of Council's Vision, Mission and Strategic Platforms and an identification of Council's core business, all of which were included into the document.

Our Vision and Mission

The Loddon community vision is:

Strong communities proud of their individual identities.

In order to achieve this, Council's mission is to:

Deliver services that enhance the sustainability and liveability of our communities.

Council's Core Business

Council's core business was identified under 10 headings:

1. **Leadership:** Providing vision and leadership in planning for our community's longer-term future.
2. **Provision of wellbeing services:** Cost-effectively providing for the basic needs of our communities.
3. **Planning for future needs:** Anticipating and planning for demographic and economic shifts.
4. **Economic development:** Supporting the growth and diversification of our economy, based on areas of competitive advantage.

5. **Providing quality infrastructure:** Developing and maintaining both built and natural assets appropriate to community priorities.
6. **Financial sustainability:** Planning and managing for long-term financial needs and keeping our ratepayers informed about the financial situation.
7. **Education and life-long learning:** Advocating for better youth engagement and life-long learning outcomes.
8. **Compliance:** Ensuring we are compliant with all legislative reporting requirements.
9. **Regulation:** Ensuring community compliance with local regulations.
10. **Advocacy and partnerships:** Collaborating internally and externally to achieve our region's goals and promoting the interests and position of our Council.

Council's Strategic Platforms

Council's strategic platforms for the next four years are:

1. **Build a network of strong communities:** Support our townships in preserving their individuality whilst leveraging their collective strength.
2. **Grow our population through appropriate development:** Capitalise on the demand for lifestyle properties, without compromising premium agricultural land or our environment.
3. **Champion our agrifood enterprises:** Be an advocate for our agrifood sector and support it to remain the backbone of our shire's economy.
4. **Make our towns liveable and memorable:** Improve the liveability of our towns by making them attractive to existing residents, prospective residents and tourists.
5. **Grow and diversify our economy:** Attract investment that introduces new industries, presents opportunity to existing businesses and grows our working population.
6. **Support our transitioning townships:** Support small town communities to retain the best possible quality of life in the face of a declining population with increasing needs.
7. **Connect with the next generation:** Engage our youth to equip them for a positive future and keep our communities young, vibrant and energised.

The priorities and key projects identified in the Council Plan aim to assist Council in achieving these objectives.

At the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 27 May 2014, Council resolved not to make any adjustment to the 2013/2017 Council Plan and Council will continue focusing on the objectives included in that document in the 2014/2015 financial year.



Our Shire

Loddon Shire is located in central Victoria, about 175 kilometres north-west of Melbourne. It is bounded by the Gannawarra Shire in the north, the Shire of Campaspe and the City of Greater Bendigo in the east, Mount Alexander and Central Goldfields Shires in the south and Northern Grampians and Buloke Shires in the west.

Loddon Shire is a predominantly rural area, with many small towns and communities. The largest towns are Boort, Bridgewater on Loddon, Inglewood, Pyramid Hill and Wedderburn.

The Shire encompasses a total land area of about 6,700 square kilometres. Land is used mainly for agriculture and horticulture, particularly grain, sheep, wool, beef cattle, dairy, pigs and poultry. In recent years, there has also been an increase in viticulture, olives and fodder crops.

Major features of the Shire include the Loddon River, Terrick Terrick National Park, Leaghur State Park, Kooyoora State Park, Lake Boort, Major Mitchell Trail, Mount Korong, Melville Caves, Laanecoorie Reservoir and various wineries.

Major highways passing through the Shire include the Calder Highway, the Loddon Valley Highway and the Wimmera Highway.

Our People

Population

The Estimated Resident Population (from the Australian Bureau of Statistics) for 2013 in Loddon Shire was 7,443 and the number of private dwellings, according to the 2011 Census, was 4,143.

The Census concluded that the overall median age of people in the Shire was 50 years, the median weekly household income was \$686 and the median weekly rent \$100.

The proportion of rented households in 2011 was 16% and those with a mortgage 23%. Overall, 52% of the population owned their dwelling.

Census population figures for our bigger towns in 2011 were given as follows: Boort (760), Inglewood (711), Wedderburn (680), Pyramid Hill (419) and Bridgewater on Loddon (363).

Population was spread across the following age groups:

Children and young people, 0 to 19 years	23%
Adults, 20 to 69 years	60%
Mature adults and seniors, 69+ years	17%

During the year, Council recorded 71 births in the Shire (75 in 2012/2013).

Origin

The top five ancestries claimed by residents of the Loddon Shire during the 2011 Census were Australian (44%), English (41%), Scottish (13%), Irish (11%) and German (3%).

Overall, 86% of residents were born in Australia and 93% speak only English at home.

Education

Overall, 32% of the population aged 15 and over held educational qualifications, while 55% had no qualifications.

Employment

Census data from 2011 showed that 2,932 residents of Loddon Shire were employed.

Of that total, 37% of workers were involved in agriculture, forestry and fishing, 10% in health care and social assistance, 7% in retail trade and 5% in public administration and safety.

In 2011, the car was the principal method by which people travelled to work. In total, 57% used a private vehicle, 20% worked at home and 8% always walked to work.

Volunteers

Loddon Shire has a strong sense of self-reliance and community spirit and this is reflected in the rate of volunteerism experienced. The 2011 Census showed a rate of 34% of the population volunteering – and many of those volunteers held roles in a number of community organisations.

This figure compared with a total of 23% in regional Victoria generally.

In addition, 13% of our people provided unpaid care for others.

MAYOR & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Three over-riding themes have emerged as Council reflects on the year just gone and the new one already under way.

The first is Council's keen focus on long-term planning, another, the many tangible achievements realised this past year and the third, our hopes of enhancing our towns while maintaining an efficient operation.

In terms of the first theme, the formation of a Long-Term Financial Plan has been a critical factor in our efforts to chart a clear course ahead for our levels of service and our community's expectations.

Council first adopted a Long-Term Financial Plan early in 2013 and this document was comprehensively reviewed during the year.

It's expected the plan will predict Council's future financial performance and position and enable us to improve our infrastructure levels and standards, while avoiding the need for unplanned rate rises or service cutbacks.

In a similar vein, Councillors met in May to pore over a list of potential community infrastructure projects for the next 10 years and to consider both the needs of the community and possible funding sources.

Much on the list was aspirational, but a good number of the projects named have already attracted different levels of funding and are fully expected to go ahead.

Some, such as planned pool improvements, Wedderburn's streetscape and Inglewood Town Hall, are well on the way, but others fall into the "maybe" category, such as upgrades for recreation reserves, local halls, community centres and streetscapes.

All this long-term thinking has been done in the face of a markedly changing funding environment for local government.

When the two of us travelled to Canberra in June for the annual National General Assembly of Local Government – accompanied by Crs Curnow and Beattie – it became very clear that the federal government was determined to bring the Budget back to surplus and no amount of pleading or protest was going to change that.

There was a great deal of discussion among the civic leaders of the nation's 560-odd local government authorities about the Commonwealth's stated intention to freeze the indexation of financial assistance grants – a move which could punch a hefty hole in Loddon's future financial planning.



Gavan Holt.



John McLinden.

What was encouraging was the widespread support expressed by both government and Opposition for the long-term prospects for Roads to Recovery funding and discussions around the government's plan to release a White Paper later this year on reforming the relationship between the Commonwealth and state governments – a process to which we would be delighted to contribute.

Council's response to this changing financial landscape has been one of watchfulness, but, at the same time, a resolve to get on with the job and maintain its usual optimism.

This past year has seen a string of achievements for our communities that we, as a Council, are proud to look back on.

Just last June, Council was delighted to see the official opening of two new netball courts in Mitchell Park at Pyramid Hill by the Victorian Minister for Sport and Recreation, Damian Drum.

The day marked the end of a \$120,680 project to upgrade the netball facilities, made possible by funding of \$75,000 from the state government's Community Facility Funding Program, a Council contribution of \$26,200 and \$15,000 from the Pyramid Hill Netball Club, backed up by a further \$4,480 worth of volunteer labour.

That event almost closed the book on Loddon Shire's eight-year effort to upgrade the municipality's netball facilities – a \$1.4 million improvement program which resulted in the construction or refurbishment of 17 courts around the Shire.

Now finished and in use are one court in Wedderburn and dual courts in Bridgewater, Inglewood, Boort, Pyramid Hill, Newbridge, Mitiamo, Calivil and Serpentine.

MAYOR & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

The last upgrade in Council's mind is for Wedderburn's Donaldson Park, where a second court will be rebuilt next year with funding already secured by Council.

Another exciting development has been the radical change we've seen to the old Wedderburn Community Centre.

The \$1.75 million redevelopment project in train there will ultimately result in the completion of a new Maternal and Child Health centre, visiting allied health medical consulting rooms, a new Loddon Visitor Information Centre and a renovated Wedderburn Neighbourhood House.

Much was accomplished during the year, with staff and volunteers moving into the new extension during the autumn while construction work continued in the old building.

A landscape architect was appointed to help finalise the surrounding garden areas and the whole project is due to be completed by the end of 2014.

This redevelopment is fully expected to lower the costs of obtaining essential medical services from outside the region by providing them locally, saving \$1.4 million over five years.

Major change is also under way in the south of the Shire, with funding secured and planning well advanced for the Inglewood Town Hall project.

The building and grounds are owned by Loddon Shire and administered by a committee comprising Council and community representatives.

A number of local groups have come together on this \$2.15 million project, including the Inglewood Community Resource Centre, the Inglewood Town Hall Committee, the Inglewood and District Community Bank, Council, state government and community members.

It will transform the iconic 1883 building into a lively, two-tier community hub, featuring new business and multi-purpose facilities, training rooms, a kitchen upgrade and spaces for community activities, special events and displays

More detailed planning will take place over the next few months.

The Town Hall, with its unique chiming clock, is a magnificent gold rush era building and the redevelopment promises to deliver an outstanding community asset.



Retiring Mayor Cr Geoff Curnow and Cr Cheryl McKinnon.



Cr Holt addresses the meeting.



Returning Mayor Cr Gavan Holt (centre) is flanked by, from left, Crs Beattie, McKinnon, Condliffe and Curnow.

Further up the Calder Highway, just outside Bridgewater, a major commercial development has begun, with early works commenced during the year on a new facility for Hay Australia.

The company supplies high-quality fodder for leading dairy, beef and equine businesses around the world and it's a huge feather in Loddon's cap to have an organisation such as this making a home in the Shire.

Current plans are for the company to ultimately be handling up to 60,000 tonnes of fodder a year.

In February, Councillors acted to safeguard a vital community asset when they agreed to spend up to \$500,000 buying water to top up Little Lake Boort to protect it from dry years.

The lake is relatively shallow, with a maximum depth of just 1.7m, and has a storage capacity of 934 megalitres.

It already had a 600-megalitre allocation and Council's purchase meant there would be another 300 megalitres available.

The freshwater lake is estimated to be worth a couple of million dollars a year to the local community.

It is a highly-valued wetland which provides habitat for a range of water birds, fish and reptiles.

Part of the 595ha Lake Boort Lake Reserve, it is a mecca each summer for holiday makers, anglers, water ski enthusiasts, bird watchers and bush walkers.

Other small towns which were helped in a particular, and highly practical, way during the year included Calivil, Pyramid Hill, Mitiamo and Bridgewater.

Last October, Council set up a program whereby six major recreation reserves around the Shire would receive new oval mowers over the following three years, to replace existing run down or ageing equipment.

Three other reserve committees had recently bought new mowers and were therefore ruled out of the first round of the scheme.

The new policy offered grants of up to \$35,000 for reserve committees to purchase replacement oval movers, aimed at achieving cost savings for local communities and easing the burden on volunteer labour.

Calivil received a new four-wheel-drive Shibaura out-front mower in February and Pyramid Hill followed in May with the gift of a Kubota.

The reserve committees at Mitiamo and Bridgewater both opted for diesel-powered Hustler Super Z 72" out-front machines.

As Mayor, I made a point of attending three of those handover ceremonies, with the fourth not formally arranged before year's end.

Looking forward, Council is determined to continue steering a course towards greater efficiency in all it does.

Our aim is to minimise any potential rate increases to our property owners while doing our utmost to make our communities nice places to live.

In closing, we must acknowledge the generous support of both federal and state governments in our endeavours – it's that backing which has allowed us to achieve what we have, hand-in-hand with local communities.

Credit, too, goes to a dedicated and professional staff, all genuinely committed to delivering a high-quality service to the communities of Loddon Shire.

We recognise and thank them for their efforts during this past year.

We also record our appreciation of the high levels of support and co-operation Council has enjoyed from the community in seeking to bring about positive change.



Cr Gavan Holt
Mayor



John McLinden
Chief Executive Officer

PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENTS

Community Satisfaction Survey

Council has been involved in the annual Community Satisfaction Survey undertaken for the industry since 1998.

This survey provides Council with important information about how the community judges Council's performance in the current year, as well as giving Council staff the ability to assess any trend in results over multiple years.

The survey questions refer to the broad areas of governance and service delivery.

Governance is covered by general council performance, advocacy, community engagement, customer contact and the overall direction Council is taking.

Service delivery is captured by key service areas. Those collected for a number of years include local streets and footpaths, recreational facilities, appearance of public areas, waste management, enforcement of local laws, business and community development and tourism.

In 2012, a number of new indicators were added, identified by the limited trend data available (three years).

They cover areas of family support services, elderly support services, planning and building permits, emergency and disaster management, maintenance of unsealed roads and informing the community.

The 2013 Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey results for the Loddon Shire show Council's overall performance is rated at a score of 69 out of 100, an increase of one point from last year's score of 68, and an increasing trend since 2011.

Council's performance in advocacy increased from 60 to 62, community engagement fell from 62 to 60, customer contact increased from 72 to 76, while overall direction increased from 55 to 57.

Council scored higher than the median result of Small Rural Shires (a group of 22 like Councils) in all governance areas.

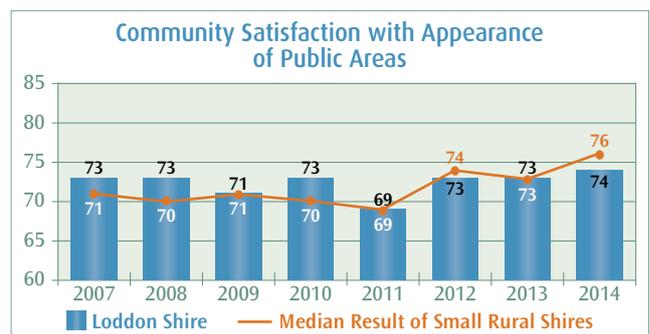
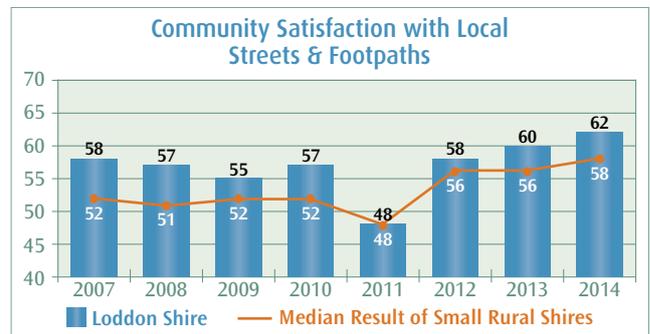
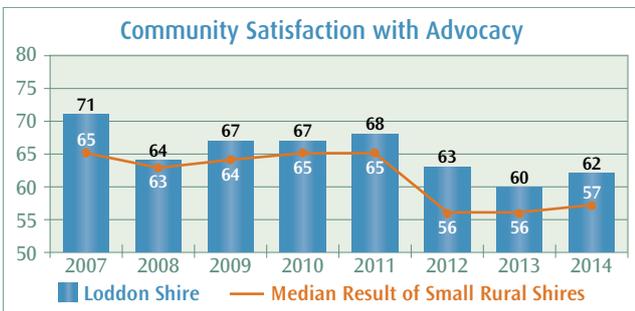
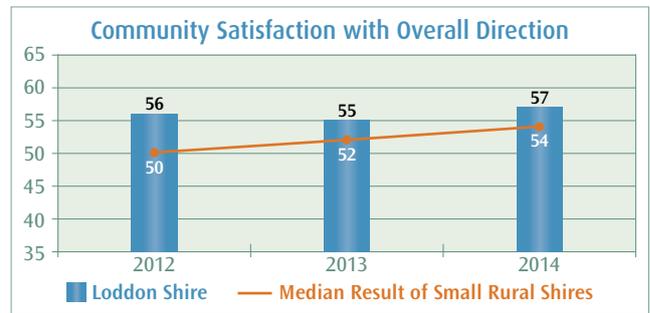
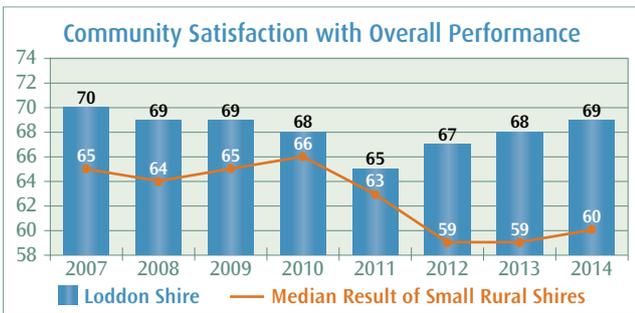
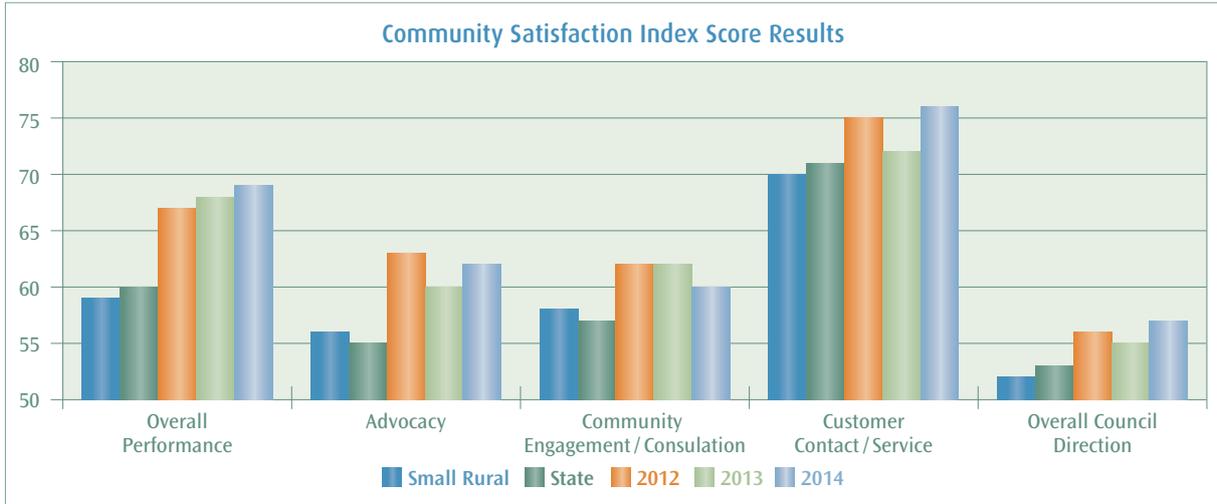
There were 12 service delivery areas showing analysis from previous years.

Council scored higher than last year in eight areas – local streets and footpaths, recreational facilities, appearance of public areas, waste management, business and community development and tourism, planning and building permits, emergency and disaster management and informing the community.

Scores remained the same for elderly support services, but decreased in enforcement of local laws, family support services and maintenance of unsealed roads.

VICTORIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT INDICATORS		
	2013/ 2014	2012/ 2013
Affordability/Cost of Governance		
Average Rates & Charges Per Assessment	\$1,132	\$1,075
Average Rates & Charges Per Residential Assessment	\$838	\$875
Sustainability		
Average Liabilities Per Assessment	\$835	\$949
Operating Result Per Assessment	\$518	(\$230)
Services		
Average Operating Expenditure Per Assessment	\$3,461	\$5,974
Community Satisfaction Rating for Overall Performance	69	68
Capital Expenditure		
Average Capital Expenditure Per Assessment	\$1,342	\$953
Infrastructure		
Renewal Gap	78%	101%
Renewal and Maintenance Gap	160%	490%
Governance		
Community Satisfaction Rating for Council's Advocacy	62	60
Community Satisfaction Rating for Council's Engagement	60	62

PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENTS

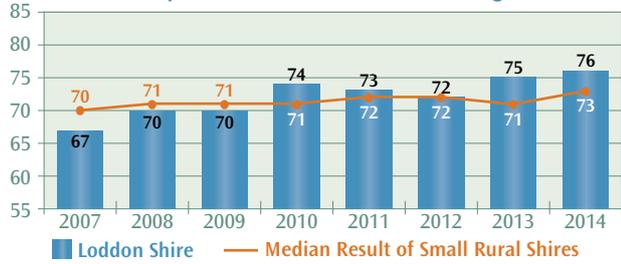


PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENTS

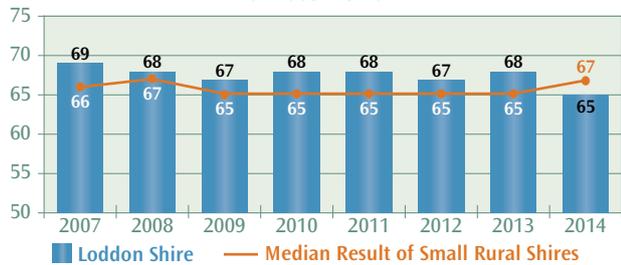


Residents' satisfaction with public areas such as the Tarnagulla Community Centre rose sharply to 76 in the latest survey.

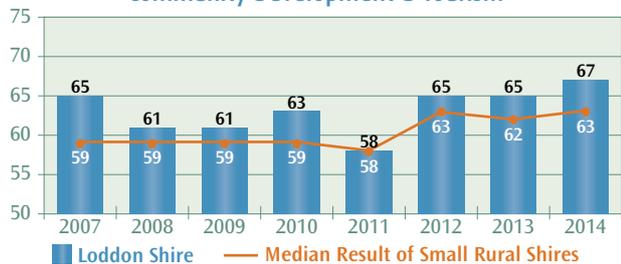
Community Satisfaction with Waste Management



Community Satisfaction with Enforcement of Local Laws



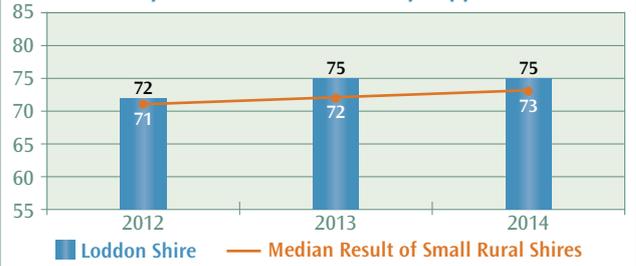
Community Satisfaction with Business & Community Development & Tourism



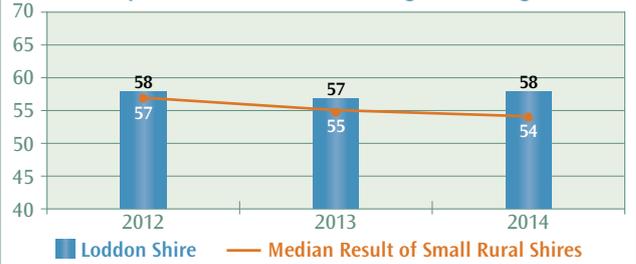
Community Satisfaction with Family Support Services



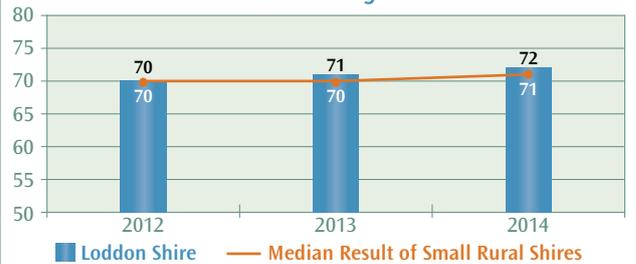
Community Satisfaction with Elderly Support Services



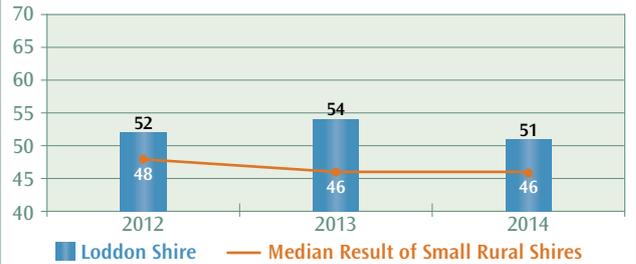
Community Satisfaction with Planning & Building Permits



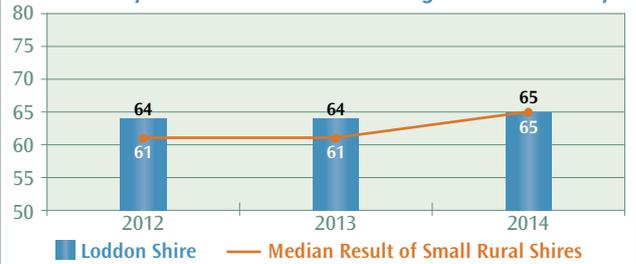
Community Satisfaction with Emergency & Disaster Management



Community Satisfaction with Maintenance of Unsealed Roads in Your Area



Community Satisfaction with Informing Your Community



Financial Indicators

The following financial indicators are included in Council's Financial Statements.

They provide a snapshot of Council's performance during the financial year or its position at the end of the financial year.

Debt Servicing Ratio

The Debt Servicing Ratio identifies Council's capacity to service its outstanding debt.

The ratio expresses the amount of interest paid as a percentage of Council's total revenue.

The ratio is expressed as:

Debt Servicing Costs	\$26,076
Total Revenue	\$22,452,692
	= 0.12%

Debt Commitment Ratio

The Debt Commitment Ratio identifies Council's debt redemption strategy.

The ratio expresses the percentage of rate revenue used to pay interest and redeem debt.

The ratio is expressed as:

Debt Servicing & Redemption Costs	\$208,602
Rate Revenue	\$8,651,565
	= 2.41%

Revenue Ratio

The Revenue Ratio identifies Council's dependence on non-rate income.

This is determined by assessing rate revenue as a proportion of the total revenue of Council.

The ratio is expressed as:

Rate Revenue	\$8,651,565
Total Revenue	\$22,452,692
	= 38.53%

Debt Exposure Ratio

The Debt Exposure Ratio identifies Council's exposure to debt.

The ratio is expressed as:

Total Indebtedness	\$4,040,126
Total Realisable Assets	\$58,882,474
	= 6.86%

The ratio enables assessment of Council's solvency and exposure to debt.

Total indebtedness refers to the total liabilities of Council. Total liabilities are compared to total realisable assets.

For the purpose of the calculation, realisable assets are those assets which can be sold and which are not subject to any restriction on realisation or use.

Working Capital Ratio

The Working Capital Ratio assesses Council's ability to meet current commitments.

The ratio expresses the amount of current financial assets Council has available to meet its current financial liabilities.

The ratio is expressed as:

Current Assets	\$16,070,020
Current Liabilities	\$3,901,076
	= 4.12:1

Adjusted Working Capital Ratio

The Adjusted Working Capital Ratio assesses Council's ability to meet current commitments, where financial liabilities have been reduced to reflect long service leave that is shown as a current financial liability.

The ratio expresses the amount of current financial assets Council has available to meet its current liabilities.

The ratio is expressed as:

Current Assets	\$16,070,020
Current Liabilities – Current Long Service Leave Liability	\$2,496,900
	= 6.44:1

RATIO COMPARISON

Ratio	2013/ 2014	2012/ 2013
Debt Servicing Ratio	0.12%	0.08%
Debt Commitment Ratio	2.41%	2.10%
Revenue Ratio	38.53%	18.69%
Debt Exposure Ratio	6.86%	7.30%
Working Capital Ratio	4.12:1	4.54:1
Adjusted Working Capital Ratio	6.44:1	6.54:1

OUR COUNCIL

Councillors

Cr Neil Beattie



Boort Ward

First elected: 2005

Re-elected: 2008 and 2012

Cr Beattie lives at Catumnal, west of Boort, running a dryland and irrigation farm along with a trucking operation.

Cr Beattie is Chairman of Little Lake Boort Management Committee, an active member of the Boort Football Club, Life Member of the North Central Football League, member of the Boort Aerodrome Committee of Management and Boort Memorial Hall Committee of Management.

He is a member of the Murray Darling Association, MAV, Rail Freight Alliance, Recreation Strategy Implementation Steering Committee and Boort Park redevelopment group and inaugural chairman of the Boort Cereal Growers Co-operative.

Cr Colleen Condliffe



Inglewood Ward

Served three previous terms on Council from 2000 to 2008

Re-elected: 2012

Cr Condliffe grew up on the family farm at Salisbury West and was educated in Bendigo.

Her community involvements have included the Breakfast in Schools Program, Country Women's Association and Victorian Farmers Federation.

She has completed the Loddon Murray Leadership Program and was the first woman elected to Loddon Shire Council.

Cr Condliffe formed the Landcare group at Salisbury West and organised the 1997 Women on Farms Gathering at Bendigo. She was a regional winner of the ABC Rural Woman of the Year award that same year.

Cr Condliffe is currently involved with the sports centre in Inglewood, Bridgewater on Loddon Development Committee, Women's Health in Bendigo and rural financial counselling and is secretary of the Inglewood



Town Hall Committee, a board member of Inglewood & District Community Bank and Vice-Chair of the Inglewood Resource Centre.

She is chair of the Kooyoora Women's Network and a member of the transition advisory committee of the Dingee Bush Nursing Centre.

Cr Geoff Curnow



Tarnagulla Ward

First elected: 2008

Re-elected: 2012

Cr Geoff Curnow lives at Laanecoorie and has a background in agricultural production. Cr Curnow and his wife, Merna, are the third generation to farm their property, producing a variety of grain crops and prime lambs.

Cr Curnow's present community involvement includes roles as Secretary of Laanecoorie Mechanics Institute Hall Reserve Committee, Chairman of the Laanecoorie Loddon River Recreation Reserve Committee of Management,

member of Laanecoorie Branch of the Victorian Farmers Federation, West Marong LandCare Group and Woodstock West CFA and board member of the Central Murray Regional Waste Management Group.

Cr Gavan Holt



Wedderburn Ward

First elected: 2003

Re-elected: 2005, 2008 and 2012

Mayor: 2005/07, 2009/11 and 2013/14

Cr Holt was born and raised in Wedderburn, where the Holt family has a history of involvement in local government.

Having completed a Commerce degree from the University of Melbourne, for 10 years he taught at various secondary schools across Victoria.

Cr Holt then returned to Wedderburn and is now a businessman with interests in farming, investment and hotels.

Cr Holt's present community involvement includes the Wedderburn Development Association Community Planning Group, Wedderburn & District Harness Racing Club, Donaldson Park Committee of Management, Wedderburn Community Centre Committee of Management and Wedderburn Football Club.

He is also involved with the Wedderburn & District Community Bank Steering Committee, Wedderburn Mechanics & Literary Institute Hall Committee of Management and the Wedderburn Engine Park Committee of Management.

Cr Holt is chair of the Shire's ANZAC Centenary Organising Committee, Council delegate to the Municipal Association of Victoria, MAV Rural North Central Region councillor member of the Rural Councils Victoria executive and a member of the MAV Planning Sub-committee.

He is also Council's representative on its internal audit committee.

Cr Cheryl McKinnon



Terrick Ward

First elected: 2012

Cr McKinnon, with her husband, Glenn, operates an irrigation and dryland farming operation based in Pyramid Hill and Terrick Terrick East, comprising beef and lamb production and cropping.

Cr McKinnon has been involved in community work in Pyramid Hill for many years. She was a member of the

founding committee of the Pyramid Hill Neighbourhood House and worked in education, supporting students with disabilities.

Cr McKinnon's current community involvements include the Pyramid Hill Neighbourhood House, Pyramid Hill Historical Society, Pyramid Hill Progress Association, Pyramid-Raywood-Mitiamo VFF Branch Secretary, Chair of the Loddon Shire Nature Tourism Advisory Committee and a seat on the board of the Goldfields Regional Library Corporation.

She serves on the committees of the Dingee Progress Association, East Loddon Community Centre, Mitiamo Municipal Recreation Reserve, Pyramid Hill Memorial Hall, Pyramid Hill Swimming Pool and Serpentine Bowls & Tennis Pavilion Reserve.

Representing the community

Council meetings

Council holds its meetings on the fourth Tuesday of the month (with the exception of December, which is normally held on the third Tuesday of the month).

Council meetings commence at 3.00pm, with a Council Briefing held prior to the meeting.

Council holds Council Forums on the second Tuesday of the month when required.

Councillor Representation on Committees

Councillors provided representation on the following committees:

Cr Neil Beattie

- Murray Darling Association
- Municipal Association of Victoria (substitute)
- Rail Freight Alliance
- Recreation Strategy Implementation Steering Committee

Section 86 Committees of Management

- Boort Aerodrome Committee of Management
- Boort Development Committee of Management
- Boort Memorial Hall Committee of Management
- Boort Business and Tourism Council Committee of Management
- Korong Vale Mechanics Hall Committee of Management
- Korong Vale Sports Centre Committee of Management
- Little Lake Boort Committee of Management
- Yando Public Hall Committee of Management
- Boort Park Committee of Management

OUR COUNCIL

Cr Colleen Condliffe

- Australia Day Committee
- Calder Highway Improvement Committee
- Loddon Healthy Minds Network
- Loddon Youth Committee

Section 86 Committees of Management

- Bridgewater Memorial Hall Committee of Management
- Bridgewater on Loddon Development Committee of Management
- Campbells Forest Hall Committee of Management
- Inglewood Community Sports Centre Committee of Management
- Inglewood Lions Community Elderly Persons Units Committee of Management
- Inglewood Riding Club Committee of Management
- Inglewood Town Hall Committee of Management

Cr Geoff Curnow

- Central Murray Regional Waste Management Group
- Calder Highway Improvement Committee (substitute)
- Loddon Municipal Emergency Management Plan Committee
- Loddon Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee

Section 86 Committees of Management

- Kingower Development & Tourism Committee of Management

Cr Gavan Holt

- Loddon Shire Internal Audit Committee
- Municipal Association of Victoria
- Loddon ANZAC Centenary Organising Committee
- Rural Councils Victoria Executive

Section 86 Committees of Management

- Donaldson Park Committee of Management
- Wedderburn Community Centre Committee of Management
- Wedderburn Engine Park Committee of Management
- Wedderburn Mechanics & Literary Institute Hall Committee of Management
- Wedderburn Tourism Committee of Management

Cr Cheryl McKinnon

- Nature Tourism Advisory Team
- North Central Goldfields Regional Library

Section 86 Committees of Management

- Dingee Progress Association Committee of Management
- East Loddon Community Centre Committee of Management
- Mitiamo Municipal Recreation Reserve Committee of Management
- Pyramid Hill Memorial Hall Committee of Management
- Pyramid Hill Swimming Pool Committee of Management
- Serpentine Bowls & Tennis Pavilion Reserve Committee of Management

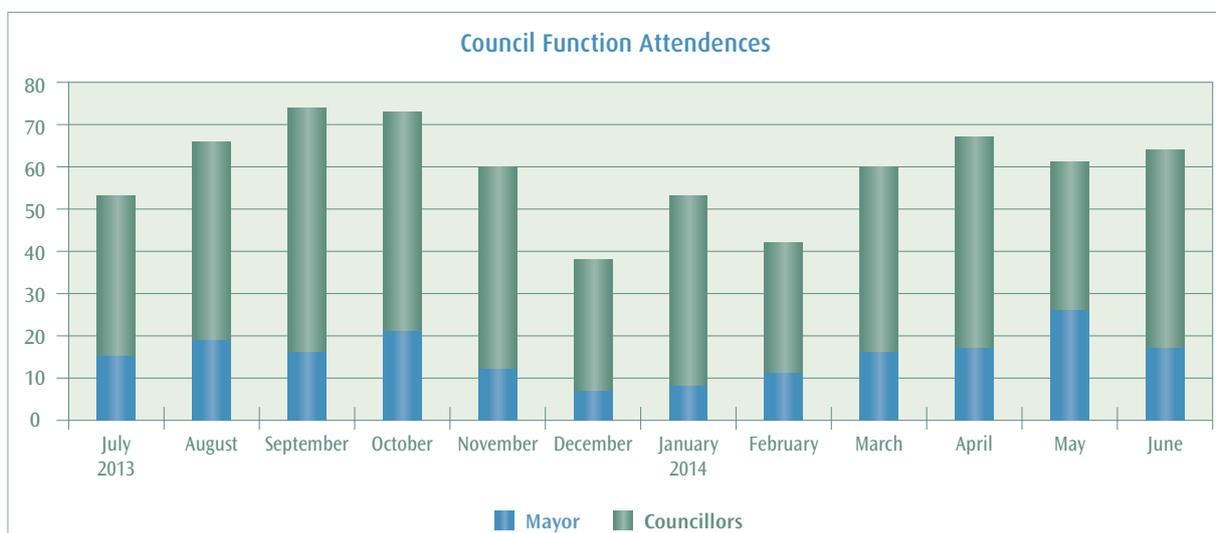
Councillor Attendances

During the year, the Mayor and Councillors attended various functions on behalf of the Loddon Shire.

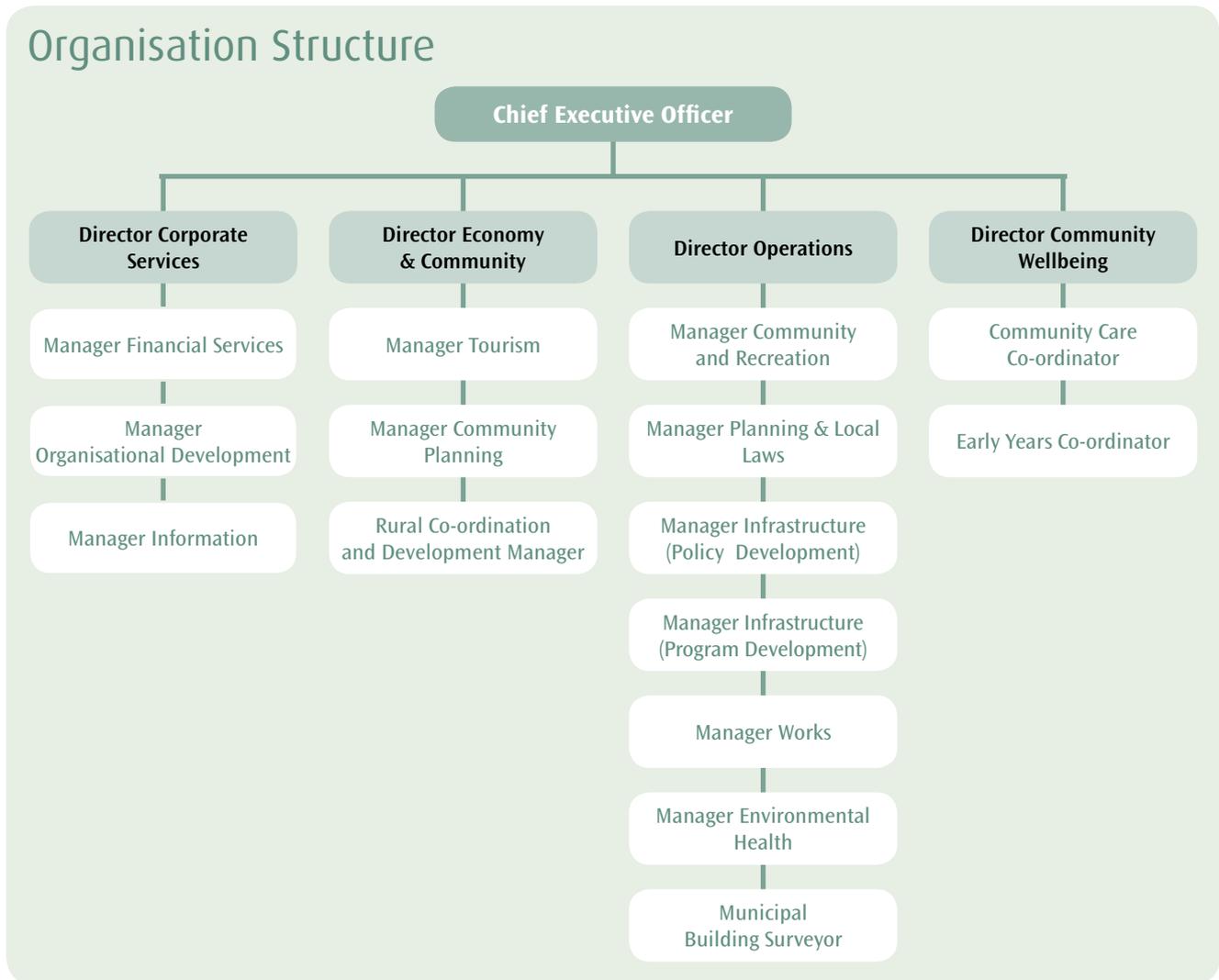
Some of the functions related to their representation on the committees listed, while others arose from invitations by community groups, local government bodies, politicians, etc.

The following graph shows their attendances by month.

In total, the Mayor attended 185 functions, while the other Councillors attended 526.



OUR ORGANISATION



Management Executive Group

The Management Executive Group is made up of the Chief Executive Officer and the four Directors. The group meets on at least a weekly basis to discuss matters that relate to the effective and efficient operation of the entire organisation.

Chief Executive Officer, John McLinden

John McLinden was appointed Shire Engineer of the former Shire of East Loddon in 1993, having previously held engineering positions at the Shire of Rosedale, City of Broadmeadows and Shire of Colac.

After local government amalgamations in 1995, John served as Director Technical Services and, later, Director Operations, for Loddon Shire before taking up the post of Chief Executive Officer in December 2005.

John has extensive experience in local government, with a particular focus on managing the growth of rural

communities through challenging economic and climatic conditions.

He has a Bachelor of Civil Engineering degree, a Graduate Diploma in Municipal Engineering and Management and a Masters of Business Administration.

As Chief Executive Officer, John's role includes prescribed duties in accordance with the Local Government Act 1989, providing leadership to the Council, strategic planning, promoting external relationships and managing Council operations.

Director Corporate Services, Jude Holt

Jude Holt was appointed Director Corporate Services in October 2007 after serving as Manager Financial Services for the Shire since local government amalgamations in 1995.

Before this, Jude held administrative positions with the former Shire of Korong and in private enterprise and was

OUR ORGANISATION

a trainee accountant in public practice for a number of years.

She has extensive experience in local government, with a particular emphasis on financial management and administration. Jude has a Bachelor of Business degree majoring in accounting and is a graduate of the Company Directors' Course.

As Director Corporate Services, Jude's role includes business improvement, internal audit, financial management, human resource management, occupational health and safety, risk management, records management, information technology, valuations and rating and customer service

Director Economy and Community, Bryan McEwan

After a restructure of Council's operations, Bryan McEwan was appointed Director Economy and Community in February 2008.

Prior to this, Bryan worked as an Industry Investment Manager with the Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development (Regional Development Victoria).

He has also held management and technical positions in the chemical and food processing industries and worked with the former Soil Conservation Authority.

Bryan has a mix of experience in both private and public sectors, with a particular focus on regional economic development, quality management and manufacturing. He has a Bachelor of Science degree, with associated qualifications in Business and Environmental Management.

As Director Economy and Community, Bryan has a direct role in economic development in the Shire, as well as promoting tourism and community planning.

Director Operations, Ian McLauchlan

Ian McLauchlan was appointed Director Operations in March 2011 and has been with Loddon Shire since January 2008, originally serving as Manager of Infrastructure Program Development.

Before starting work with Loddon Shire, Ian held a number of engineering positions in both local government and private enterprise, as well as serving as an officer in the Royal Australian Air Force.

Ian has more than 13 years' experience in the areas of asset management, project management, contract



Management Executive Group – L-R: Ian McLauchlan, Jude Holt, Bryan McEwan, Wendy Gladman and John McLinden.

administration, infrastructure maintenance, policy and strategy development, civil construction and waste management.

He has a degree in Environmental Engineering, majoring in land and water management, and has also completed post-graduate studies in project management, contract administration, water and wastewater treatment and communications.

As Director Operations, Ian is responsible for the management and ongoing delivery of a wide range of Council services, including infrastructure policy and program development, works and maintenance, strategic and statutory planning, statutory building control, environmental and public health, local laws policy and compliance, contract management, climate change adaptation, recreation services, grant scheme administration, engineering, public buildings and youth services.

Director Community Wellbeing, Wendy Gladman

Wendy Gladman has been employed with Loddon Shire for 18 years in the community services sector.

She took up the role of Manager Community Services in January 2010 and became Acting Director Community Wellbeing in August 2012.

Wendy's subsequent appointment as Director Community Wellbeing was confirmed in May 2013 and she assumed the post officially on 1 July 2013.

Wendy oversees the management of the maternal and child health and immunisation programs, the Loddon Kindergartens Cluster, aged and disability services, the Home & Community Care (HACC) program, the Packaged Care program, Municipal Emergency Recovery and the Loddon Healthy Minds Network.

Management Team



Rural Co-ordination and Development Manager, Brian Hinneberg

Brian Hinneberg joined Council in March 2011 as Flood Recovery Manager, charged with helping the Shire recover from the effects of the severe floods of the previous summer.

He brought with him extensive experience from his time working with the Victorian Government in economic and regional development.

In March 2012, Brian took up a new role as Rural Co-ordination and Development Manager. His primary focus continued to be on flood recovery, including helping with farm-specific issues, keeping in touch with water authorities, primary industry representatives and businesses, as well as facilitating outreach services to farmers, farm families and rural small businesses.

Corporate Services Directorate



Manager Financial Services, Deanne Caserta

Deanne Caserta started work with Council in 2004 in an administration role and, in 2007, was awarded an accounting cadetship through Council's Scholarship Program.

To complete her degree she combined work with part-time university studies until she graduated in 2012 with a Bachelor of Commerce with majors in Accounting and Human Resource Management.

Deanne is also currently working towards completion of her CPA accreditation.

Her role involves overseeing the preparation of the budget, financial statements, monthly financial reporting to Council, reporting to various government departments, payment of suppliers, customer service and rates preparation.



Manager Organisational Development, Carol Canfield

Carol Canfield commenced with Council in September 2007 after a long career with the City of Greater Bendigo and Shire of East Loddon. Carol has held positions in payroll, risk management, various administration roles and as Assistant Shire Secretary.

Carol's role includes human resource management, payroll, risk management, staff training, occupational health and safety, staff health and wellbeing and

insurance. She was instrumental in managing the passage of Council's latest Enterprise Bargaining Agreement.



Manager Information, Leigh Jardine

Leigh Jardine joined Council in April 2014 as Manager Information. Prior to that, Leigh worked in the public health system and private industry in various IT roles.

Leigh's role includes management of information technology services, records and information services within Council, as well as providing IT support and expert guidance for Council's future IT strategy.

Economy & Community Directorate



Manager Community Planning, Tim Jenkyn

Tim commenced with Council in 2006 as Drought and Environment Officer. He has worked on various community projects with diverse sections of the community, as a private contractor and for a range of regional authorities. Tim's experience spans across many industries, including horticulture and forestry, landscaping and construction, on heritage projects and in education, youth, indigenous and disability services.

Early in 2008, Tim was appointed Manager Community Planning. The role involves community engagement, project development and delivery, working on local and regional initiatives and managing Loddon's Community Planning program.



Manager Tourism, Robyn Vella

Robyn Vella started work with Council in 2000 assisting the Tourism Manager on a part-time basis.

In 2003, she went full-time as a tourism co-ordinator specialising in coach tours before rising to the role of Manager Tourism.

Robyn's aim is to promote Loddon as a great place to visit, to enhance economic activity by encouraging visitors to stay and spend locally, to build local pride in our communities and to create a healthy and diverse tourism industry.

OUR ORGANISATION

Operations Directorate



Manager Community & Recreation, Allan Stobaus

Allan Stobaus was appointed as Loddon's Manager of Community & Recreation in September 2001 following five years in a similar role at Bruce Rock Shire in Western Australia.

Allan is responsible for the management of Council's grant schemes and swimming pools, strategic planning for community facilities, project management of capital works recreation infrastructure projects and youth development.



Manager Environmental Health, Teresa Arnup

Teresa Arnup commenced with Council in November 2008. She has more than 18 years' experience as an Environmental Health Officer.

Teresa's role in Council includes monitoring of premises under the Food Act, Public Health and Wellbeing Act, Tobacco Act and Residential Tenancies Act. Teresa also manages the diabetic syringe program and the issuing of septic tank permits under the Environment Protection Act.



Manager Infrastructure Policy Development, Terry Watson

Terry Watson was appointed as Manager Infrastructure Policy Development (formerly known as Manager Assets) after local government amalgamations in

1995. He was previously employed by the Shire of East Loddon and Shire of Bet Bet as Assistant Shire Engineer.

Terry has a Diploma of Civil Engineering and, in his current role, is responsible for developing and maintaining policies, procedures and strategies for the provision of all infrastructure assets of the Council and developing management plans and registers for Council's assets.



Manager Infrastructure Program Development, David Fry

David Fry commenced with Council in March 1991 as Superintendent of Works, after more than 10 years' experience working with earthmoving and civil

contractors in Melbourne. In 1998, David was appointed to the role of Manager Works.

In 2011, David was appointed as Manager Infrastructure Program Development. This role involves the development of Council's annual infrastructure works program, Council's waste management program, building

management and maintenance program, engineering survey and design, as well as the management of all infrastructure assets including roads, bridges and drainage.



Manager Works, Steven Phillips

Steven Phillips joined Loddon Shire in 2009 as the Assistant Works Manager following seven years with the Department of Sustainability and Environment, where he worked in forestry and fire management.

In 2011, Steven was appointed to the position of Manager Works, where he is primarily responsible for Council's maintenance and construction activities on roads, streets, bridges, footpaths and parks and gardens. This role also includes responsibilities for Council's vehicle and fleet management and VicRoads maintenance contracts. He also acts as the Municipal Emergency Resource Officer.



Manager Planning & Local Laws, Tyson Sutton

Tyson Sutton joined Council in November 2007 after working in strategic and statutory planning roles with the City of Greater Bendigo and private industry.

Tyson manages the town planning and local laws responsibilities of Council, including development assessment, land use strategies, enforcement of the planning scheme, enforcement and administration of local laws and animal management.



Municipal Building Surveyor, David Turner

David Turner has worked with Council since June 2005. His experience includes more than 20 years in local government building control and over 15 years on building sites.

David's role in Council includes issuing building permits, administering the provisions of the Building Act 1993 and the Building Regulations 2006, working with owners, builders and contractors, assisting people to maintain applicable standards with existing buildings, providing building information and advice to industry and the community, responding to private building surveyors' enquiries for property information for new developments, resolving issues with works conducted without Council approval, dealing with siting approvals for prescribed temporary structures (such as large marquees, etc.), responding to solicitors' enquiries for property transfers, responding to applications to vary the regulations and resolving lapsed or expired building permits.



Indoor staff attended a special function at Serpentine during the year and took time out for a team photo.

Our staff

Staff Recruitment & Retention

Staff Health & Wellbeing

Council is committed to looking after the health and wellbeing of all staff, although it is recognised that Council cannot address any staff member's individual health and wellbeing needs without the co-operation of that person.

Council provides a healthy workplace by:

- Developing, in consultation with staff, workplace-specific programs to address lifestyle, health, fitness and safety issues
- Encouraging staff wellness and proactively managing risk of illness
- Encouraging staff to take periodic annual leave (where relevant) to maintain a positive balance between work life, family and friends
- Actively promoting exercise, healthy eating and a smoke-free environment to improve or maintain staff members' personal wellbeing
- Providing confidential assistance and counselling services that benefit all staff
- Providing targeted health and wellbeing programs.

Programs offered to all staff in 2013/2014 included:

- WorkSafe health assessments – 68 employees
- Flu vaccinations – 61 employees

Employment Assistance Program

Council offers a free confidential Employee Assistance Program for staff who are experiencing difficulties in their personal or professional lives.

Car Pooling

Council has a car pooling program for staff travelling to the Wedderburn office from Bendigo.

Managers are rostered to drive their car on specific days. Staff are picked up from a central point and dropped back to that point at the end of the day.

The latest revision of this policy was approved by the Management Executive Group in May.

Over the course of the year, five staff members have taken advantage of the program.

Staff Development

Staff Training Program

Council is committed to providing staff with access to staff training and development opportunities that will enable continuous learning and career growth in line with individual aspirations and Council's goals.

At the annual staff development reviews, employees identify training they would like to undertake the following year. Council also provides training that is required for legislative purposes and to keep qualifications current.

During the year, Council staff undertook training courses in the following areas:

- Occupational Health and Safety
- First Aid & CPR
- Computer Applications
- Specialised competencies
- Compliance

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Study Assistance Policy

Council has a Study Assistance Policy that is available to permanent employees following the attainment of 12 months continuous service.

Assistance is provided in the form of subsidies for course fees, examination and assignment leave and some leave for attending classes.

During the year, three employees accessed this policy while undertaking further study, they were:

- Heather Christie – Advanced Diploma in Record Keeping
- Deanne Caserta – CPA
- Lorraine Jackson – Diploma of Accounting

Traineeships

Council supports staff who are prepared to undertake traineeships in their field.

The following staff completed their traineeships during the year:

- Linda Canfield – Diploma of Management for Community Services
- Janine Jackson – Diploma of Management
- Glenn Williams – Certificate III in Automotive Mechanical Technology
- Lyn Don – Certificate IV Frontline Management
- Michelle Hargreaves – Certificate IV Frontline Management
- Julie Ritchie – Certificate IV Frontline Management
- Christine Coombes – Certificate IV Frontline Management

The following staff are either continuing a traineeship commenced earlier or have commenced a traineeship:

- Peter Ramsdale – Certificate III in Landscape Construction

- Shaun Smith – Certificate III in Landscape Construction
- Vaughan Herrick – Certificate III in Landscape Construction
- Vicki Andrew – Certificate IV in Disability and Certificate IV in Aged Care
- Annette James – Certificate IV in Disability and Certificate IV in Aged Care
- Rick Robertson – Certificate IV in Disability and Certificate IV in Aged Care
- Kristy Simpson – Certificate IV in Disability and Certificate IV in Aged Care
- Bronwyn Tonkin – Certificate IV in Disability and Certificate IV in Aged Care
- Leanne Welsh – Certificate IV in Disability and Certificate IV in Aged Care

The following staff completed the following qualifications during the year.

- Denise Kosmatos – Certificate III in Aged Care
- Lorraine Jackson – Diploma of Accounting
- Kylie Jones – Certificate IV in Local Government (Health and Environment)

Council's support is provided via time to attend required classes and direct financial assistance.

Staff scholarship program

Council has a staff scholarship program aimed at reducing the financial burden of undertaking university education for students and providing relevant work experience in their chosen career in a local government setting.

Council had no staff member studying under this program in 2013/2014.



Successful trainees (from left) Michelle Hargreaves, Julie Ritchie, Christine Coombes and Lyn Don are congratulated by Council's Carol Canfield.



From left, Lynne Habner, Wendy Gladman, Ian McLauchlan, Jude Holt, Carol Gibbins and Bryan McEwan.

Work experience program

Secondary school students

Council is an active supporter of the work experience program that operates in the school system and often hosts students from Years 10, 11 and 12.

During the year, Council hosted the following students:

- Tom Bligh (Wedderburn College) worked in the Parks and Gardens team
- Brittany Martin (Wedderburn College) worked in the mechanics workshop at the Wedderburn depot
- Madeline Campbell (Wedderburn College) worked in the Tourism department
- Alex Lopes (Wedderburn College) worked at the Wedderburn Preschool
- Tarryn Smith (Catholic College, Bendigo) worked at Inglewood Preschool

School-based Apprenticeships

Over the years, Council has hosted many students under school-based apprenticeships. This program provides a learning environment in the workplace while students remain at school.

Council did not have a school-based apprentice during the year.

Communicating with staff

Staff newsletter

A staff newsletter is distributed with the fortnightly pay slips. The newsletter includes items of interest, job applications, coming events and personal milestones by staff.

Intranet

Council has an intranet site that is used to communicate information. Staff located at the Wedderburn and Serpentine offices, Boort, Newbridge, Pyramid Hill and Wedderburn depots, plus some remote workers in the Community Services Department have access to the intranet.

All-staff meetings

Council holds an all-staff meeting in March and September. These meetings provide staff with information about current events, enable presentations by external groups, enable training for the whole staff, recognise staff achievements, both personal and professional, and give staff the opportunity to ask questions of the executive.

All-staff Christmas lunch

Each year, Council hosts an all-staff Christmas lunch in the Shire. The lunch provides staff with an opportunity for



Loddon staff took part in a regional training course.



The LGPro organisation offers a range of training options for staff.

informal interaction with their colleagues, managers and Councillors and provides Council with the opportunity to thank staff for their efforts throughout the year.

The 2013 lunch was held at the Newbridge Recreation Reserve.

Staff achievements

Staff recognition

The following staff received recognition of excellence at the 2013 Christmas function:

- Serpentine office Staff
 - Carol Gibbins
 - Stacey Williamson
 - Wendy Cioban
 - Kylie Jones
 - Vicki Andrews
 - Kim Fletcher
 - Lorraine Fawcett
 - Kath Sheridan
 - Rebecca Curren
 - Rick Robertson
 - Linda Canfield
 - Kaye Leech
 - Leanne Welsh
 - Sue McGuire

OUR ORGANISATION



Staff enjoyed a trip to see 'Queens of the Outback' in Charlton.



Staff enjoy their meal at the 2013 Christmas lunch.



Employees with their service certificates at Newbridge.



The Christmas party was a great time to get together.

- Lorraine Fawcett – Assessment Officer
- Tanya Leach – Home Carer
- Lynne Habner – Executive Assistant
- Lorraine Jackson – Finance Officer
- Steven Phillips – Manager Works
- Graeme Smith – Design Engineer
- Mark Arnup – Technical Officer
- Dale Jackson – Technical Officer
- Julie Ritchie – Revenue Collector
- Peter Smith – Team Leader, Newbridge
- Tony Vella – Street Sweeper Operator
- Ron Harbridge – Tractor Driver
- Ian Hargreaves – Grader Operator
- Alan Jackson – Team Leader, Wedderburn
- Steve Formosa – Townscape Mower Operator
- Christine Coombes and the Regional Living Expo team
 - Helen Tonkin
 - Lynne Habner
 - Robyn Vella
 - Carol Canfield

Individual achievements

Certificate of Recognition

At the all-staff Christmas lunch held each year, staff who have reached service periods of 10, 20, 30 and 40 years are presented with Certificates of Recognition.

At the December 2013 lunch held at Newbridge, the following certificates were presented:

40 years of service

- John Forster – Team Leader, Pyramid Hill Depot

20 years of service

- John McLinden – Chief Executive Officer
- Helen Canfield – Preschool Assistant, Inglewood Preschool

10 years of service

- Denise Bridges – Tip Attendant
- Jean McNish – Home Carer
- Andrew Dean – Tractor Driver
- Peter Ramsdale – Townscape Serviceman
- Ian Hargreaves – Grader Operator
- Peter Norman – Water Truck Driver

Supporting Our Staff

Occupational Health & Safety

Council recognises its moral and legal responsibility to provide, so far as is reasonably practicable, a safe and healthy work environment for employees, contractors, customers and visitors.

This commitment extends to ensuring that the organisation's operations do not place the local community at risk of injury, illness or property damage.

Council continues its commitment to consultation and co-operation between management and employees through Council's Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) Committee.

This committee consists of staff and management representatives and meets quarterly, with all areas of the organisation represented.

All OH&S obligations continue to be met in a systematic, proactive and consultative manner.

Policies and procedures continue to be developed or reviewed to reflect new legislative requirements.

Equal Employment Opportunity

Council supports access and equity for all employees and recognises diversity as a valuable strength that will create benefits for employees and the community.

Council's Equal Opportunity & Anti-Discrimination Policy ensures that any potential breach is resolved impartially and fairly.

Council regularly reviews its policies, procedures and practices to ensure equity and transparency for all staff.

Risk Management

Council is committed to proactive risk management and continues to develop its risk management framework and strategy to ensure it continues to prevent or minimise the chance of something happening that will have an adverse impact on Council's objectives.

Council has a comprehensive system of incident reporting and management, risk identification, assessment and management and legislative compliance.

An important element of this system is Advent Manager, an automated incident, risk and compliance software tool.

This software enables the breakdown of risk and compliance requirements into simple tasks, which can then be assigned for action.

Simple, yet comprehensive, reports can be run in minutes, giving a clear snapshot of how Council is progressing towards desired governance outcomes.

The compliance module is regularly updated as legislation changes and ensures that Council's practices remain current.

Staff Analysis

Number

Council has 214 staff in total with an effective full-time equivalent of 134.

Most of our staff work from depots, in the offices or as home carers.

Other areas where Council employs staff are in the preschools, recycling stations, school crossings and in maternal and child health centres.

Status

Council has 94 full-time, 76 part-time and 44 casuals.

Gender

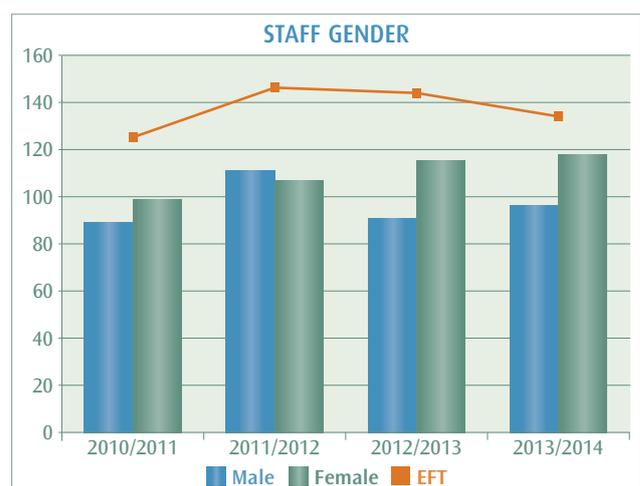
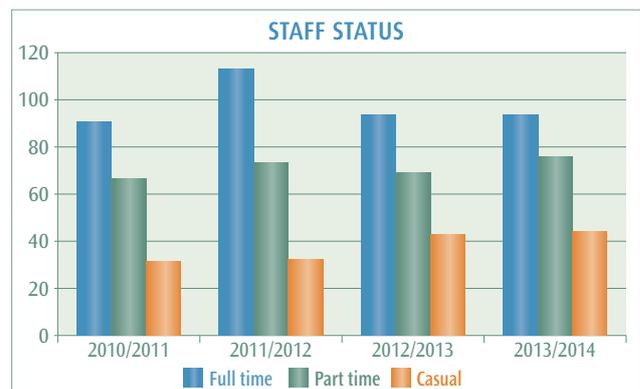
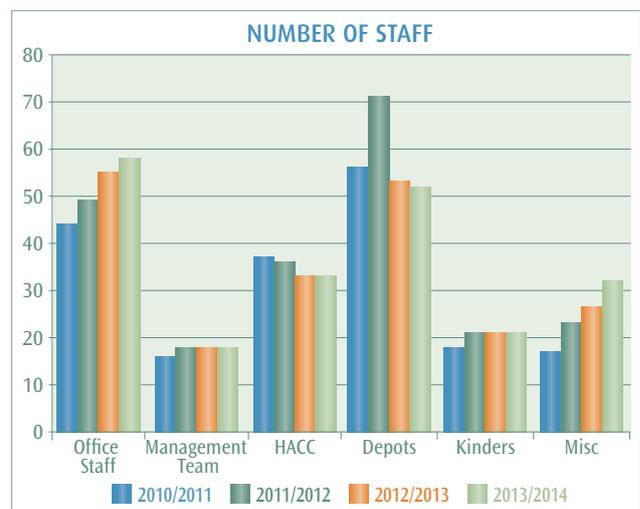
Of the total staff numbers, 45% are male and 56% female.

In 2012/2013, 44% were male and 55% were female.

All staff working from Council's four works depots are male.

Preschool staff are all female. Other worksites have a mix of female and male staff.

Home care and office staff have a greater prevalence of females, while the management team has a greater prevalence of males.



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Age

Council's age demographic continues to show a strong representation of staff over 35 years of age.

This will provide challenges for workforce planning in the future, particularly due to the high number of staff in the 55+ bracket.

Length of Service

Some 42% of employees have been employed for less than five years.

Of those employed less than five years, 55% have been employed for less than two years and 45% between two and five years.

Staff Representation on Committees

Bellenger, Tony

- Central Victorian Tracks 'n' Trails Working Group
- Inglewood Reservoir Committee of Management
- Loddon Mallee Sport Assembly (Sports Focus)
- Recreation Strategy Steering Committee
- Regional Youth Affairs Networks

Bewley, Peter

- Loddon Shire Occupational Health and Safety Committee

Brown, Shannon

- Australia Day Committee Secretary

Campbell, Duncan

- Loddon Shire Asset Management Working Group
- Regional Finance Forum

Canfield, Carol

- Loddon Shire Consultative Committee
- Loddon Shire Occupational Health & Safety Committee
- Loddon Shire Risk Management Committee
- North Central Local Learning & Employment Network

Caserta, Deanne

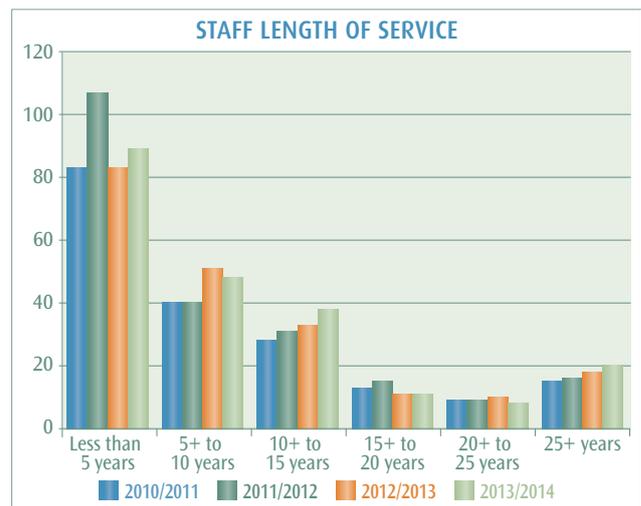
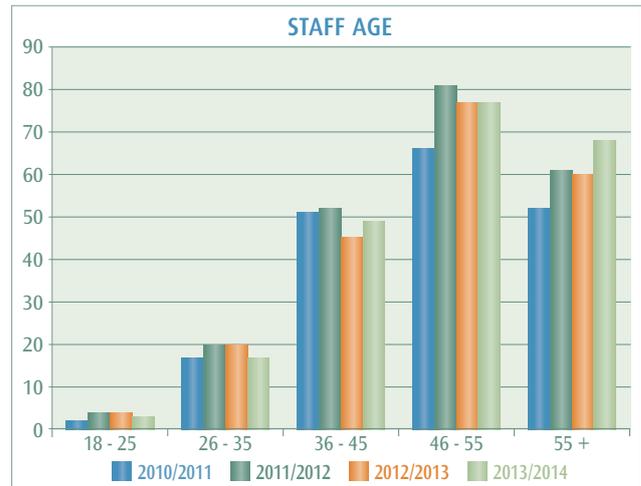
- Loddon Shire Asset Management Working Group
- Loddon Shire Consultative Committee
- Loddon Shire Risk Management Committee
- Regional Finance Forum

Christie, Heather

- Loddon Shire Consultative Committee

Conway, Ross

- Loddon Shire Occupational Health and Safety Committee



Coombes, Christine

- Loddon Bendigo Rural Women's Network
- School Councils School Community Reference Group for the North-Central Trade Training Centre

Dowling, Cameron

- Loddon Municipal Fire and Emergency Management Planning Committee



Pictured at the staff Christmas party were (from left) Lynne Habner, Christine Coombes, Carol Canfield, Helen Tonkin and Robyn Vella.



Kathryn Sheridan and Rebecca Curren.

Foster, John

- Loddon Shire Plant Replacement Committee

Fry, David

- Loddon Shire Asset Management Working Group
- Loddon Shire Risk Management Committee

Gibbins, Carol

- Bendigo Loddon Primary Care Partnership Continuous Improvement Framework Committee
- Diabetes in Loddon Action Group
- Inglewood Lions Community Elderly Persons Units Committee of Management
- Loddon Aged & Disability Services Network
- Loddon Mallee Government Aged & Disability Consortium
- Loddon Municipal Fire and Emergency Management Planning Committee
- Loddon Shire Occupational Health and Safety Committee

Gladman, Wendy

- Bendigo Loddon Primary Care Partnership Board
- Early Years Professional Network
- Loddon Aged & Disability Services Network
- Loddon Campaspe Family Violence Advisory Committee
- Loddon Healthy Minds Network
- Loddon Mallee Government Aged & Disability Consortium
- Loddon Municipal Fire and Emergency Management Planning Committee
- Loddon Shire Consultative Committee
- Loddon Shire Risk Management Committee
- Regional Relief and Recovery Planning Committee (Southern Region)
- Wedderburn Community Centre Committee of Management

Hargreaves, Ian

- Loddon Shire Plant Replacement Committee

Hinneberg, Brian

- Agrifood Skills Australia Interim Regional Steering Committee
- Innovative Farming Implementation Plan Project Co-ordination Committee
- Loddon Valley Water Services Committee (ex officio)

Holt, Jude

- Bendigo Loddon Primary Care Partnership Finance Committee
- Loddon Shire Asset Management Working Group
- Loddon Shire Audit Committee
- Loddon Shire Risk Management Committee
- Regional Procurement Cluster

Isbister, Kim

- Loddon Municipal Fire and Emergency Management Planning Committee
- Regional Emergency Management Planning Committee
- Regional Emergency Management Team
- Regional Strategic Fire Management Planning Committee

Jardine, Leigh

- Loddon Shire Risk Management Committee

Jenkyn, Tim

- Central Victorian Tracks 'n' Trails Working Group
- Inglewood Town Hall Hub Project Working Group
- Loddon ANZAC Centenary Organising Committee
- Loddon Mallee Community Planners' Network
- Loddon Shire Community Planning Committees
- Loddon-Buloke L2P Steering Committee
- Operation Next Gen Steering Committee
- Transitioning Towns Project, RDA Loddon Mallee
- Transport Connections Program Executive Committee

Last, Alan

- Loddon Shire Plant Replacement Committee

OUR ORGANISATION

Lloyd, Daniel

- Loddon Municipal Fire and Emergency Management Planning Committee
- Loddon Shire Occupational Health & Safety Committee
- Loddon Shire Plant Replacement Committee

McDonald, Brian

- Loddon Shire Consultative Committee
- Loddon Shire Plant Replacement Committee

McEwan, Bryan

- Central Victorian Agribusiness Forum
- Jones Eucalyptus Distillery Site Committee of Management
- Loddon Shire Risk Management Committee
- Northern Poultry Cluster

McLauchlan, Ian

- G-MW Connections Project (NVIRP) Agency Liaison Group
- Loddon Shire Asset Management Working Group
- Loddon Shire Risk Management Committee

McLinden, John

- Loddon ANZAC Centenary Organising Committee
- Loddon Campaspe Councils
- Loddon Mallee Regional Growth Plan Steering Committee
- Loddon Mallee Regional Managers Forum
- Loddon Shire Asset Management Working Group
- Loddon Shire Audit Committee
- Loddon Shire Consultative Committee
- Loddon Shire Risk Management Committee
- Municipal Association of Victoria Innovation Committee
- Murray River Group of Councils
- North Central Goldfields Regional Library Corporation Board
- Rural Councils Victoria Executive

Norman, Peter

- Loddon Shire Occupational Health & Safety Committee

O'Sullivan, Alycia

- Diabetes in Loddon Action Group
- Early Years Professional Network
- Loddon Shire Occupational Health & Safety Committee
- Maternal & Child Health Regional Co-ordinators' Network

Phillips, Steve

- Loddon Municipal Fire and Emergency Management Planning Committee

- Loddon Shire Asset Management Working Group
- Loddon Shire Consultative Committee
- Loddon Shire Plant Replacement Committee
- Loddon Shire Risk Management Committee

Ramsdale, Peter

- Loddon Shire Occupational Health & Safety Committee

Ross, Marg

- Loddon Shire Consultative Committee

Schultz, Darren

- Boort Aerodrome Committee of Management
- Central Murray Regional Waste Management Group
- Loddon Shire Occupational Health & Safety Committee

Seppings, Jeff

- Loddon Shire Consultative Committee

Shay, David

- Loddon Shire Consultative Committee

Stobaus, Allan

- Loddon Mallee Sport Assembly (Sports Focus)
- Loddon Shire Risk Management Committee
- Recreation Strategy Steering Committee

Sutton, Tyson

- Loddon Mallee South Regional Growth Plan Technical Advisory Group
- Loddon Shire Risk Management Committee

Vella, Robyn

- Bendigo Regional Tourism Board
- Loddon Southern Region Development & Tourism Committee of Management
- Nature Tourism Advisory Team
- Nature Tourism Festival Committee
- Wedderburn Community Centre Committee of Management

Watson, Terry

- Loddon Shire Asset Management Working Group
- Loddon Shire Risk Management Committee

Williams, Craig

- Loddon Shire Plant Replacement Committee

Wright, Glen

- Loddon Shire Plant Replacement Committee

Zanker, Gary

- Loddon Shire Occupational Health & Safety Committee

At your service



◀ Serpentine Parks and Gardens crew

Peter Wallbank, Scott Cunningham, Vaughan Herrick, Terry Canavan, Steven Formosa, Shane Maxwell and Shaun Smith.

▶ Newbridge Depot staff

At back, Travis Jackson, Ross Conway, Glenn Wright and Steve Cimesa; in front are Ian Hargreaves, Col McClelland and David Shay.



◀ Wedderburn Depot staff

Glenn Williams, Tony Benaim, Bill Chalmers, Amadeo (Bob) Montebello, Luke Selby, Peter Norman, Alan Last, Owen Bailey, Anthony Webb and Alan Jackson.

▶ Boort Depot staff

Back row: Andrew Dean and Leigh Poyner; at front, Brian McDonald, Louis Pridmore, Mark Minogue, Shayne Morris, Peter Bewley, Ron Hird and Peter Magnone.



◀ Pyramid Hill Depot staff.

Gary Zanker, Terry Thomas, Brendan Pickles, Shane Gamble, Allan Bock, Warren Painter, Ron Harbridge and Ron Kuno.

▶ Preschool staff

Back row: Christine Mann, Helen Canfield, Sally Maxted, Vikki Moresi, Tina Bone, Jodie Lock and Trudi Van De Wetering; at front, Louise Bewley, Shirley Ervin, Alison Dean, Deanne Storey, Kim Bian Yap and Billy Griffin.



◀ Inglewood Community Care staff

Lynne McCallum, Rick Robertson, Evelyn Morrison, Jean McNish, Kerry Younghusband, Roslyn Scafati, Catherine Tankard, Debbie Mayne, Tania Leach and Lorraine Fawcett.

OUR SERVICES

Council provides a diverse range of services to its community.

Community Wellbeing

- **Aged services**, including home care, personal and respite care, property maintenance, Meals on Wheels, senior citizens' centres, elderly persons' units and planned activity groups.
- **Early years services**, including maternal and child health, immunisations and cluster management of preschools.
- **Loddon Healthy Minds Network**, including meetings and activities designed to boost mental health awareness and personal support for residents of Loddon Shire.
- **Recovery**, including working with Council's emergency management team to deliver initial relief measures, then aid in ongoing recovery work; also includes response to single incidents of personal trauma.

Council's HACC services and immunisation programs are funded through the Department of Health, while our kindergartens and maternal and child health work receive funding from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.



The busy Inglewood Kindergarten.



Shoulder works on the Emu-Logan Road.

Corporate Services

- **Council administration**, including customer service and administrative support, records management, municipal building and equipment provision.
- **Council committees**, including administrative support for Section 86 committees in managing compliance with the Local Government Act 1989.
- **Financial management**, including preparation and management of the Council budget, preparation of financial statements and government statistical returns, collection of various revenue sources and payment of employees and suppliers.
- **Mobile library service** provided throughout the Shire.
- **Rating and valuations**, including management of valuations of properties in the Shire, contract management relating to the revaluation process and raising annual rates and charges.
- **Staff management**, including recruitment, development, wellbeing program and occupational health and safety.

Economy and Community

- **Community planning for communities across Loddon Shire**, including building Loddon communities through facilitation, logistical and financial means to improve the environmental aesthetic of communities and developing key community assets; supporting, managing and assisting communities to realise strengths and opportunities and to determine pathways for development; and facilitating novel approaches and solutions to local issues.
- **Economic development**, including support to new and existing businesses through direct facilitation, development of networking opportunities, provision of information, leadership development, promotion and marketing of opportunities within the Shire; referral to internal and external agencies to encourage access to Shire, state and federal development programs.



Repair works on the Logan-Kingower Road.

- **Industrial development**, including providing industry with access to infrastructure in developed and zoned industrial land which is appropriately located and priced to encourage the sustainable growth of industry.
- **Loddon Discovery Tours**, including assistance to the Loddon tourism industry, public speaking, marketing and promotion of group tours, consulting, business liaison, tour bookings, project management and co-ordination, itinerary design, administrative and logistical support, program development to improve customer service, business development presentation and financial support for promotion.
- **Tourism development services**, including facilitation of strategic projects, assistance to small business, development of marketing and promotional material, assistance with advertising, direct financial support of key projects, provision and maintenance of tourism promotional signage and advice to new and existing tourism businesses, fostering development of tourism linkages throughout the region and encouraging connectivity between regional communities and key tourism bodies such as Tourism Victoria, Tourism Alliance, Goldfields Committee and Bendigo Tourism; and offer administrative support to the Loddon Visitor Information Centre.

Operations

- **Access programs**, including disability access and Transport Connections projects to improve accessibility in and around the Shire.
- **Building surveyor services**, including building permit and occupancy approvals and administering the Building Act.
- **Community grants scheme**, including the administration of the Community Grants Scheme which provides local community groups with financial support to deliver projects, programs or initiatives which improve the lives of Loddon residents.
- **Environmental health services**, including septic tank and waste water management approvals; food safety

- inspections and certification; monitoring of tobacco and alcohol sales, compliance with the Public Health and Wellbeing Act and Environment Protection Act and their enforcement.
- **Environmental management services**, including weed management on Council property and development and implementation of Loddon's response to climate change.
- **Infrastructure management**, including long-term asset management planning for roads, buildings, recreational facilities, pools, parks, waste facilities and bridges; development and delivery of annual infrastructure projects and programs; contract administration; survey and design and digital mapping.
- **Local laws services**, including stock and domestic animal management permits; management of unsightly premises; roadside bushfire management works and local laws enforcement and compliance.
- **Recreation services**, including financial and administrative support to sporting clubs, management of Council's swimming pools, applications for government grants and assistance with long-term strategies for recreation facilities.
- **Town planning services**, including planning permit and subdivision approvals, planning scheme compliance and enforcement, changes to the planning scheme and protection of significant heritage, cultural and environmental assets within the Shire.
- **Works delivery**, including maintenance and construction of roads, bridges, road reserves, footpaths, parks, gardens, rest areas, toilet facilities, playgrounds, buildings and pools; depot, plant and fleet maintenance and management; response to infrastructure-related customer requests; and waste management.
- **Youth support services**, including facilitating youth events, financial support for youth-related initiatives and long-term planning for youth development and retention.



Works at Newbridge to improve Progress Park.



Erecting student artwork at the Wedderburn pool.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JULY 2013

Road works shift

Early in the new financial year, Council moved to radically revise the way it looked after the municipality's unsealed roads. It shifted away from a stance of mainly responding to complaints to one where all roads in the Shire were to be inspected and maintained in an orderly manner, while still responding quickly to hazardous situations.

'Yes' case backed

Loddon Shire Council threw its support behind the "Yes" case for a change to the Australian Constitution designed to cement the Commonwealth's ability to provide direct funding to local councils.

Change on the way

A special ceremony at the Wedderburn Community Centre marked the official start of works which will deliver a new community hub and enhanced maternal and child health, tourism and neighbourhood house facilities on the site. Then Mayor Cr Geoff Curnow led the brief formalities, accompanied by CEO John McLinden and Director Economy and Community Bryan McEwan.

Getting around eased

A brochure and phone app designed to help with people's transport needs in Loddon Shire was released by Council in July. The initiative was financed by the Victorian Government's Transport Connections program.

Building saved

The historic Gooroc State School (below) was relocated from behind the Wedderburn Community Centre to Engine Park, thanks to members of the Wedderburn Historical Engine and Machinery Society. The project – estimated to eventually cost around \$25,000 – was made possible by a \$10,000 Council community grant, approved late last month, plus a further \$5000 from Council.



Staying mobile

A "Mobility Expo" planned for Boort in late July aimed to help drivers aged over 60 with relevant safety information. The free expo, scheduled for Boort Memorial Hall, was organised by RoadSafe Central Victoria in conjunction with Victoria Police, the Transport Accident Commission and Loddon Shire.

New citizens

Three residents of Loddon Shire were welcomed into Australian citizenship at a ceremony on 22 July at the Council Chambers in Serpentine.



Member for Murray Dr Sharman Stone (left) and Mayor Cr Geoff Curnow congratulate Kim Johnson, from Pyramid Hill, and Jennifer Dougall, from Wedderburn, on their Australian citizenship.

Lighting up

Sixteen local governments across north, west and central Victoria – covering almost half of the state – joined forces to deliver a project to upgrade almost 23,000 street lights with energy-efficient technology. The change-over was expected to save more than \$40 million in electricity and maintenance costs over the next 20 years.

Youth project

Council threw its hat in the ring for a new, three-year, state-wide youth engagement project entitled "Change It Up", put together by the Victorian Government and the Foundation for Young Australians. Targeted specifically at regional youth, the effort aims to engage with young people to find out why they leave home, how they could be encouraged to stay and how they might become more involved in shaping their communities.

Turkish visit

Mayor Cr Geoff Curnow attended a farewell function held at East Loddon P-12 College for the school's visiting group of nine Turkish students and four teachers.

The tourists, from the seaport of Canakkale, spent two weeks in Loddon Shire after brief sightseeing stops in Sydney and Melbourne.

Disability push

Loddon Shire's Accessible Accommodation Guide project got off the ground in July, with the first reference group meeting in Wedderburn. The project aimed to produce a guide to accommodation options for people with a disability when they chose to visit the region.

New faces

Council welcomed two new faces on its Community Wellbeing team - Rebecca Curren became the Early Years Co-ordinator to succeed Sue Thomas, while Kathryn Sheridan was appointed to the newly-created position of Care Co-ordination and Quality Team Leader, focused on Council's Home and Community Care clients.

Business mentoring

Three businesses from Loddon Shire were among a group of 10 which made up a "Regional Grow Your Business" planning and mentoring program in Bendigo. They were the Loddon Visitor Information Centre, Inglewood's Royal Hotel and Roz's Treasures, from Wedderburn.



Graduates from the Regional Grow Your Business program.

AUGUST

Achievers talk

Two high achievers in small business in country Victoria shared their stories during a get-together at Boort this month at the invitation of Council. The 20 participants at the one-off workshop, hosted by the Lanyon family at Simply Tomatoes and Aussie Wool Quilts, heard from Rob Asplin, of River Country Adventours, and Peter Skilbeck, owner of the Plaistow Homestead B&B at Newstead.

Happy Feet

Council's Tourism Department created a new social initiative with the Happy Feet Loddon Wanderers, a month-long challenge during August to individuals and groups around the municipality to explore new territory and get in touch with some of the Shire's busy community centres.

In stitches

Melbourne fashion business The Dresscode Initiative sent representatives to Wedderburn to investigate the level of interest among local knitters in supplying stocks of hand-knitted accessories. An earlier visit saw 15 women from Charlton, Donald, Boort and Wedderburn (pictured below) attend a meeting.



Money talks

The last of three training workshops for local business owners was held at Inglewood's Royal Hotel on 6 August, led by Rural Financial Counsellor Colin O'Brien. The series was free to participants, thanks to funding from AusIndustry and administrative support from Loddon Shire.

Cupcakes compete

Loddon Shire staff and their families put their imaginations to work when the Wedderburn office hosted a cupcake competition to support the RSPCA's national fund-raising effort, Cupcake Day. Mayor Cr Geoff Curnow acted as judge and the effort resulted in a donation of \$191 to the appeal.



Organisers Michelle Hargreaves, Rosemary Isaac and Sara Nesbit.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

It's a 'no'

Prime Minister Rudd's decision to hold the federal election on 7 September meant plans for the planned referendum on Constitutional change were shelved.

Loddon Shire was a committed supporter of the Municipal Association of Victoria in its campaign efforts.

Netballers looked after

An eight-year effort to upgrade Loddon Shire's netball facilities neared its end in August, with the \$1.4 million improvement program

nearly done. Of that amount, Council allocated \$232,284, external funding provided \$769,723 and community contributions (both in cash and in-kind) \$401,301. This funding resulted in the construction or refurbishment of 17 courts around the Shire.



Drive on in

Loddon Shire continued to roll out the welcome mat for motorhome owners with the announcement in August that Bridgewater had been officially declared an RV-Friendly Town. The accolade came after determined efforts by Council and supportive Bridgewater residents to have a small area of the Bridgewater recreation reserve set up specifically for the needs of recreational vehicle users. It brought to two the number of RV-Friendly Towns in the Shire, after Wedderburn was approved in 2010 with a site in the Hard Hill reserve.

Growing bigger, naturally

Late August marked the beginning of the fourth annual Naturally Loddon Festival. Filling five weeks last year, the 2013 program spanned eight weeks, running through until 27 October with a total of 20 events.

New this year were canoe trips on the Loddon River, a revived Blue Eucy Heritage Festival at Inglewood, a New Age market day at Wedderburn and the annual meeting of the Prospectors and Miners Association of Victoria.

Helpers thanked

Mayor Cr Geoff Curnow attended morning teas in Pyramid Hill and Boort to thank Council volunteers as part of National Meals on Wheels Day.

SEPTEMBER

Art in the streets

Twenty-five students from Loddon Shire's four secondary schools travelled to take part in a three-day program with Melbourne Street Art Tours, the only business of its kind in Australia run by street artists. It was the first time an experience such as this had been offered by Council's youth development staff.



Cyclists visit

Residents of Boort and Pyramid Hill cheered on waves of cyclists competing in a day-long 136km road race on 5 September as part of the six-day Tour of the Murray River. The tour was one section of Cycling Australia's Subaru National Road Series for 2013, a six-month program of team and individual competitions for men, women and Under 19 riders. The Tour of the Murray River was sponsored by the Murray River Group of Councils, comprising the Mildura and Swan Hill Rural Cities and Loddon, Campaspe, Gannawarra and Moira Shires.



SA-bound

Loddon Shire's "Club 5 to 8" took a tour to Victor Harbour, in South Australia, in September. Club 5 to 8 is a social group run by Council for Shire residents or ratepayers aged 50 years or older. Highlights of the trip included sightseeing stops in Bordertown and Tailem Bend and a day at Hahndorf in the Adelaide Hills.

Online market

Several Loddon businesses were quick to sign up for Farmhouse Direct, an initiative from Australia Post which saw a genuine farmers' market for Australian-grown and made produce set up online. Representatives of Farmhouse Direct visited Boort and Inglewood at Council's invitation to explain the concept to interested business operators.

Organ restored

A \$9,000 grant from Council's Community Planning resources made a significant contribution towards the three-year effort to refurbish a rare and historic pipe organ in Inglewood. The 134-year-old Fincham organ at St Augustine's Anglican Church had necessary cleaning and refurbishment work done by experts from Wakeley Pipe Organs, of Chirnside Park.

Call for leaders

The call went out in September for any Loddon Shire residents interested in joining the 2014 Loddon Murray Community Leadership Program. Co-ordinated by Community Leadership Loddon Murray, the program aims to develop leaders for local communities across central and north-west Victoria. Council provides one scholarship place each year for a local resident and offers in-kind assistance whenever LMCLP activities touch on our towns.

Century celebrated

Terrick West Estate, at Prairie, hosted "Celebrate a Century of Rural Innovation and Change", organised by the East Loddon Historical Society. The day, supported by Council with a \$400 grant, featured historic farm machinery, old wool handling equipment, saddlery and horse-drawn vehicles, shearing and sheep handling, working dogs, vintage bicycles, crafts and sundry collections.



Festival revived

A revived Blue Eucy Heritage Festival in Inglewood, based at Inglewood Museum's Distillery Park, featured guided tours of the museum, displays of old machinery, woodchop demonstrations, market stalls and demonstrations of gold mining, farming, wood cutting, bee keeping and eucalyptus distilling.

New ute delivered

Council updated its work fleet in September with the purchase of a purpose-built four-wheel-drive Ford Ranger ute, fitted with a custom-designed tray structure. Built by steel fabricator Eddington Engineering, at Eddington, the \$14,000 add-on features a hydraulic tailgate, LED lighting and specially designed compartments for dog and cat cages, tools and signs.



Staff member Travis Jackson with the new ute.

Hall revamp

Sweeping draft plans were unveiled this month for a major redevelopment of the Janiember hall and Serpentine recreation reserve. Architects' plans went on display and an informal open day and barbecue allowed residents to discuss the project. The design involved new social rooms, kitchen and kiosk, new football and netball rooms and storage room.

Shire on Show

Council teamed with Salute Oliva owners Peter and Marlies Eicher to mount an experimental tourism push at the Royal Melbourne Show.

Peter and Marlies were there to promote their award-winning produce and to be presented with four medals in this year's Royal Melbourne Fine Food Awards.



OCTOBER

Seniors' treats

Older residents of the municipality enjoyed the entertainment provided by Loddon Shire's 2013 Seniors Festival in early October. Features of the program were two mystery trips, Gala Day and the second Senior Master Chef competition at Inglewood.

Irrigation field day

Council joined with the Department of Environment and Primary Industries, North Central Catchment Management Authority and Goulburn-Murray Water to



present an Irrigation Innovation Farm Day and farm walk this month. The free event began with morning tea at the Durham Ox Hall before an inspection of new irrigation systems on the neighbouring properties of Murray and Jo Haw and the Maxted family of Durham Ox.



Bands do battle

Young musicians from across north-west Victoria gathered in Wedderburn in October for the Northern Country Regional Final of this year's Push Start Battle of the Bands. Showcasing the talents of performers from Loddon, Buloke, Hepburn, Macedon Ranges and Mt Alexander Shires and the cities of Ballarat and Bendigo, the event was hosted by the Shire's FreeZa group from Wedderburn.

Splashing the cash

Meeting in Serpentine in October, Councillors endorsed a new Swimming Pool Development Plan for 2014/2018, superseding the prior plan introduced in 2008. Areas slated for improvements over the next four years include the installation of solar panels to contribute to energy costs, new shade structures, water play features, better fencing and the painting of some pool shells.

Going greener

In October, Loddon Shire formally adopted its Environmental Sustainability Strategy for 2013/2018, committing itself to a wide range of new priorities and actions designed to balance economic viability, environmental benefit and community wellbeing.

The initial work was funded by a \$30,000 grant from the former Department of Sustainability and Environment and the development of the strategy won extra support from the Victorian Government under the Victorian Adaptation and Sustainability Partnership.

Working smarter

Council arranged a series of e-business training workshops, starting in October, after an online survey showed a demand for these from local operators. Sessions covered such areas as online marketing strategies, website development, search engine optimisation, online selling, social media and email marketing plans. Funding for the initiative was provided through Agrifood Skills Australia.

Meaning business

Council continued its vigorous efforts to support small business owners around the Shire with two special workshops in Inglewood and Boort. The workshops, funded by a \$5,000 grant from the Victorian Government, aimed to help business owners take a searching and objective look at their operations.

Breakfast reminder

Two schools in Loddon Shire – East Loddon and Wedderburn – hosted a Sunshine Breakfast this month to recognise this year's Mental Health Week in Victoria. These annual breakfasts are an initiative of the Loddon Healthy Minds Network, aimed at focusing the thoughts of young people on issues of mental wellness and the resources available.

Free day out

Fifty people from Bendigo – all tourism business operators or volunteers – were treated to a day out in Loddon Shire as part of the Shire's membership of Bendigo Tourism. Led by Loddon Ambassador Roberta Foster, the group visited Wedderburn, Inglewood and Bridgewater in order to familiarise participants with the varied tourist attractions of the area.

Healthy approach

Council formally adopted its Public Health and Wellbeing Plan to cover the next four years. Positive steps contained in the plan included boosting the community input of young people, encouraging volunteers and people with disabilities and better equipping parents for their demanding responsibilities.

Team thrilled

Council's Community Care staff members were part of a team which took out a prestigious award at the LGPro Aged and Disability Services Awards held in Melbourne. The Award for Outstanding Team Contribution was presented to the Loddon Mallee Aged and Disability Consortium, a collection of 10 councils spread across northern and north-west Victoria. The group had worked together since 1999 to deliver aged care packages to clients.

Artists kept busy

The second annual Loddon Healthy Minds Art Competition attracted 15 entries from students at Wedderburn and Pyramid Hill Colleges, under the theme, "Mental Health, Let's talk about it". The pieces were judged by local artists John Burge and Nola Wright.



History captured

A massive digital historical resource was unveiled this month, created over five years by the joint efforts of local historical society volunteers and Council's Manager Community Planning, Tim Jenkyn. The body of work details iconic sites and places of local significance across the four former Shires which make up most of the present municipality of Loddon – Korong, Bet Bet, Gordon and East Loddon.

Crusher on duty

In November, Council moved to provide its own road-building materials – and make a substantial cost saving – with the use of a giant rock crusher at its Newbridge quarry.

The crusher was expected to remain on-site for about two months to produce a heap of material three-quarters the size of a football field.

In a typical year, Council uses 50,000 to 60,000 tonnes of crushed rock or gravel.



NOVEMBER

Pools open

The five swimming pools managed by Loddon Shire – at Wedderburn, Inglewood, Mitiamo, Boort and Pyramid Hill – opened for the summer this month in better shape than ever. Over the previous five months, Council completed a far-reaching program of maintenance works, spending more than \$142,000 from its recreation budget.



Preschool's 50th

Boort Preschool celebrated its 50th anniversary with a morning tea at the centre this month. The building was constructed on land donated by the former Gordon Shire and overseen by Council's Shire Engineer of the time, John Strahan.

Food and wine app

In November, Loddon operators in the food and wine tourism sector were invited to sign up for a new regional initiative aimed at growing Central Victoria's share of this burgeoning market. Bendigo Regional Tourism launched a new food and wine smartphone app and touring map to profile food and wine producers, cafes, restaurants, markets and events from across the Bendigo, Loddon, Mount Alexander and Central Goldfields regions.

Spreading the word

Loddon Shire tourism staff and volunteers spread the word about the attractions of the Loddon Valley at two Bendigo locations in November – the RV and Camping Leisurefest at Epsom Racecourse and at Bendigo Marketplace.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Emergencies plan

The City of Greater Bendigo, Campaspe Shire, Loddon Shire and Mount Alexander Shire signed an agreement in November to work together to effectively plan for emergency events across the municipalities. The Shared Local Government Emergency Management Services Memorandum of Understanding outlined how each Council would develop and implement sustainable, standard emergency management processes.

Cr Holt returns

Cr Gavan Holt (right) was installed as Mayor of Loddon Shire for the fifth time in a ceremony held at Wedderburn. He succeeded Cr Geoff Curnow.



Tick for kinder

In November, Wedderburn Kindergarten became the latest of Loddon Shire's pre-schools to fare well under the federal government's National Quality Framework assessment program. Pyramid Hill, Dingee and Boort Pre-Schools had already been through the searching process.

Small Towns kit

Loddon Shire had a hand in producing an imaginative online resource called the Transitioning Towns Toolbox, designed to help small townships adapt to change. Manager Community Planning Tim Jenkyn was part of the steering group behind the project, along with representatives of Regional Development Australia Loddon Mallee, Regional Development Victoria and four other municipalities.

New citizens

Seven residents of Loddon Shire were welcomed as new Australian citizens at Serpentine. Six candidates were from Pyramid Hill and one was from Boort.



Club milestone

Late this month, Cr Gavan Holt officiated at the re-opening of the Bridgewater bowls club after an extensive flood restoration project lasting almost three years. The project cost of \$208,175 was shared between the state government's Flood Recovery Infrastructure Fund (\$142,450), Loddon Shire (\$7,500), Council's flood insurance (\$21,798) and the club itself (\$36,427).

DECEMBER

Festival flies the flag

The bunting, bandsmen and bikes were back in Brooke St on 7 December when the "Inglewood Alive: Look at Us Now" festival filled the town with colour and sound. The day was organised by a sub-committee of the Inglewood Development and Tourism Committee, with funding support from the Inglewood and Districts Community Bank, Council and the local community.



Christmas cheer

Council hosted its annual Christmas dinner for the Shire's older citizens at the Serpentine Hall in early December. The social day featured a "beach" theme with entertainment from musical duo Mantel and a surprise visit from Santa.

Costa visits

Celebrity TV gardener Costa Georgiadis (right) officially opened "Poo to Plate", the community garden and propagation nursery at the Wedderburn Community House. Funding for the project came from Loddon Shire (\$5,500), the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal (\$3,000) and Acciona Australia (\$2,000).



Camp places sponsored

Council again sponsored two places for a summer camp on the Mornington Peninsula which sees up to 300 children attending from all over Victoria. The Portsea Camp has been operating for more than 60 years and a northern Victorian support team, known as the Kerang Portsea Camp Group, has been sending children from the Gannawarra, Loddon and Wakool Shire areas for half that time.

Heavy news

Director Operations Ian McLauchlan reported to Council's December meeting on the proposed introduction early in 2014 of the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator Scheme, designed to establish Australia's first national, independent regulator for all vehicles over 4.5 tonnes. The Regulator's office will administer one set of laws for heavy vehicles and act as a one-stop shop for heavy road transporters' relationship with government.

Care taken

Council adopted its Community Care Strategy for 2013/2017, built on two plans previously employed by Council – an Aged and Disability Strategy and an Active Ageing plan. It was developed through consultation with agencies and service providers in Loddon, a community survey, focus group work and a prior searching examination by Councillors and executive staff.

Funding for fun

At its December meeting, Council approved a further \$10,400 in events sponsorship to cover the first half of 2014. This brought to \$21,400 the amount advanced during this financial year to help community groups with their plans.

Signs for walkers

Council announced that 12 walking trails across Loddon Shire were to receive brand-new signage early in 2014, but residents were invited to have their say first. Draft signs were prepared and Council was keen to hear feedback from interested people on their style and content. The trails concerned were around Bort, Bridgewater, Inglewood, Laanecoorie, Pyramid Hill, Serpentine, Tarnagulla and Wedderburn.



Town hall appointment

Council appointed Hughes Cartwright Design Group, of Bendigo, as architect for the design documentation of the Inglewood Town Hall Hub redevelopment. The \$2.15 million project was designed to deliver a two-tier extension to the current building to incorporate new training rooms, toilets, community facilities and business spaces, the restoration of existing rooms and a kitchen upgrade.



Planning help

Developers or landowners wanting to subdivide land in Loddon Shire received some good news with the confirmation that they could now make use of a new tool called SPEAR – Surveying and Planning through Electronic Applications and Referrals. SPEAR was an Australian first, allowing subdivision applications to be compiled, lodged, managed, referred, approved and tracked online, any time.

Looking us over

Loddon Shire was visited by national travel magazine *Caravan and Motorhome on Tour* in December, for the purpose of filming a 45-minute DVD.

This was the first time the publication had ever visited the Shire. Magazine editor Fred Wright and cameraman/producer John Haberfield were guided through the week by an itinerary drawn up by Council's Tourism Department and assisted by local volunteers.

Sports the focus

Meeting in Serpentine, Councillors voted to hold the inaugural Loddon Shire Sports Awards at the Pyramid Hill Memorial Hall on 20 August 2014, with a range of award categories to honour high-achieving clubs and sportsmen and women across the municipality.

Christmas thanks

Council and the Wedderburn Community House invited 57 volunteers to dinner this month to thank them for their help at the centre and in Loddon's Visitor Services.

JANUARY 2014

Ski champs excel

Bridgewater became a mecca for water skiers again this month as national champions rubbed shoulders with keen students of the sport in a number of high-profile events. The annual Junior Ski Development Camp, organised by the Bridgewater Water Ski Club, was followed by the Australian Masters Water Ski Tournament, again hosted by the Bridgewater club in conjunction with the Loddon Shire and two associated sports bodies. Later in the season, two more tournaments showcased the skills of some of the country's most skilled skiers.

Top marks

The Loddon Visitor Information Centre recorded six sectional scores of 100% in a Mystery Shopper audit conducted by Bendigo Tourism, designed to give honest feedback on how the centre is presenting itself and its region.

Kids in the swim

Swimming lessons for children were offered at each of the five swimming pools managed by Loddon Shire in January – four run by VicSwim instructors and one by local volunteers. VicSwim held classes at Inglewood, Mitiamo, Pyramid Hill and Wedderburn, while, in Boort, the town's swimming club ran its annual program of lessons for youngsters aged six months to six years.

New home planned

Work got under way on a new manager's residence at the Council-owned Wedderburn Caravan Park, with a contract let to New Trend Transportable Homes, of Shepparton, to build and install a nine-square timber home on the site early in 2014. Council set aside \$120,000 for the work.

Review hurdle cleared

The Shire's long-running Rural Zones Review took another step forward in January after the proposed amendments to the planning scheme were formally approved by the Victorian Minister for Planning in December for public exhibition and comments. Formal letters to landholders were prepared and a notice inserted in the *Victoria Government Gazette*.

Flicking the switch

Loddon Shire committed itself to taking part in a massive sustainability initiative which will see about 23,000 street lights upgraded across northern, central and western Victoria. Meeting in Serpentine, Council gave the nod to the use of LED light replacements and approved additional budget allocations for the next two financial years. The "Lighting the Regions" project sees

16 local government authorities working with the Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance and the Wimmera Mallee Sustainability Alliance.

Our top citizens

Thelma Powell, of Boort (right), and Susan Horsley-Wyatt, of Newbridge, shared the award of Citizen of the Year when Loddon Shire's latest Australia Day honours were announced.

The award for Young Citizen of the Year was shared between Mitch Henderson, of Lake Marmal, and Lachlan Twigg, of Tandarra, while the Community Group/Event of the Year award went to Newbridge Country Womens Association (CWA), pictured below.

Community service awards were also given out in all five wards. The recipients were Alister McDougall (Boort), Sue Brown (Inglewood), Lorna Stewart (Tarnagulla), Vaughan Herrick (Terrick) and Darryl Arnott (Wedderburn).



Last over the line

Inglewood Kindergarten was the last of Loddon Shire's five Council-run preschools to undergo searching scrutiny under the National Quality Framework assessment program.

Councillors were told at their meeting this month that the centre had received a rating of "Meeting National Quality Standards" in all seven areas examined.

FEBRUARY

Mower gift

The Calivil recreation reserve committee received a new out-front mower as a gift from Council in February. Calivil was the first community facility to benefit from a new policy approved by Council last October, under which six major recreation reserves around the Shire will receive new oval mowers over the next three years. The machine was a four-wheel-drive Shibaura CM374 model, valued at \$27,273.

Poppies mooted

Loddon Shire's Rural Co-ordination and Development Manager, Brian Hinneberg, convened a meeting of interested farmers in Boort in February to canvass the idea of a poppy-growing industry starting in Loddon. Representatives of Tasmanian processor TPI Enterprises Ltd attended on the day.

Reserve upgrade

Plans to reinvigorate the Laanecoorie foreshore reserve (below) took another step forward this month with the release of final designs for the site. The move followed almost a year of public consultation and consideration by the Committee of Management after draft plans were put on display at the reserve last March.



Lucky winner

Pam Sandells, of Vermont, was the lucky winner of a gold nugget in a tourism giveaway organised by Council to encourage visitors to give their postcodes.



Climate talks

A regional forum held in Maryborough in February was the next step in a major Victorian project aimed at helping communities cope better with our changing climate. Loddon Shire is one of six councils in the southern Loddon Mallee region involved in "Adapting to Change", an initiative funded by the Victorian Adaptation and Sustainability Partnership with a grant of \$240,000.

Alycia steps up

Alycia O'Sullivan (right) joined Loddon Shire Council in the role of Early Years Co-ordinator, based at Serpentine, succeeding Rebecca Curren. With a solid background in human resources, Alycia is co-ordinating Council's Maternal and Child Health services, the infant immunisation program and the Shire's kindergarten cluster.



Feedback sought

The annual Local Government Services Survey – also known as the Community Satisfaction Survey – ran in Loddon, with researchers contacting residents to seek their views on a wide range of performance indicators. The survey, which is carried out under the auspices of the Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure, seeks to assess both how councils are doing and ways they could improve.

Road rebuilt

One of the bigger road-making projects handled by Loddon Shire Council over recent years had its final seal this month. A 2.3km stretch of the Bridgewater-Raywood Rd between Pyramid-Yarraberb Rd and the Shire boundary with the City of Greater Bendigo was rebuilt and widened for safety reasons. The \$1 million project took five months and involved the removal of 18 mature trees which were close to the side of the road.

MARCH

Grants offered

Council's Community Planning program and Community Grants Scheme were both reopened for the new year, with a total pool available to approved local projects of \$450,000. Combined with Council's \$500,000 allocation to the strategic project fund, this represents \$950,000 available for high priority community infrastructure and service initiatives. Council considered both the community grant and planning submissions at its meeting in June.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Town's big weekend

The population of Wedderburn swelled over the Labour Day weekend thanks to a happy combination of four special events.

The annual Minelab Detector Jamboree drew hundreds of visitors to Hard Hill Reserve, a major school reunion attracted 140 former local students and staff, estate agents opened vacant houses and shops and a town-wide series of garage sales helped residents clear out unwanted goods.



Having their say

A public meeting in Newbridge this month gave residents the chance to have their say on plans devised by Council and the local community for improvement works in Progress Park.

A \$10,000 allocation from Loddon Shire under the Newbridge Community Plan was granted for a significant clean-up and beautification of the area.

Online network launched

Council gave its backing to a new online network for residents of Loddon Shire who are living with disability, their supporters and other interested community members.

The Inclusive Communities Network of Greater Bendigo and Loddon Shire went live on the social networking tool, Yammer.

Lake topped up

Councillors voted to buy 300ML of water to secure the long-term future of Little Lake Boort. They saw the lake as a critical asset for the town, with high environmental values and an undoubted place as the centrepiece of Boort's recreational life, with its picnic and sporting opportunities and popular caravan park.

Cultural tourism deal

Loddon Shire joined forces with the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation, Bendigo Coachlines, Bendigo Regional Tourism, Mount Alexander and Central Goldfields Shires, the City of Greater Bendigo and other stakeholders to initiate a feasibility study into the idea of large-scale, organised Aboriginal cultural tourism in central Victoria. The Central Victoria Indigenous Tourism Feasibility Study was funded by a grant of \$29,400 from the Victorian Government's Regional Growth Fund, plus contributions of \$1,600 from Loddon Shire and similar-sized allocations from other partners.

Tim Fischer to visit

Former National Party Deputy Prime Minister and Australia's first residential ambassador to the Holy See Tim Fischer was named as guest speaker at Loddon Shire's principal celebration of the centenary of Anzac Day in April 2015.

A major ceremony marking the occasion will be held at the Serpentine recreation reserve and hall on Friday 24 April.

Rail buildings reborn

The vacant Inglewood railway station and goods shed buildings will be transformed into a busy multi-purpose community space, thanks to the Victorian Government's Community Use of Vacant Rail Buildings Program. Council will lease the property from VicTrack, providing a home to tenants Inglewood and Districts Health Service, Workspace Australia, the Goldfields Choir and Foodbank.

Study approved

Council heard it could commission an economic development strategy to guide the Shire's economy and stimulate employment opportunities up to 2018, thanks to a \$45,000 grant from the Victorian Government's \$1 billion Regional Growth Fund.

Loddon Shire was to contribute \$15,000 towards the project.

Two join course

A \$7,000 scholarship from Council enabled Serpentine mother-of-two Chloe Armstrong (right) to join the 2014 intake of the



Loddon Murray Community Leadership Program. She joined Durham Ox dairy farmer Glenys Broad as the two representatives of Loddon Shire in the current nine-month course.

Classics on track

Loddon Shire's annual celebration of historic sports car racing, the Eddington Sprints, fired up again on 29 March, with a cavalcade of gleaming cars dating from the turn of the 20th century through to the late 1970s. This year, for the first time, the cars were joined on the track by vintage motorcycles testing themselves against the clock.

Fun with fauna

"Nestboxes for Kids", an innovative project uniting school students, community volunteers and local conservationists, got under way in Loddon. The brainchild of the Loddon Plains Landcare Network, the project was made possible this year by funding of \$3,000 through the latest round of Council's Community Grants Scheme.



OTs out and about

Two experienced occupational therapists started working with Council assessment officers and community care workers to help clients. Sarah Gallagher, from Bendigo Health's Rural Health Team, based at Serpentine, works with clients in the Bridgewater, Inglewood, Wedderburn, Serpentine and Tarnagulla areas, while Kerry Harrower, from Kerang's Northern District Community Health Service, is covering the Pyramid Hill and Boort areas.

Pool changes raised

Council started work on concept plans for making the Inglewood swimming pool more accessible for people with a disability. Subject to funding, potential changes could include permanent ramp entry to the pool, designated accessible parking bays, accessible toilet and change facilities and increasing accessibility to other facilities within the pool grounds.

Children's services

Council began work on the development of the latest plan for its early years services and sought public input through an online survey. Loddon Shire's Municipal Early Years Plan 2014/2018 will map out Council's services for children aged from birth to eight years and their families.

Steven's surprise

Loddon Shire Council Works Manager Steven Phillips won a statewide award for excellence, announced this month in Melbourne. Steven was named Public Works Practitioner of the Year during the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia (Victoria Division) conference held at The Hotel Windsor.



Steven Phillips (left) is congratulated on his award by Operations Director Ian McLauchlan.

Flood markers planned

Council followed up its plans, originally approved in 2012, to produce a series of descriptive flood markers to commemorate the 2011 flood event with a decision to add a second panel to be displayed alongside the first, showing photos of the devastation in particular areas.

APRIL

Detecting tips

Nathalia gold detecting enthusiast Michael Hamilton, who grew up in Loddon Shire, teamed with Council to present a series of workshops starting at Easter, aimed at giving others the chance to learn about prospecting and try their luck in the field.

Bonus for campers

Loddon Shire opened part of the new Bridgewater Caravan Park to campers and visitors for the first time on 4 April, keeping it open right through the school holidays and across the Easter break and Anzac Day weekend. On 27 April, it was closed again to allow final construction works to take place.

Lifetime tags a first

Dog and cat owners registering their pets in Loddon Shire this month received, for the first time, a lifetime tag for their animals. The tag was given whether it was a case of a new registration or a renewal.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Review goes to panel

Loddon Shire Council took the next step in the long-running process of its Rural Zones Review when Councillors voted to invite an independent planning panel to assess submissions received during the latest phase of its public consultations. That panel was expected to report back in May, with the matter due to be brought before Council again in June.

Expo lauds country life

Almost 10,000 visitors and 147 exhibitors attended the third Regional Victoria Living Expo at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre in mid-April. The free event is a four-year Victorian Government commitment aimed at driving population and investment growth in rural and regional areas.

All of Victoria's 48 rural and regional councils generally take part.



Wool buyer sets up shop

Sheep farmers in Loddon Shire welcomed the news of a long-established wool buyer setting up shop in Wedderburn's main street.

F. Ferguson Wool Company had previously been operating in town in co-operation with the Wedderburn Farmware and Produce Store, but decided to open its own shopfront next door in the former W. Cashen & Sons Mobil garage.

Chance to showcase wares

Food and wine producers in the Loddon Valley were offered a rare opportunity to showcase their wares to a huge audience, thanks to a new initiative from Council's Tourism Department. Manager Tourism Robyn Vella was applying for a stand in the "Taste of Victoria" pavilion at this year's Royal Melbourne Show, in an effort to promote the region as a holiday destination.

Cenotaph gets fresh look

The Boort Cenotaph was looking an absolute picture by Anzac Day, after a seven-week, \$52,000 Council project to improve the safety and amenity of the site. In addition to the poor condition of the existing kerb and channel, the original slope of the land made crossing it difficult for some older residents, there were problems with drainage and the Mobile Library and post office reported issues with people having difficulty getting in and out.

Work started in early March, involving levelling the site, kerb construction, asphaltting and concreting and a new irrigation system.

Artworks sought

Young residents of Loddon Shire were invited to submit work for the Loddon Healthy Minds Network's annual art exhibition in October, open to all Shire residents aged 14-18 years. Timed to link in with Mental Health Week, the competition took the theme of "Five Ways to Wellbeing", being "Connect, Be Active, Take Notice, Keep Learning and Give".

Streetscape plan

A \$1.4 million project to upgrade and beautify Wedderburn's main street (below) began to gather pace. The Wedderburn Streetscape Improvement Project is an initiative of the Wedderburn Development Association and Community Plan Committee, in partnership with Loddon Shire Council.



Website live

Loddon Shire's brand-new website went live in April – the culmination of more than nine months' work by Council staff and contractors. The new-look site provided easy-to-find information on community events and facilities, tourist attractions, business and investment opportunities, historical records, Council news and policies.

Going solar

Loddon Shire expected to cut its power bills and significantly reduce greenhouse emissions with a planned move to install solar panels at its Wedderburn offices. The \$45,000 project, funded by the Victorian Government, was a priority action under the Shire's Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2013/2018, which was approved by Council late last year.

Welcome mat out

Loddon Shire took another step in its efforts to attract motorhome owners with the announcement that Pyramid Hill had been officially welcomed as an RV-Friendly Town. This brought to three the number of RV-Friendly Towns in the Shire, after Wedderburn was approved in 2010 and Bridgewater succeeded in its application last year.

All smiles

Loddon Shire's five kindergartens embraced a new state government program designed to improve the oral health of preschool-aged children. Ten teachers and assistants attended a two-hour training workshop at Serpentine to hear more about how the program, called Smiles 4 Miles, could be implemented.

\$3.8m program coming

Loddon Shire Councillors gave the nod to a \$3.8 million program of road, bridge, drainage and urban infrastructure improvements for the coming financial year. Meeting in Serpentine in April, Council agreed on an in-principle commitment to a busy year across nine key areas of activity under its annual infrastructure program.

Writer liked us

Veteran travel writer Fred Wright heaped praise on Loddon Shire in the April edition of *Caravan and Motorhome On Tour* magazine. Fred and his cameraman visited Loddon in December at the invitation of Council's Manager Tourism, Robyn Vella, to see the sights and film a 45-minute DVD. It was the first time the publication had ever visited the Shire and the first time anything on this scale in terms of tourism promotion had been achieved.

Leigh's on board

Leigh Jardine joined Loddon Shire Council as Manager Information, responsible for the management of IT services, records and information services within Council as well as providing IT support and expert guidance for Council's future IT strategy. Born and raised in the Ouyen district, Leigh brings with him 10 years' experience in the IT industry, having worked in the public health system and private industry in business support and network design.

Statues in mind

The federal government gave Loddon Shire \$20,000 this month towards the cost of erecting bronze statues of two of the district's most decorated soldiers, Albert Jacka and Albert Borella. The funding, was issued under the Anzac Centenary Local Grants Program. Council has convened a working group to plan the Shire's contribution to the centenary.



MAY

Sports heroes sought

Nominations opened in May for a unique set of awards designed to honour the Shire's top sportspeople. Council decided to sponsor its first-ever sports gala in the style of the Loddon Powercor Excellence Awards, which normally take place every two years. The high-profile social event was scheduled for 20 August at Pyramid Hill, with special guest sportsman, media commentator and motivational speaker Max Walker (right).



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Mystery Shopper

Bendigo Regional Tourism, the body established in September 2012 involving Mount Alexander, Central Goldfields and Loddon Shires and the City of Greater Bendigo, funded a Mystery Shopper program for Loddon, designed to give honest feedback on how businesses were presenting themselves and their region.

Prettier park

A sculpture walk, events space, new shelters and a revamped play space were just a few of the features of proposed plans for the latest stage of the Boort Eastern Entry redevelopment announced this month. The streetscape renewal project has now reached its final stage after eight years of work and a total funding commitment of more than \$1 million.

Rate-capping rejected

Mayor Cr Gavan Holt led the attack on the Victorian Labor Party's proposal to cap council rate increases to CPI, saying the plan was unsustainable. Cr Holt said any such move would be a seriously backward step for the Shire, forcing a rethink of Council's long-term financial planning and posing a threat to Council services and infrastructure projects.

Gift cuts work time

Pyramid Hill recreation reserve became the second community facility to benefit from a policy approved by Council last October, under which six major recreation reserves around the Shire would get new oval mowers over the next three years. Cr Gavan Holt officially presented the keys for the new machine – a Kubota F3690 out-front mower, valued at \$34,950 – to reserve committee members at Mitchell Park.



Right: Raman Sharma, of Bridgewater, is congratulated by his wife, Divya, and Mayor Cr Gavan Holt after the ceremony at Serpentine.

Survey an encouragement

Council's Community Care Department received a pat on the back for the quality of its work, following a survey of service users.

The Shire conducts such a survey each year in an effort to determine how people feel about the overall program and how it could improve. Director Community Wellbeing Wendy Gladman said 150 survey forms were distributed randomly to service users and 52 were returned.

Volunteers thanked

During National Volunteer Week, Council hosted two functions, in Boort and Pyramid Hill, to thank its Meals on Wheels helpers and one more the following day for volunteers at the Loddon Visitor Information Centre in Wedderburn.

Swimmers in hot water

Four of Council's five public swimming pools were fitted with new solar hot water systems this month, after a successful grant application to the Commonwealth Government. The pools at Wedderburn, Pyramid Hill, Inglewood and Mitiamo all received a Solahart roof-mounted system to provide hot water for showers and basins. The Boort pool was not included because it was supplied with a new electric hot water system just a few months earlier.

New citizen

Raman Sharma, of Bridgewater, was awarded Australian citizenship in May during a special ceremony held at the Serpentine Council Chambers.

Raman arrived in Australia from India in 2007 as a student of hospitality and management and took up a job at Bridgewater Roadhouse in 2011.



Doing business better

Owners of local retail businesses looking to work smarter and be more effective were offered more help from Council in the form of a self-assessment questionnaire. The six-page document covered such key areas as telephone etiquette, a shop's internal and external appearance, dealing with customers, websites and access issues.

Road plan review

Council took a searching look at how it manages the roads under its jurisdiction and came up with some proposed changes to improve its service to residents. Councillors discussed the matter at their meeting in Serpentine in late May and resolved to put the Shire's revised Road Management Plan out for public comment.



Kicking goals

Minister for Sport and Recreation Damian Drum visited Janiember Reserve in Serpentine this month to bring news of a \$100,000 investment in facility improvements, funded under the government's Country Football Netball Program. Mr Drum said the money would go towards new football and netball change rooms.

High-tech treasure hunt

More than 100 enthusiasts converged on Wedderburn's Jacka Park for the Shire's third free geocaching event and barbecue. Over the past two years, the geocaching day has attracted participants from across Victoria and interstate.

JUNE

New website

Tarnagulla and its surrounding towns moved to grow their presence on the internet with the launch of a new website this month. The website was an initiative of the Loddon Southern Region Tourism and Development Committee.

Tourism update

Council hosted a "Volunteers' Dinner" in Wedderburn this month to brief Visitor Information Centre helpers on the latest developments in Loddon Shire tourism.

Canberra talks

Loddon Shire had four strong advocates in Canberra this month when the 20th annual National General Assembly of Local Government convened at the National Convention Centre. The assembly comprised three days of speeches, panel discussions, workshops and debates, including addresses by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development Warren Truss, Shadow Minister for Infrastructure and Transport Anthony Albanese, Australian Greens Leader Senator Christine Milne and Director of the Australian War memorial Brendan Nelson. Representing Loddon's interests were Crs Holt, Beattie and Curnow, as well as Council CEO John McLinden.

Access issues addressed

Plans to encourage more people with disabilities to take holidays in Loddon Shire took a firm step forward, with site visits begun to accommodation providers around the municipality. The idea of compiling a list on each provider's accessibility was a joint project between Council's Disability Inclusion Officer, Jolie Middleton, and the Shire's tourism staff.

Streetscape works push on

Council's planned beautification works in Allen St and Borella Park in Korong Vale moved ahead, after completing the tasks of landscaping at the hall, tree-planting, tidying up the northern entry and removing the former workshops and concrete on the railway land on the western side of Allen St. Works at Borella Park included increased power to the site, a new barbecue installed, tidying of garden beds and the pruning of sugar gums on Vernon St.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Here's where to stay

A smart new brochure was released detailing all the accommodation options for visitors to Loddon Shire.

Businesses included on the leaflet range from camping parks to hotels, farm stays and self-contained accommodation providers.

Road repair the last one

Major work on the Barraport-Minmindie road represented the very last job under the \$32 million flood recovery program which compressed 10 years of road construction, repair and maintenance into two. Works co-ordinator Ossie Costello said the reason it had taken until now to finish this particular road was that it remained under water until late last year. "There were 2,015 road repair jobs listed under Council's flood recovery program and we've finally been able to do the last one," he said.



Waste water audit

Council's waste water audit around the Shire was more than halfway through by June. The aim of the 12-month assignment was to establish a database of all older waste water systems in the municipality, focusing particularly on unsewered towns and properties within 100 metres of key water catchment areas. And the good news was that 96% of properties checked were keeping their waste water on-site.

Show your wares

Bendigo Regional Tourism – which covers the Loddon, Mount Alexander and Central Goldfields Shires, plus the City of Greater Bendigo – announced it had secured a stand in the "Tastes of Victoria" pavilion at the 2014 Royal Melbourne Show to promote the region as a food and wine lovers' holiday destination. Loddon producers were invited to support the initiative by manning the stand for a day and displaying their wares.

Town's full history told

A new book telling the complete history of Wedderburn was sent to the printer this month – the first time such a mammoth task had ever been attempted. The 342-page hardcover work, entitled *The Golden Harvest – A History of Wedderburn*, was written by Korong (Wedderburn) Historical Society stalwart Keith Ring and freelance writer and consultant Geoff Arnott. Funding for the project was sourced from the Australian and Victorian governments, Loddon Shire Council and the Inglewood and Districts Community Bank.

Elder abuse campaign

Staff at Council's Serpentine offices took up a purple theme on 18 June to mark World Elder Abuse Day, an awareness effort to highlight the ways in which senior citizens are sometimes hurt and discriminated against in modern society.

New house for managers

This month marked a milestone for Wedderburn caravan park managers Andrew Berthelsen and Gaye Washington when they officially received the keys to their new home. A \$120,000 Council project delivered a nine-square, two-bedroom timber home adjacent to the former run-down residence.



Netball courts opened

There were celebrations at Pyramid Hill in June when Victorian Minister for Sport and Recreation Damian Drum arrived to officially open Mitchell Park's new netball courts. The ceremony marked the end of a \$120,680 project to upgrade the netball facilities, made possible by funding of \$75,000 from the state government's Community Facility Funding Program, a Council contribution of \$26,200 and \$15,000 from the Pyramid Hill Netball Club, backed up by a further \$4,480 worth of volunteer labour.

Events supported

Council decided in June to back nine community groups with special grants to help with their planned events. Council's Events Sponsorship Scheme has traditionally operated on a yearly basis, but a change was approved last February whereby such groups can now apply any time up to 30 days before their event takes place. This first round, covering applications received from 1 March to 1 June, saw a total of \$4,800 given out to groups around the Shire.



Wedderburn's New Age Festival was one of the events to receive Council support.

Big tick for Council

The latest local government Community Satisfaction Survey, conducted in February-March, showed improvements in four of five core measures for Loddon Shire – overall job performance, customer service, advocacy and overall council direction. Each year, Local Government Victoria engages an independent consultant to conduct a phone survey of each municipality to measure residents' satisfaction with the services provided by their council.

Call to young adults

Loddon Shire announced this month it had become an official partner of a Bendigo-based network dedicated to helping young working adults develop their skills and advance their careers. The Bendigo Young Professionals Network, established in 2004, aims to attract, retain and develop people in their twenties and thirties. Loddon was the first local government body to make the move to officially partner with BYPN.

Community Grants Scheme

Forty-four community groups in Loddon Shire received some welcome news in June when Council formally approved its list of successful applicants under the 2014/2015 Community Grants Scheme. Councillors agreed to allocate \$195,326 in grants for the year, out of

a possible \$200,000. In operation since 2000/2001, the scheme exists to help recreational, sporting and service organisations deliver projects that improve quality of life for residents.

Call on pet owners

Council threw its support behind the 10th annual National Desexing Month in July in an effort to urge pet owners to neuter their animals and avoid unwanted litters of puppies and kittens. The public awareness campaign, run by the National Desexing Network, involves more than 2,200 veterinary clinics around the country, all councils and hundreds of community organisations.

Fourth mower arrives

Bridgewater recreation reserve became the fourth recipient of a brand-new oval mower this month, thanks to an innovative policy adopted by Council. Last October, Council decided to set up a program whereby six major recreation reserves around the Shire would receive new mowers over the following three years.

Bridgewater's choice was a diesel-powered Hustler Super Z 72" out-front mower, with options, valued at \$27,489.



Projects win support

Loddon Shire set its Community Planning priorities for the new financial year, after Councillors considered the proposed list at their June meeting in Serpentine. In total, Council committed to spending \$266,000 on 18 requested projects across the municipality's five wards. Manager Community Planning Tim Jenkyn said annual CP funding was based on a \$50,000 allocation per ward, plus a \$500,000 Strategic Fund allocation.

HIGHLIGHTS

CARAVAN PARK REBORN

Bridgewater's brand-new caravan and camping park is in the final stages of construction, after a massive recovery effort by Council and the local community spanning more than three years.

The floods of 2010/2011 devastated the former campground, leaving smashed debris strewn across the ground and heartbreak for the many holiday makers and water sports enthusiasts who had been coming to the river there for years.

The six-hectare property, which boasts 600m of river frontage, is administered through the Victorian Department of Environment and Primary Industries and is managed by Loddon Shire Council.

Always something of a "Mecca" for water-skiers, fishing and canoe clubs, the site had regularly hosted a range of national and international sporting events.

Council's man guiding the development, Senior Project Engineer Andrew Bainbridge, said the floods, while traumatic in their effects, had created the opportunity for the park to be revitalised.

"All sites within the park were flooded, with many of the existing site-holders' caravans and cabins either severely damaged or totally lost," Andrew said.

"The 2011 flood was a 'once in a century' occurrence, but it opened the door for the park to be rebuilt in line with industry 'best practice'.

"A primary objective of Council was to build a park with high-quality facilities and a range and standard of accommodation that appealed to a broad variety of visitors."

The funding for the \$3.4 million project was provided by the then Department of Sustainability and Environment, the Local Government Infrastructure Program, Council's own reserves and insurance money.

The new park will have a total of 119 camping sites – 87 for caravans (with power, water and sullage disposal), 10 cabins, four places for recreational vehicles and 18 for tents.

Features will include a swimming pool, jumping pillow, playground and multi-function room, additional amenities block, manager's residence, park office and camp kitchen.

Also planned were several barbecue shelters, a boat storage yard, sealed roads through the park, improved signage, new lighting and improvements to the southern boat ramp.

Taking pride of place in the redevelopment is the recently opened \$110,000 water sports platform, a project funded by the Australian and Victorian governments and Loddon Shire, with extra financial and voluntary help from the Bridgewater Water Ski Club.

Holiday makers keen to track progress on the park's rebuild were given a sneak preview in April this year, when Council decided to make 50 sites available at no charge to campers and caravanners as a goodwill gesture.

Visitors were allowed in from the start of the school holidays until the end of the Anzac Day weekend, before the site was closed again to allow final construction works to take place.





JANIEMBER PARK UPGRADE



Minister for Sport and Recreation Damian Drum (centre right, with tie) and Liberal candidate for Bendigo East Greg Bickley celebrate the \$100,000 funding announcement with young players and their supporters at Serpentine.

Serpentine residents harbouring long-held dreams of seeing major improvements at their local recreation reserve had their hopes raised significantly late last year, when sweeping draft plans were unveiled for a major redevelopment of Janiember hall and surrounds.

The upgrade had been on the community's drawing board for three years.

Serpentine residents developed a 10-year master plan for the town in 2009, after a process of consultation led by former Councillor Christine Brooke, and this particular project had been on the community's drawing board for three years.

Townsppeople were all too aware the hall had poor change room facilities, limited social spaces in poor condition, restricted catering and kiosk facilities, problems with heating, cooling and storage and landscaping deficiencies.

Architects' plans were put on public display and an informal open day and barbecue held to talk with local residents about the project.

The design was for a multi-purpose complex involving new social rooms, kitchen and kiosk, new football and netball rooms and storage room.

The cause received an unexpected boost in May, when Minister for Sport and Recreation Damian Drum arrived at Janiember Reserve to bring news of a \$100,000 investment in facility improvements there.

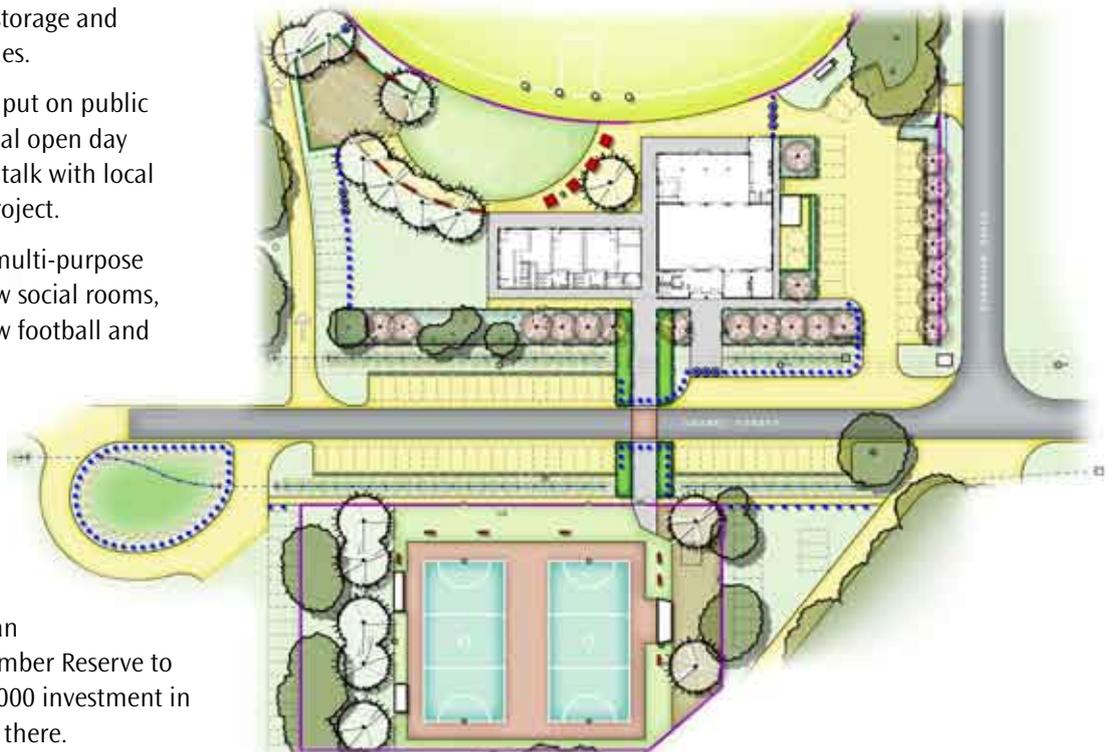
The money, provided under the government's Country Football Netball Program, was earmarked for the change rooms.

Loddon Shire is contributing \$415,000 to sit alongside \$50,000 from the football and netball clubs and the recreation reserve Committee of Management and \$20,000 from the Victorian Floods Appeal.

The overall redevelopment was costed at around \$1 million and the final funding strategy is still being finalised.

The site is a busy community hub, home to the Memorial Hall, football and netball competition, social rooms, a kiosk and shelter, children's playground and bushland reserves on two sides.

It is a key facility in the central Loddon area for large events, meetings, sport and social activities, with bookings as varied as sheep shows, strength training and children's playgroups.



MOWERS PROVE A BOON

An innovative scheme to support the hard-working volunteers at recreation reserves around the Shire began to roll out during the year.

With so many committee members battling along with tired or outdated equipment, Council decided to give new oval mowers to six major recreation reserves around the Shire over the next three years.

Three other reserve committees had recently bought new mowers and will not be eligible for this funding until well after this time.

The new policy, approved by Council in October, sees grants of up to \$35,000 made available to reserve committees, aimed at cost savings for local communities and easing the burden on volunteer labour.

The one-off grants are on top of Council's annual financial allocations towards maintenance costs and encouraging committees to apply for extra money through the Community Grants Scheme.

First cab off the rank was Calivil, where curator Alan Fidler was delighted to receive the keys to a four-wheel-drive Shibaura CM374 out-front mower, valued at \$27,273, from Mayor Cr Gavan Holt.

Next up was Pyramid Hill, where Cr Holt took great pleasure in formally handing over a Kubota F3690 out-front mower, valued at \$34,950.

The Mitiamo reserve committee has also enjoyed the arrival of a new machine – a diesel-powered Hustler Super Z 72" out-front mower, with options, valued at \$27,489.

Bridgewater's choice was the same as Mitiamo's, Cr Holt again officiating at a brief handover ceremony late in June at the recreation reserve.

Top right: Pictured at the official handover of the new Hustler mower at Bridgewater were, from left, committeeman Allan Bunnett, supplier Dave Edwards, from Bridgewater Farmware, Mayor Cr Gavan Holt, recreation reserve president Bryan Ryan and mower operator Glenn Mangano.

Right: Calivil recreation reserve curator Alan Fidler gets the feel of his new mower, joined by (from left) committeeman Lachlan Ralph, president Sue Lea, committeeman Richard Hicks and Loddon Shire Mayor Cr Gavan Holt.

Loddon Shire's major reserves cater for competition football, cricket, netball, bowls and, in some cases, hockey and golf.

They are located at Wedderburn, Mitiamo, Inglewood, Serpentine, Newbridge, Pyramid Hill, Calivil, Bridgewater and Bort.

Manager Community and Recreation Allan Stobaus said every reserve committee needed at least one oval mower to maintain its facilities to an appropriate standard.

"The operation, maintenance and ultimate replacement of this equipment represents a substantial part of committees' overall operating costs," Mr Stobaus said.

"Council set up a separate account to meet these costs over the identified replacement period of three years at a cost of \$70,000 a year.

"This policy will result in net costs to Council of about \$210,000 over the next three years, then around \$350,000 every decade thereafter."



REGIONAL LIVING EXPO

A new record of 9,638 Melburnians attended the 2014 Regional Victoria Living Expo at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre in April, according to Deputy Premier and Minister for Regional and Rural Development, Peter Ryan.

“Feedback from the 147 exhibitors was that visitors this year were even more serious about relocating to country Victoria,” Mr Ryan said.

“Many councils reported that expo patrons had done their homework and were asking specific questions about the regions and the towns they liked.

“Visitors asked about how to get quality jobs in their respective fields; about affordable housing, education, health and community life – questions indicating they were serious about relocating.”

The 2014 expo was the latest in a series of four being staged by the Victorian Government to drive population and investment in regional and rural Victoria.

It brought together under the one roof all 11 regions and 48 councils operating in regional and rural Victoria, as well as representatives of industry and businesses.

Loddon Shire was represented at the expo last year by six Council staff, who did such a great job that they brought home the award for Best Council Stand.



Victorian government minister Peter Walsh chats with volunteer Kathryn Lanyon at the Boort stand.



Marilyn Lanyon offers tastings of her green tomato products to passers-by at the expo.



The Loddon Shire stand was looked after by volunteers (from left) Carol Canfield, Helen Tonkin, Karen Fazzani and Dede Williams, as well as Economy and Community Director Bryan McEwan and Executive Assistant Lynne Habner.

This year, Loddon’s stress ball giveaways – in the shapes of farmyard animals – were a huge hit, with all 2,000 units disappearing into the crowds.

The prepared stocks of printed material and promotional DVD’s were exhausted as expo patrons plied our helpers with their questions.

The free event included performances from arts, cultural, music and dance groups, input from council ambassadors, seminars on practical aspects of relocating and a kids’ “interactive zone”.

Another new element this year was an invitation from Council to the Boort Tourism Group to run a stall on its own.

Eight volunteers from the community helped manage Boort’s stand over the weekend, offering a bright package of information about the town.

They were armed with printed case studies of people who have moved to Boort, plus portfolios of businesses and real estate for sale.

There were also two large photo banners as a backdrop, information on community organisations, a slide show and a presentation from Boort District Health.



Marilyn Lanyon, from Boort, invites Premier Denis Napthine to taste her gourmet produce.

NEW WEBSITE LAUNCHED

Loddon Shire’s brand-new website went live in April, after more than nine months’ work by Council staff and contractors.

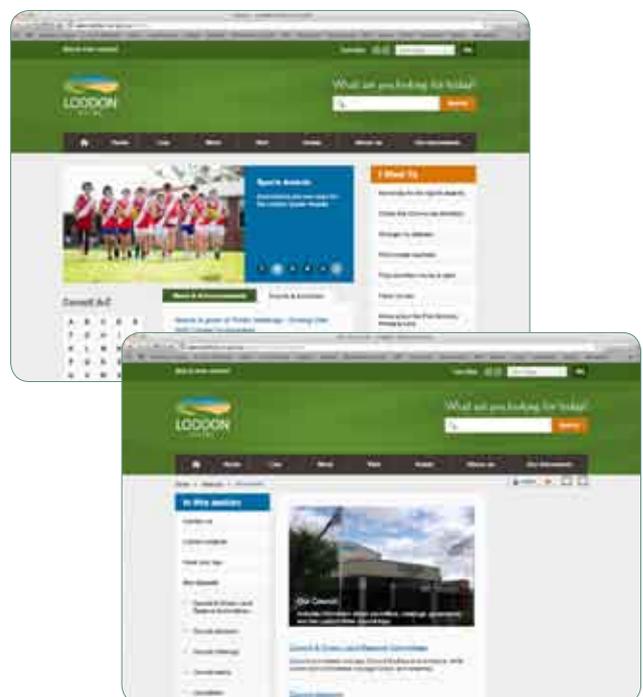
The new-look site puts all of Council’s services at a user’s fingertips, with easy-to-find information on community events and facilities, tourist attractions, business and investment opportunities, historical records and policies and much more.

The home page features a simple “I Want To” panel, the latest news from around the Shire, a Council A-Z and an easy-to-use search bar.

To have a look around the new website, go to www.loddon.vic.gov.au



Work on the Shire’s new website was led by Director Corporate Services Jude Holt (left) and expert staff member Anne Hassell.



Community Wellbeing

Community Care Services

Home and Community Care (HACC) Services

The Loddon Shire HACC program information pamphlet entitled *Your rights and responsibilities as a HACC service user* identifies that the service supports clients, carers and their families.

The pamphlet recognises that the people who support a client are an important consideration in the establishment of care planning.

The *Service Recipient Information Booklet* includes carers in the list of those eligible for HACC services and support.

Clients are advised that their carers are welcome to be a part of their assessment and review process and Assessment Officers actively advocate for the inclusion of carers.

The client data system initiates a prompt when a carer has been identified to be included in discussions with clients about their care and future goals.

Currently, Council complies with requirements of the Carers Recognition Act by including the Act's fact sheet in the HACC services information pack for new clients and in the staff induction folder.

An explanation of the obligations under the Act has been placed on the agenda of Community Care Worker team meetings and the Serpentine Office staff meeting.

Expert help

The Occupational Therapy and Personal Care Assistant funding provided through the Victorian Department of Health's Home and Community Care program offered an important opportunity for local HACC service providers at Council to work together to improve services to HACC clients and support client autonomy and independence.

Two occupational therapists are co-located with the Community Care team, working with the Assessment

Officers and Community Care Workers to support the development of appropriate practices.

Seniors get busy

Loddon Shire's senior citizens' centres provide a friendly, welcoming place for social activities, meals and educational opportunities for residents aged over 55.

The Shire is home to six centres, located in Boort, East Loddon (Calivil), Inglewood, Pyramid Hill, Tarnagulla and Wedderburn.

Programs are co-ordinated by the local committees and can vary between centres. Each centre holds a weekly or monthly luncheon.

Every quarter, there is a shared forum organised for all centres, while the Combined Seniors' Christmas party is always a great success.

Last year's event, held on 5 December, saw guests enjoy a Christmas lunch in a convivial atmosphere.

The annual Loddon Seniors Festival in October, timed to fit in with Victorian Seniors Week, is another highlight.

Last year, the activities began with two mystery trips before the official launch, known as Gala Day, on 9 October at Serpentine Hall.

Gala Day offered a free lunch, plus some information about strokes, and live music to enjoy. A number of community and information stalls were also on hand.

The following week, the Shire's highly successful Senior Master Chef competition returned for its second year.

Held on 15 October at Inglewood Primary School, the day featured healthy eating tips from Kate Finegan, of Bendigo Health, before the competition heated up between the rival teams.

Volunteers thanked

Volunteers play a vital role in supporting Council in its service delivery and the Shire regularly makes a point of expressing its appreciation.

During August, Meals on Wheels helpers were recognised at a morning tea in Pyramid Hill and at afternoon tea in Boort.

During National Volunteers Week in May, functions were hosted in Boort and Pyramid Hill, with the Mayor in attendance.

Quality check

The Quality Improvement Committee was established to provide a consistent and strategic approach to quality improvement in Loddon Shire Council's HACC services, to implement the improvements suggested by the Quality Review which took place in April 2013 and to promote a culture of continuous quality improvement.



Occupational therapists Kerry Harrower, left, and Sarah Gallagher are involved with Council's HACC team.

COMMUNITY SERVICES AND RECREATION FACTS & FIGURES

	2013/ 2014	2012/ 2013	2011/ 2012
Aged and Disability Services			
Meals on Wheels			
Meals delivered	9,001	7,983	11,014
Number of recipients	214	192	247
Home Care			
Hours delivered	7,974	8,327	8,460
Number of recipients	317	320	336
Home/garden maintenance			
Hours of property maintenance	787	829	734
Number of recipients	180	179	158
Personal Care			
Hours of personal care	2,504	2,434	2,502
Number of recipients	61	75	68
Respite Care			
Hours of respite care	2,504	2,434	2,502
Number of recipients	61	75	68
Planned Activity Groups			
Hours of activities provided	5,302	5,930	4,713
Number of recipients	95	110	103
Aged and Disability Assessment team			
Number visited (new and existing service recipients)	458	518	493
Percentage of existing clients visited at least once during the year	93.50%	93.50%	93.37%
Hours of service delivered by the Aged & Disability direct care staff to residents of Loddon Shire	17,756	18,115	18,957

	2013/ 2014	2012/ 2013	2011/ 2012
Aged and Disability Services (continued)			
Children & Family Services			
Births	71	75	65
Immunisation program (vaccines administered)	610	578	416
Kindergarten enrolments 4 yr old	70	61	78
Kindergarten enrolments 3 yr old	38	50	41

	2013/ 2014	2012/ 2013
Local Laws/Animal Control		
Dogs registered	1881	2348
Cats registered	361	444
Local laws permits issued	57	46
Permits to burn issued	43	3
Youth Services		
FReeZA events		
Number of events	8	11
Attendance	1,447	1,714



The number of dogs registered in Loddon dropped significantly during the year.



Council's Community Wellbeing activities are all aimed at encouraging healthy lifestyles in Loddon's towns and rural areas.

Workers kept in touch

Council's Community Care Workers attended regular team meetings during the year.

Agenda items included discussion around client requirements, the needs of a diverse community and possible OH&S issues.

Training for workers included quarterly all-staff workshops covering such issues as dementia, infection control, the Active Service Model, fire safety, personal safety and diabetes.

Sessions were also held with Chisholm Institute on palliative care, basic assessment for HACC workers, grief and loss, challenging behaviours, reflective practice and Mental Health First Aid.

A number of staff commenced their studies for Certificate IV in Aged and Disability and HACC during the year.

Loddon Healthy Minds Network

A healthy breakfast

Two schools in Loddon Shire hosted a Sunshine Breakfast in October to mark Mental Health Week in Victoria.

The breakfasts are an initiative of the Loddon Healthy Minds Network, aimed at focusing the thoughts of young people on issues of mental wellness and the resources that are available if needed.

The schools involved were East Loddon and Wedderburn.

The Loddon Healthy Minds Network was formed in 2007 to actively pursue mental health issues as they related to residents of the Loddon Shire.

Artfully done

"Mental Health – Let's talk about it" was the theme that challenged secondary school students in Loddon Shire last year when the Loddon Healthy Minds Network announced its 2013 art competition.

The aim of the exercise was to put on a show of artworks reflecting the message of mental health and wellbeing.

Teachers and students from Pyramid Hill College and Wedderburn College took up the opportunity and several prizes were on offer for the young artists.

Network membership

The membership of Loddon Healthy Minds Network expanded over last year to now include representatives from Bendigo Health, Inglewood and District Health Service, Boort District Health, Northern District Community Health Service, Bendigo Loddon PCP, Lifeline, Headspace and community representatives from Wedderburn, Boort and Inglewood.

Early Years Services

Maternal and Child Health

The Maternal and Child health service is a free service that caters for children from birth to school age.

It consists of 10 key age and stage consultations and additional visits as required to support parents with parenting skills and their children's health and development.

Loddon Shire Council provides a service one day a week in Inglewood and Boort and every second week in Dingee and Pyramid Hill.

Council also provides an enhanced maternal and child health service one day a week for those families at risk in the community by providing a more intensive level of support.

Immunisations

Council's free immunisation service vaccinates children from birth to four years old to protect them against harmful diseases before they come into contact with them in the community.

Council offers infant immunisations once a month, with sessions held at Serpentine and Boort on the odd months and Inglewood, Dingee and Pyramid Hill on the even months of the year.

Council also runs immunisation sessions at the four P-12 schools in Loddon Shire three times a year for Year 7 and 10 boys and girls and Year 9 boys.

These vaccinations guard against chickenpox, human papilloma, hepatitis B and whooping cough.

Preschools

Council is the cluster manager for five preschools in the Shire at Wedderburn, Inglewood, Dingee, Pyramid Hill and Boort.

Staff members operate 15 hours of kindergarten for four-year-olds and all services have been assessed according to the National Quality Framework during 2013.

Four preschools met the required standards and one was judged as working towards them.

This year, Council also ran three-year-old sessions at all centres excluding Inglewood.

Corporate Services

Office systems

New website unveiled

Loddon Shire's brand-new website went live in April – the culmination of more than nine months' work by Council staff and contractors.

The new-look site puts all of Council's services at residents' fingertips, with easy-to-find information on community events and facilities, tourist attractions, business and investment opportunities, historical records, Council news and policies and much more.

Fire Services Property Levy

Council was able to successfully implement the Victorian Government's Fire Services Property Levy during the year for the first time.

Staff worked hard to learn all aspects of the legislation and undertook a risk analysis of all of the challenges involved.

Those concerned worked through a substantial action list over the 12-month period in the lead-up to implementation.

Staff audited all properties under Council's jurisdiction to ensure that classifications were correct and handled a large number of queries regarding the legislation following the issuing of rates notices.

Staff also managed the required payments to the State Revenue Office for monies collected on behalf of the state.

Overall, the preparation done in the lead-up to implementation resulted in good knowledge by the staff and a smooth transition into the new legislation.

New to the team

Leigh Jardine joined Loddon Shire in April as Manager Information, responsible for the management of IT services, records and information services within Council as well as providing IT support and expert guidance for Council's future IT strategy.

Born and raised in the Ouyen district, Leigh brought with him 10 years' experience in the IT industry, having worked in the public health system and private industry in business support and network design.

Won on Merit

In 2012/2013, Council embarked on a focus on improving its customer service and client relations management and, during this latest year, oversaw the full implementation of the new Merit software.

This is a stand-alone electronic CRM system that has been adapted to integrate fully with existing software, especially with Council's rating and property management systems.

The improvement was undertaken by seconding internal staff for a fixed term to help roll out various activities to all service areas.

Launching the plan involved 200 activities, upon which responsible managers and officers were asked to complete a workflow questionnaire which was replicated in the software.

Training of all staff was undertaken and this was completed by June 2014.

GOOD MANAGEMENT FACTS & FIGURES

	2013/ 2014	2012/ 2013
Customer Service		
Incoming calls received through the front counter	21,309	21,750
Land Information Certificates issued	387	385
Rates		
Rates notices issued	7,723	7,652

All the activities of client service, both internal and external, will be tracked and the performance of customer service will, for the first time, be able to be reported.

Financial planning

Taking the long view

In 2013/2014, Council adopted its second Long-Term Financial Plan, this time for the period 2014/2024.

By preparing the Long-Term Financial Plan, Council is able to determine whether service levels and community expectations are able to be funded. The result may require a shift in expectations and/or service levels in some areas of Council's business.

The plan includes all income and cost factors expected for Council over the period, importantly planning for major projects and actions from the many strategic plans that Council has adopted over the years (including Youth Strategy, Recreation Strategy, Tourism Plan).

The Long-Term Financial Plan outlines various levels of sustainability as provided below:

- Critical short-term sustainability (working capital, cash liquidity and debt levels)
- Medium-term sustainability (operating surplus achieved net of abnormal items and capital funding)
- Long-term sustainability (spending more on asset renewal than consumption and meeting community service needs).

The plan is designed to absorb financial shocks and to eliminate volatility in rate rises.

It is a dynamic plan and will be updated on a rolling basis as the years progress.

The Local Government Act 1989 states that one of Council's roles is to maintain the viability of the Council by ensuring that resources are managed in a responsible and accountable manner (Sections 3C (2) (a) and 3D (2) (c)), and this plan assists the Council in its responsibilities.

Economy and Community

Tourism

Doing business better

Owners of local retail businesses looking to work smarter and be more effective were offered more help from Council during the year in the form of a self-assessment questionnaire.

The six-page document covered such key areas as telephone etiquette, a shop's internal and external appearance, dealing with customers, websites and access issues.

Manager Tourism Robyn Vella said customer service was a vital part of daily operations which was often poorly appreciated.

"There are many facets to good customer service and this questionnaire will help people identify which areas are doing well and what needs improvement," Robyn said.

The questionnaire is now being published quarterly through Council's electronic tourism newsletter and posted on the Shire's website.

Town boosts online presence

Tarnagulla and its surrounding towns are growing their presence on the internet, with the launch of a new website in June.

Special guest for the brief ceremony at the Tarnagulla Community Centre was City of Greater Bendigo Executive Manager Tourism Kathryn Mackenzie.

The website has been an initiative of the Loddon Southern Region Tourism and Development Committee.

It covers Tarnagulla, Laanecoorie, Eddington, Newbridge, Moliagul, Waanyarra, Arnold and Llanely, with sections on local organisations, businesses, events and attractions.

Mayor Cr Gavan Holt and Tarnagulla ward Councillor Geoff Curnow led the proceedings.

The address of the website is www.tarnagulla.com.au



Victory Park, Tarnagulla – part of the picture the town is looking to promote through its new website.

Magazine exposure

Loddon Shire featured in a nine-page colour spread and promotional DVD in April after a visit to the area by national travel magazine *Caravan and Motorhome on Tour*.

It was the first time the publication had ever visited the Shire.

Magazine editor Fred Wright and cameraman/producer John Haberfield were guided through the week by an itinerary drawn up by Council's Tourism Department and assisted by local volunteers.

Fred said he and John had been highly impressed by what they'd seen.

"Everyone we've met has been very committed to improving the tourism potential of Loddon Shire," he said.

"The best thing about this area has been the friendliness of people – and that's what travellers are really looking for."

Caravan and Motorhome is one of 20 motoring, craft and outdoor adventure titles produced by the Express Media Group in Sydney.

Welcome to RVs

Loddon Shire continued its efforts to attract motorhome owners as visitors during the year with the confirmation that Pyramid Hill and Bridgewater had been officially endorsed as RV-Friendly Towns.

That news brought to three the number of RV-Friendly Towns in the Shire, after Wedderburn was approved in 2010.

Loddon Manager Tourism Robyn Vella said Council intended to make Loddon an RV-Friendly Shire and other sites at Boort and Inglewood were in mind for the future.

The tag of "RV-Friendly Town" is bestowed after a formal accreditation process by the Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia, based in Newcastle.

With more than 66,000 members operating some 29,000 motorhomes, the club – the biggest of its kind in Australia – offers motorhome insurance, a monthly magazine, social events through its 97 local chapters, a Solos' Network for members travelling alone and two national rallies a year.

There are about 180 RV-Friendly Towns around Australia and that number is growing steadily.

Accommodation help

A smart new brochure detailing all the accommodation options for visitors to Loddon Shire was distributed towards the end of the year.

TOURISM FACTS & FIGURES

	2013/ 2014
Tourism facts for the Loddon Visitor Information Centre	
Loddon Visitor Information Centre	
Walk-in visitors	5,419
Telephone enquiries	1,297
Email enquiries	839
Loddon Discovery Tours	
Co-ordinated eight-day tours	231
24 days of extended tours	18
Guest speaking appearances	17
Visitors to Loddon Shire	
Total number of people visiting the Shire	348
Number of people surveyed	96

Businesses included on the leaflet ranged from camping parks to hotels, farm stays and self-contained accommodation providers.

The brochure was placed at the Loddon Visitor Information Centre, on tourist stands and on the Council website.

Community Planning

Transitioning Towns

The Transitioning Towns Toolbox has been developed as a resource for communities, local government, businesses and other regional stakeholders to use in planning and developing social and economic strategies that will strengthen small towns.

Headed by Regional Development Victoria, the Loddon Mallee group includes Buloke, Campaspe, Central Goldfields, Gannawarra, Loddon, Macedon Ranges and Mt Alexander Shires, Mildura and Swan Hill Rural City Councils and the City of Greater Bendigo.

The Toolbox was developed in recognition of the fact that 84% of towns in the region had a population of less than 3000 and many were economies dependent on agriculture.

As Loddon Shire has these characteristics, Council played an important role in developing these resources with

HIGHLIGHTS

neighbouring shires of the southern Loddon Mallee region.

Advocacy of regional needs is undertaken through consultation with well organised local and sub-regional groups, such as the Murray River Group of Councils and the Loddon Campaspe Group of Councils.

Inglewood Town Hall

Planning is well advanced for the proposed \$2.15 million Inglewood Town Hall project.

The full funding was finally secured last August when Member for Swan Hill Peter Walsh visited the town to officially present a cheque for \$500,000 from the state government's Putting Locals First program.

The story goes back to June 2010, when Loddon Shire Council, together with its government and community partners, commissioned a project to establish whether there was a need for a new community hub in Inglewood.

A feasibility process was followed and a Project Working Group established to deliver thorough concept plans that would provide the basis for stakeholder agreement, detailed building plans, applications for funding and project management recommendations.

A later Open Day proved a pleasing success, with more than 50 people looking through the hall and examining the plans.

Last December, Council appointed Hughes Cartwright Design Group as architect for the design documentation and some early ground works have been undertaken since then, including underpinning, drainage and asbestos removal.

Final plans were still being refined at year's end, but Council expected to see significant work begin early in 2015.

The project will transform the iconic 1883 building into a lively community hub, featuring new business and multi-purpose facilities, training rooms, a kitchen upgrade and spaces for community activities, special events and displays

Boort's Eastern Entry

A sculpture walk, events space, new shelters and a revamped play space are just a few of the many features of proposed plans for the future to follow on from the Boort Eastern Entry redevelopment.

Council's ambitious streetscape renewal project has now reached its final stage after eight years of work and a total funding commitment of more than \$1 million.

Work will begin later in 2014 on a wide range of jobs, all preparing the way for a potential fresh look to Nolens Park and a reinvigorated children's play area.

The budgeted cost of this third stage is \$404,400, shared between Loddon Shire (\$90,000), state government (\$300,000) and the Boort community's in-kind contribution of \$14,400.

Road works and the relocation of services are expected to cost \$250,000, a park shelter \$75,000, realignment works for future playground upgrades \$33,800 and trees and landscaping \$45,600.

Laanecoorie foreshore

Plans to reinvigorate the Laanecoorie foreshore reserve will come into play during the latter half of 2014, with final design approvals now through.

The decision to start work follows more than a year of public consultation and consideration by the Committee of Management after draft plans were put on display at the reserve in March 2013.

Those plans were the result of months of discussions between local residents, the Loddon Shire Council and government authorities, aimed at returning the area to recreational community use shared with controlled camping access.

Plans for the project include extending walking areas, vehicle-restricted areas, tree planting and general landscaping, new signs and improvements to the river bank.

Old bollards and fences will be removed and new ones installed, day parking areas established and native conservation areas fenced in.

Trail signs coming

Twelve walking trails across Loddon Shire will get brand-new signage early in the new financial year after the groundwork achieved over the past 12 months.

The trails concerned are around Boort, Bridgewater, Inglewood, Laanecoorie, Pyramid Hill, Serpentine, Tarnagulla and Wedderburn.

The project actually got under way in 2012, but was held up by the massive flood restoration effort which dominated Loddon's thinking for two years up to 2013.

The designated tracks and trails are graded to national standards for walking, access and, where appropriate, cycling and horse-riding and consistent icons will show areas of interest and rest areas over a background aerial image.

Distances are provided so users can determine if they would like to walk whole or part of the trail and the design will also double as a brochure, so can be printed when needed.

A Quick Response, or QR, code will be produced for each trail so the sign and map can be loaded directly into a smartphone or computer.



Above and right: The giant new shed rises on the Hay Australia site near Bridgewater.

GPS data on all trails can also be accessed from the web and any risks clearly spelt out.

Business Development

Boosting business

Rural Co-ordination and Development Manager Brian Hinneberg was involved in ongoing strategic efforts to stimulate business activity in Loddon Shire during the year.

His economic development role saw him engaging with farmers, agribusiness leaders, government departments, delegations of visiting business people, potential investors, peak agricultural organisations, local business owners and other local authorities.

A notable success was the arrival in Loddon during the year of Hay Australia, who purchased a parcel of land from Loddon Shire Council roughly 4km south of Bridgewater on the Calder Highway.

The business plans to establish an export-accredited hay processing plant on the site with an investment of more than \$6 million over three years.

It expects to employ 14 staff when fully operational and has already built the first shed on the site, creating up to 16 jobs in the process.

Hay Australia is planning to produce up to 60,000 tonnes of fodder a year for export to Japan, Korea and China, among other markets.

AgriFood initiative

Brian Hinneberg continued his support of the AgriFood National Regional Initiative through his membership of the steering group in the local region.

The main role of parent body AgriFood Skills Australia is to work with rural industry, government, education and training providers to meet the skills and workforce needs of industry.



An Australian “first”, AgriFood NRI aims to confront the ingrained employment and job retention problems endemic to regional communities.

The initiative was rolled out across four regions – the Loddon Mallee (encompassing the Loddon, Buloke and Gannawarra Shires), the Western Downs in Queensland, the Warren-Blackwood electoral district in south-west Western Australia and Eyre Peninsula in South Australia.

The Commonwealth Government made available almost \$1 million to help employers build the right mix of skills and knowledge in their workforce and to enable workers to productively remain in the region.

Irrigation field day

Loddon Shire Council, The Department of Environment and Primary Industries, North Central Catchment Management Authority and Goulburn Murray Water jointly hosted an Irrigation Innovation Farm Day and farm walk at Durham Ox in October to showcase the latest in irrigation management and technology.

Beginning with morning tea in the Durham Ox Hall, the program featured an inspection of new irrigation systems on the neighbouring properties of Murray and Jo Haw and the Maxted family.



The new Wedderburn Community Centre, as imagined by its designers.

The 65 participants were able to inspect new, much-improved farm irrigation layouts which featured pipes and risers, a centre pivot system and an upgraded border check irrigation system with portable time-based automation and laser-graded bays fully serviced with a re-use facility.

Poppy plans mooted

When the Victorian government introduced new legislation allowing commercial alkaloid poppy production in the state, Loddon Shire quickly contacted the three licensed processors in Tasmania requesting information for farmers on this new crop to our Shire.

TPI Enterprises responded and provided an information day for interested growers in Boort, attended by more than 80 people.

TPI's desire was to see a substantial area sown to poppies in the north of the state, with the aim of ensuring security of supply of poppy straw to its extraction and purification facility near Cressy in Tasmania.

Those present were told the crop could potentially deliver gross margins of between \$2,000 and \$4,000 per hectare.

Working online

Council sponsored a series of workshops during the year aimed at helping business owners in the Shire to grow their skills in online marketing.

Run by consultant Tim Gentle, of Design Experts in Bendigo, the sessions looked at such areas as using social media, web-based marketing, managing websites and email.

The program was supported by Agrifood Skills Australia, with the intention of increasing the capacity and profitability of regional businesses through the use of digital initiatives.

Major projects

Wedderburn Community Centre

Council started work on the \$1.75 million redevelopment at the Wedderburn Community Centre in June 2013, with the aim of delivering a new community hub and enhanced maternal and child health, tourism and neighbourhood house facilities.

The design includes new consulting rooms from which the Inglewood & District Health Service will operate, a new tourism office, two interview rooms for visiting services, two improved multi-purpose rooms, new toilet facilities and two new meeting rooms.

By the end of the financial year, much had already been accomplished, with the extension open for business and demolition of the internal components of the old building and new under-floor plumbing work both completed.

New timber framing had been done, along with the necessary electrical and plumbing fittings, and a new communications cupboard added, with all existing phone and data services restored.

During the rest of winter and into spring, work was to continue on the internal joinery, plastering, installing phone and data services to the old building, fitting new roof insulation, preparing for painting and planning for a new photovoltaic system.

A landscape architect has started work on the surrounds and Council expects to be able to complete the project in October.

Bridgewater Caravan Park

Construction began on the rebuilding of the Bridgewater Caravan Park in June 2013 after Council had chosen the winning tenders.

The park gradually took shape during the year, beginning with the installation of services including sewerage,

electricity, water, fire service, irrigation, road works, kerbing and paths.

Works on other elements, such as the manager's residence, camp kitchen and amenities building, were also commenced.

Along the way, there was a "public walk-through" in November, when interested people were invited to see the park's progress for themselves, and a temporary opening of the gates in April for campers to visit.

Council's gesture of offering free camping was well appreciated, with strong demand for the sites made available, particularly over the Easter break.

The site was closed again after the Anzac Day long weekend, enabling Council to get on with the works needed to bring the \$3.4 million project to completion.

As at year's end, there were still some finishing-off jobs to do, but Council was expecting to officially open the park in October.

Station back on track

The vacant Inglewood railway station and goods shed buildings will be transformed into a busy multi-purpose community space, thanks to the Victorian Government's Community Use of Vacant Rail Buildings Program.

Minister for Public Transport Terry Mulder announced in March that Loddon Shire Council had taken on the lease of the property, which will be converted under a major rebuilding program.

Mr Mulder said Inglewood & Districts Health Service would use the converted station building, Workspace Australia and the Goldfields Choir will set up base in the goods shed and Foodbank will have the use of a new shed built alongside.

Loddon Shire Mayor Cr Gavan Holt said Council was delighted with the Minister's announcement.

"We are excited to be involved in this project," Cr Holt said.

"The redevelopment is being co-ordinated through VicTrack, which has held discussions with the prospective tenants, the Inglewood Tourism and Development Committee, the local community and Council.

"VicTrack will manage the project works and will retain ownership of the property."

Work to refurbish the buildings was expected to start in mid-2014 and it was anticipated that tenants would move in by spring.

Small business support

Council initiated a project in 2013 to fit alongside the state government's Support Small Business Day held in October.



Mayor Cr Gavan Holt faces the media at the launch of the restoration project at the old Inglewood train station.

As well as designing self-assessment business audits for local operators, the Shire organised two workshops, with funding support from the Department of State Development, Business and Innovation.

Thirty businesses contacted Council for further information and were asked to register in the Support Small Business Day program, with information sent to additional businesses via email and media releases.

Staff from 18 businesses took part in the workshops.

New estate on the way

A \$397,000 project to build the first industrial estate in Inglewood got under way during the year.

The Victorian government provided more than \$198,000 towards the development through the \$1 billion Regional Growth Fund's Putting Locals First program.

The balance was put forward by Council.

The 2ha site will be made up of five lots of 4000 square metres.

The Reef Street estate was a key initiative in Loddon Shire's Economic Development Strategy and community groups such as the Inglewood Tourism and Development Committee, Inglewood Community Resource Centre and the local Lions Club were included in the consultation process.

Completion was expected by December 2014.

Council has already built industrial estates in Boort, Wedderburn and Serpentine, thanks to vital and generous support from the Department of State Development, Business and Innovation.

Incentive scheme

Loddon Shire has initiated a new scheme this year in which Council partners with local estate agents to promote the sale of industrial land to potential clients.

The agents are able to earn a special payment if they are successful in securing new businesses.



A special project in Boort during the year aimed to boost the vitality of the main shopping street.

'Streetlife' a boost

Boort retailers received a major boost late last year when Member for Swan Hill Peter Walsh announced new *Streetlife* grants of \$20,000 and \$5,000 to Loddon Shire Council and Boort Tourism Group respectively.

The \$20,000 was designated for a project called "Ignite Your Business", planned to provide targeted support to selected shop-front businesses in Boort through group workshops and one-on-one mentoring.

The \$5,000 grant helped to bring the Boort Traders' Association into existence, in a move designed to secure the retail future of Boort and assist with the future growth of the town.

Streetlife is a Victorian government initiative which seeks to help small businesses attract and retain customers by improving what they do.

Areas targeted include core skills in retail management, innovative practices, customer service skills, marketing plans and online and social media capabilities.

Council hopes that investments such as this will help local businesses trade successfully and so maintain their viability.

Operations

Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2013/2018

In October 2013, Council adopted its Environmental Sustainability Strategy for 2013/2018.

This strategy encompasses a broad range of activities and services performed by Council. It identifies opportunities for improving the way Council performs these roles, areas where Council could advocate on behalf of the

community with external agencies and ways to enhance the care of our local environment.

The action plan attached to the strategy identifies 44 separate items to be undertaken or explored over the next four years.

These actions range over seven different areas, including energy management, water security, biodiversity, land management and planning, sustainable transport, waste management and resource recovery and business development.

Ultimately, the ESS provides a mechanism by which Loddon Shire Council can identify and monitor progress towards achieving a more environmentally sustainable future. The ESS is a document that provides a clear set of objectives to work towards and nurtures new and existing activities with positive environmentally sustainable outcomes.

This five-year plan, the product of considerable consultation between staff, the community and expert consultants, underlines the importance of working in partnership with government, local and regional authorities, industry, business and the community.

Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013/2017

Every four years, Councils are required to develop an evidence-based Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan that identifies goals and strategies for creating healthier communities.

In a collaborative effort, Council worked with local residents, health and community service organisations and the Department of Health to develop, implement and evaluate such a plan.

Loddon's Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013/2017, which was adopted by Council in October 2013, identifies the Shire's priority health and wellbeing issues and outlines an action plan to guide the actions of Council over the next four years.

This plan encompasses five priority areas, each with a number of prioritised actions.

Areas for focus include promoting social connections, increasing physical activity, reducing smoking rates and alcohol consumption, public health protection and disease prevention and seeking out collaborative and rational systems and partnerships of organisations working together towards closing the gaps.

Capital works program

Council continues to maintain its effort in the delivery of its annual capital works and road maintenance obligations.



Wedderburn depot's Owen Bailey checks off his safety data sheets.

Some projects worth noting which have been delivered this financial year include 3km of pavement rehabilitation over three separate sections of the Pyramid-Yarraberb Road at a cost of \$650,000, a 750m section of pavement rehabilitation and widening on the Laanecoorie-Tarnagulla Road at a cost of \$111,000, a 750m section of pavement and drainage rehabilitation on the Kingower-Logan Road and a bridge replacement on Puntons Road at a cost of \$360,000.

Council also completed two major urban drainage projects in Inglewood and Serpentine for just under \$300,000.

Local road maintenance regimes

In addition to the heavy investment in the renewal and upgrade of our roads, significant efforts have been made throughout the year in the area of routine road and public infrastructure maintenance.

The Shire's works department, with the assistance of a number of specialised contractors, has continued its efforts in the routine inspection and maintenance of the road network and other public infrastructure.

Evidence of these efforts is the continued safe and efficient operation of the local road network, continued availability of public infrastructure such as playgrounds, public toilets and street furniture, and the presentation standard of our parks and public spaces.

A noteworthy initiative for 2013/2014 has been the introduction of a new approach to inspecting and maintaining local gravel roads.

For the first time, Loddon Shire has begun a programmed gravel road maintenance grading regime, through which every unsealed road in the Shire will be systematically assessed and, as required, receive maintenance grading periodically, subject to the road's classification under Council's Road Management Plan.

Practically speaking, this has resulted in roads leading to important infrastructure and homes being eligible for

ROADS FACTS & FIGURES	
Kilometres of highway	209
Kilometres of sealed local roads	
Kilometres of main roads	394
Kilometres of sealed access roads	123
Kilometres of sealed collector roads	796
Gravel local roads	
Kilometres of gravel collector roads	256
Kilometres of gravel access roads	1,114
Kilometres of minor gravel roads	1,186
Kilometres of formed roads	977
Kilometres of unformed roads	262

grading twice in any financial year, with minor gravel roads treated annually and formed (i.e. earth) roads addressed once every two years.

Reactive maintenance is also still conducted, but limited to only those situations where safety issues warrant immediate intervention.

Rural Zones Review

In 2012, Loddon Shire adopted the Rural Zones Review report, which represents a significant piece of local planning work in applying appropriate zoning throughout our rural areas.

Further, the review examined the requirements to protect agricultural land through relevant planning provisions, so as to ensure the continued future prosperity and security of the largest economic industry within the Shire.

During 2013/2014, significant progress was made towards the ultimate implementation of recommendations identified in the Rural Zones Review.

Following on from the completion of the review document itself, the required preparation of the planning scheme amendment was completed during the year, along with the mandatory public exhibition and submission process.

The public exhibition process ended on 6 March 2014, with Council receiving 14 submissions. Council then resolved to refer the amendment to an independent Planning Panel, which would provide further recommendations to Council in respect of the proposed changes.



Work under way at the Bridgewater-Maldon Road.

With the panel process now complete, it is expected a final report to Council recommending implementation of the planning scheme amendment will be presented late in 2014.

When that passes, it will represent the end of nearly four years of strategic planning work.

Roads to Recovery program

During the 2013/2014 financial year, Council allocated \$1.95 million towards approved works using funding provided by the Australian government through the long-standing Roads to Recovery program.

This financial year represented the final stage of a five-year funding cycle for the Roads to Recovery program, which provided Loddon Shire with just over \$8 million for investment towards the renewal, upgrade and maintenance of local roads.

Funding provided through this program represents a significant component of Council's overall local road budget and has yielded tangible improvements in the condition of the local road network.

Municipal signage

Continuing on from previous upgrade works on township entrance and boundary signage, the 2013/2014 budget provided for further replacement of ageing or outdated township and boundary signs throughout the local road network.

For some of the smaller towns and hamlets, this has seen the installation of single or double-sided signs rather than two separate signs.

The progressive replacement of municipal signage moves towards the establishment of a consistent corporate theme across the municipality, assists in the identification of townships and localities as well as navigation throughout the Shire and contributes to Loddon being perceived as a welcoming and well-presented place to visit.

It is envisaged that the municipal signage program will continue to be delivered over the coming years

and expanded to encompass public places and areas of significant interest, as well as smaller hamlets and localities.

Country Roads and Bridges Initiative

Over the past three financial years, Council has received \$1 million in additional funding from the state government under the Country Roads and Bridges Initiative.

This funding is administered by VicRoads and is specifically earmarked for expenditure on the maintenance and replacement of existing road and bridge infrastructure.

Council allocates this funding across a number of programs, including gravel resheeting, shoulder resheeting and resealing works. This additional injection of funds enables Council to carry out a greater quantity of much-needed maintenance and rehabilitation works.

Asset management

Road Management Plan review

Council took a searching look during the year at how it manages the roads under its jurisdiction and came up with some proposed changes to improve its service to residents.

Councillors resolved to put the Shire's revised Road Management Plan out for public comment in June, with responses due back by the beginning of July 2014.

The plan was produced following several sessions with Infrastructure and Works department officers and a public workshop in March 2013.

Council's Road Management Plan is concerned not only with roads, but also our footpaths and bridges – it basically covers how Council inspects, repairs and maintains these assets.

In this latest, simplified revision, Council has added inspections of railway level crossings and minor gravel roads, new standards for bridge and railway crossing defects and specified response times for low-risk defects.

The plan also formally introduced Council's latest road grading program, proposed improved response times for hazards and tree trimming and inserted a new clause dealing with exceptional circumstances.

Environmental health

Waste water education program

Using funding provided by the state government through the Country Towns Water Supply and Sewerage Program, Loddon Shire's Health Department has been able to prepare a suite of educational and informative



Specialist project officer Cameron Earl (left) examines a home's waste water system with environmental health student Dylan McLean.

documents to assist landowners appropriately design, install and manage on-site waste water systems.

The appropriate siting, installation and maintenance of on-site waste water systems is crucial in ongoing efforts to maintain good public health throughout the community, control the risk of nuisance impacts between properties and protect local waterways.

The "Towards Better On-site Wastewater Management in Victoria – Community Education Series" comprises helpful fact sheets developed to assist residents to understand their responsibilities and options for managing waste water.

These fact sheets cover the common types of systems, how they operate and how they need to be maintained.

Planning

New animal pound

Land was purchased on Wedderburn Junction Road in February in order to establish a new livestock pound.

The move will greatly assist Council in meeting its obligations under the Impounding of Livestock Act 1994. When impounding animals, Council assumes the responsibilities of the owner until such time as they can be returned or are disposed of. Council is therefore liable for their health and wellbeing.

ENVIRONMENT FACTS & FIGURES

	2013/ 2014	2012/ 2013
Health services		
Registered food premises	172	158
Registered health premises	12	12
Registered caravan parks	5	6
Food and water samples taken	49	35
Septic tank permits issued	44	36
Planning and building services		
Planning permits issued	105	120
Building permits issued	111 12 for new dwellings	117 13 for new dwellings
Waste management and recycling		
Garbage collected (tonnes)	3,180	2,869
Recycling collected (tonnes)	2,026	2,902

Currently, housing impounded livestock is dependent on agreement with private landholders. This land purchase puts Council in a far better position to comply with relevant legislation and codes of practice, as well as maintaining greater control over animal welfare.

In time, and subject to planning approval, it is envisaged that Council's domestic animal pound will also move to the new site from the Wedderburn Operations Depot. This will further assist Council to meet its obligations under the Domestic Animal Act.

Bridgewater rezoning

In August 2013, Council approved Amendment C33 for the Loddon Planning Scheme which saw the rezoning of 34 hectares of land adjoining the Bridgewater-Maldon Road, on the edge of Bridgewater, from Farming Zone to low-density Residential Zone.

This amendment was the first step in the process of making further land available for residential development in the Bridgewater area.

Building standards

Essential Safety Measures

Part 12 of the Building Regulations 2006 states that an owner of a building (other than a single detached dwelling) or place of public entertainment must ensure

HIGHLIGHTS

that every essential safety measure continues to perform at the same level of operation that existed at the time of commissioning and/or issue of the occupancy permit.

In an attempt to both assist property owners to meet their obligations under the Regulations and take a proactive approach towards improving safety throughout the Shire, Council's Municipal Building Surveyor prepared and issued documentation packs which were distributed to all businesses and business owners throughout the municipality.

These packs provided a friendly reminder for individuals and businesses of their obligations and provided some guidance material to assist in achieving compliance with the Regulations.

The maintenance of essential safety measures involves:

- Periodic inspections and checks in accordance with an Australian Standard or other specified method.
- Ensuring the essential safety measures are maintained at a level of performance specified by the National Construction Code (NCC) or an Australian Standard.
- Maintaining a record of the maintenance inspections and checks in a form that helps with the preparation of an annual "essential safety measures report".

Essential safety measures are the fire, life safety and health items installed or constructed in a building to ensure adequate levels of fire safety and protection for occupants and persons occupying the building over its life.

Recreation

Youth services

Council invests up to \$24,000 a year into its youth services, with funding sourced from state government and its own reserves.

The FreeZA youth initiative from the Victorian government introduces a busy round of activities for young people in Loddon, whereby committees of teenagers in several towns liaise with Council's Recreation Officer, Tony Bellenger, to organise events of their choosing.

This year, there have been eight FreeZA events involving 1,447 young attendees.

The annual Kool Skools program this year is another fixture. This is a music recording and multimedia project for secondary level school bands and solo performers to record an album of original music, either in Melbourne or Sydney, complete with their own photography, graphics and written material.

Over the past 17 years, more than 150 schools and municipal councils have participated from Victoria alone.

Council sponsors Kool Skools in the Shire each year to the tune of around \$9,000, which pays for the participating



Participants in Council's first Melbourne street art tour explore another alleyway.

students' trip to Melbourne, the launch of their CD and other expenses.

That has been made possible by the funding the Shire receives from the state government's FreeZA program, which allocated \$73,500 to Loddon for the three years to the end of 2015.

Council has also financially supported the MATES mentoring program at Wedderburn College.

A notable "first" in 2013 was a highly successful trip to Melbourne in September, which saw 25 local students enjoy a city camp run by Melbourne Street Art Tours, the only business of its kind in Australia run by street artists.

The students, all aged from 13 to 17 years, spent three days in the city accompanied by Shire Recreation Officer Tony Bellenger and teachers.

Council grants good news for clubs

Council handed out more than \$208,000 to community groups and event organisers for the 2013/2014 year when approving its annual round of community grants and event sponsorships in June 2013.

Of that total, just over \$197,600 was allocated to 38 applicants spread across the Shire's five wards, while \$10,400 was given to the organisers of 20 community events scheduled for the July to December period.

The latest round of the Community Grants Scheme was formalised in June 2014, when 44 community groups in Loddon Shire shared in a total pool of \$195,326.

In operation since 2000/2001, the scheme exists to help recreational, sporting and service organisations deliver projects that improve quality of life for residents.

Since it began, Council has invested about \$1.5 million toward 609 community-based projects worth a total of around \$5 million.

Loddon's Events Sponsorship Scheme changed its format during the year. Traditionally operating on a yearly basis, a change was approved last February whereby groups could apply any time up to 30 days before their event took place.

Operating since 1999, this scheme has now allocated more than \$182,000 to community groups to promote happenings held within the municipality.

This first round, covering applications received from 1 March to 1 June, saw a total of \$4,800 distributed.

Netball courts upgraded

An eight-year effort to upgrade Loddon Shire's netball facilities neared its end by the close of the year, with the completion of two courts at Pyramid Hill and plans set for one last major project at Wedderburn.

The \$1.4 million improvement program resulted in the construction or refurbishment of 17 courts around the Shire. Of that amount, Council allocated \$232,284, external funding provided \$769,723 and community contributions (both in cash and in-kind) \$401,301.

Now finished and in use are dual courts in Inglewood, Boort, Bridgewater, Pyramid Hill, Newbridge, Mitiamo, Calivil and Serpentine and one in Wedderburn.

A second court at Wedderburn's Donaldson Park has funding secured and will be started in the new financial year.

Pools improved

Four of Council's five public swimming pools were fitted with new solar hot water systems in May, after a successful grant application to the Commonwealth Government.

The pools at Wedderburn, Pyramid Hill, Inglewood and Mitiamo all received a Solahart roof-mounted system to provide hot water for showers and basins. It was the first time these pools had ever enjoyed hot water on tap.

The Boort pool was not included because it was supplied with a new electric hot water system just a few months ago.

The \$28,250 project was funded by a grant from the Local Government Energy Efficiency Program of just over \$25,000, with Council paying the gap.

More improvement works were planned for the off-season, with painting of the pools at Mitiamo and Pyramid Hill, all-new fencing at Wedderburn, a new irrigation system at Boort, shade sails for all pools and water features at Pyramid Hill, Mitiamo and Inglewood.



The Boort swimming pool was just one of the Shire's pools to receive upgrades during the year.

The toddler pools at Wedderburn and Mitiamo were to get new shade sails and an old and unsafe shade structure at the Boort pool was due to be replaced.

Bowlers back on the green

Last November saw a day of great celebration in Bridgewater, with the official re-opening of the local bowls club after an extensive restoration project lasting almost three years.

In January 2011, Bridgewater suffered its worst flood event on record, with the bowling club's buildings and greens totally inundated and damage estimated at more than \$200,000.

Committee members responded by working tirelessly to clean up the grounds, refurbish the social rooms, replace the machinery shed and equipment and restore the main green.

The project cost of \$208,175 was shared between the state government's Flood Recovery Infrastructure Fund (\$142,450), Loddon Shire (\$7,500), Council's flood insurance (\$21,798) and the club itself (\$36,427).

In fact, the Victorian government provided \$243,331 through its Flood Recovery Infrastructure Fund to help with restoration works to 10 community facilities throughout the Shire.

Besides the bowling club, this money assisted the pool, preschool, CERT hall, tennis club and caravan park in Pyramid Hill, East Loddon Preschool, Bridgewater public toilets, Boort Gun Club and Newbridge Hall.

REPORTING TO THE COUNCIL PLAN

Council adopted the Shire's new Council Plan 2013/2017 at its meeting on 24 June 2013.

The Plan identified seven strategic platforms which would benefit from Council's resources and energies over the following four years.

Speaking at the time, then Mayor Cr Geoff Curnow said those seven platforms were, in his view, "the areas where Council can make the most difference to the future of this municipality and its communities".

"Our focus is on strengthening our communities, population growth, economic development, the agrifoods sector, our transitioning towns and connecting with the next generation," Cr Curnow said.

"This direction will give Council the best chance of successfully building the communities we all desire."

Council was clear in saying that this plan was not merely a review of previous ones, but had come about following extensive analysis, community consultation and an independent assessment of the organisation and the community's future needs.

The seven strategic platforms and progress so far through this first year are detailed below.

While there have been a number of clearly identifiable achievements during the first year, many of the actions listed will extend over multiple years of the four-year plan.

Platform 1

Build a network of strong communities

One of the priorities here was to use Community Planning to help residents of Loddon Shire guide their own futures.

Looking to the long term, Councillors met in May to study a list of potential community infrastructure projects for the next 10 years.

The challenge was to weigh up the present and potential needs of the community with the ever-changing funding landscape facing local government.

The list was a mix of the aspirational – such as upgrades to recreation reserves, local halls and community centres – and projects already under way, such as planned pool improvements, Wedderburn's streetscape and the Inglewood Town Hall Hub.

Another priority was to develop a social media strategy and this has been achieved, with a policy now approved and resourced.

Council intends to take steps to widen its online profile early in the 2014/2015 financial year.

Council produced a calendar of events around the Shire for 2013/2014 and incorporated this information into its new website.

Another addition to the website was a list of volunteer groups around the Shire, aimed at encouraging residents to get involved and participate in organisations and events with benefit to the broader community.

The Shire's young families are set to benefit from a commitment by Council to revise its Early Years Plan to better serve its communities.

A program of public consultation was undertaken during the year in which interested people were invited to give their input into the Shire's Early Years services.

Loddon's Municipal Early Years Plan 2014/2018 will map out Council's services for children aged from birth to eight years and their families.

Platform 2

Grow our population through appropriate development

Council laid down its priority of implementing planning strategies which would accelerate growth in appropriate areas.

The story of the long-running Rural Zones Review continued through 2013/2014, with Councillors voting in March to request the Minister to appoint an independent planning panel to assess submissions received during the latest phase of its public consultations.

This took place over the month ending 6 March and Council received 14 submissions, most concerned with how the Rural Conservation Zone had been applied.

That panel was expected to report back very early in the new financial year.

Council has also started work on a settlement strategy, looking to identify potential priorities and sites for development.

At this stage, relevant statistics and data have been collected relating to demographics and residential development in the municipality.

One concrete achievement in this regard has been the application to the Minister for Planning for approval on the proposed Bridgewater residential subdivision.

The 34ha site, bounded on two sides by the Bridgewater-Maldon Rd and Peppercorn Lane, represents a rare opportunity for the Shire to open up new vacant allotments for development.



Boort kindergarten children wait patiently for Easter eggs at Kane Arnold's butcher shop. How the Shire cares for its youngsters was the subject of a new Early Years Plan devised this current year.

Landowners wanting to subdivide their properties in Loddon Shire received a helping hand during the year when Council adopted a new planning tool.

Land Victoria, part of the Victorian Department of Environment and Primary Industries, operates an online system known as SPEAR – Surveying and Planning through Electronic Applications and Referrals.

SPEAR is an Australian first, allowing subdivision applications to be compiled, lodged, managed, referred, approved and tracked online, any time.

It cuts down on cumbersome paperwork and is available at no cost to all parties involved, from applicants and responsible authorities such as councils to referral authorities and interested members of the public.

SPEAR was one element in Council's efforts during the year to improve its turn-around time on planning approvals for housing projects.

Other initiatives included development of automated reporting and monitoring systems, establishing clear delivery timelines and building greater accountability into the targets set for assessing planning applications.

Platform 3

Champion our agrifood enterprises

Council stated its intention to act as an advocate for the Shire's agrifood sector and to ensure it was adequately resourced to remain the backbone of the region's economy.

Brian Hinneberg filled the role of Rural Co-ordination and Development Manager for the year, engaging with farmers, agribusiness leaders, government departments, delegations of visiting business people, potential investors, peak agricultural organisations, local business owners and other local authorities.



The bright and welcoming new Visitor Centre in Wedderburn opened during the year as part of the \$1.75 million redevelopment of the Wedderburn Community Centre.

Platform 4

Make our towns liveable and memorable

As part of Council's desire to improve the attractiveness of our towns to residents and visitors alike, construction work commenced on the \$1.75 million Wedderburn Community Centre redevelopment in June 2013.

The completed project will deliver new consulting rooms from which the Inglewood & District Health Service and Council's Maternal and Child Health Service will operate, a new tourism office, two interview rooms for visiting services, two improved multi-purpose rooms, new toilet facilities and two new meeting rooms.

By the end of the financial year, the new extension was open for business and workers were busy with the renovations in the historic primary school building next door.

Council expects to be able to complete the project in October.

In a move aimed at the wider municipality, Council initiated efforts to help local businesses improve their customer service.

A self-assessment questionnaire was prepared and circulated and a survey conducted to gauge the level of awareness in this area.

Two workshops were held for small business operators to help them develop the skills to improve the visual impact of their businesses.

Staff from 18 businesses took part.

As an extra support, Council published a local accommodation guide for visitors and included it on the Shire's website.



Students from Wedderburn College used their creative flair to beautify the walls of the local pool.

With the presentation of our towns in mind, Loddon Shire continued its efforts towards identification and enforcement action on unsightly properties.

Council also took steps to improve its stormwater and waste water management, reviewing individual drainage strategies for each town and resetting priorities for action.

Parks and gardens, too, came in for greater attention, with project priorities reassessed, recreation reserve committees consulted about their master plans and a concept identified for future works at Donaldson Park in Wedderburn.

Council's approach to its recreation planning will take another step forward early in the new financial year when a consultant begins a review of the Shire's strategies in this area, thanks to funding from Sport and Recreation Victoria.

A key target group in the Shire's tourism marketing efforts is recreational vehicle and motorhome owners, who are visiting the region in greater numbers.

During the year, Loddon Shire enhanced its reputation in this market by successfully listing Pyramid Hill as an RV-Friendly Town.

This brought to three the number of RV-Friendly Towns in the Shire, after Wedderburn and Bridgewater were included in previous years.

Council intends to widen Loddon's appeal as an RV-Friendly Shire by developing further sites at Boort and Inglewood and promoting its facilities both online and through appropriate journals and magazines.

Platform 5

Grow and diversify our economy

Council desires to attract investment which introduces new industries, presents opportunities for existing businesses and grows the working population.

In this regard, Council has promoted the development of local tourist accommodation by compiling and publishing



Council's involvement in Kool Skools and the Push Start Battle of the Bands gives local young performers a chance to shine.

a list of available providers and hosting an information evening focusing on this business sector.

Platform 6

Support our transitioning townships

Council wishes to support its small town communities to retain the best quality of life possible in the face of a declining population with increasing needs.

To this end, it has compiled a Community Register of Vulnerable People and established proper procedures for its Community Care assessment team to follow.

Platform 7

Connect with the next generation

Council has said a high priority is to engage with youth to equip them for a positive future and keep our communities young, energised and vibrant.

A regular fixture in the area of arts and culture is Council's backing of the Kool Skools program.

This is a music recording and multimedia project for secondary level school bands and solo performers to record an album of original music, either in Melbourne or Sydney, complete with their own photography, graphics and written material.

Over the past 17 years, more than 150 schools and councils have participated from Victoria alone.

Eight FreeZa social events were held in Loddon during the year, involving attendance by 1,447 young people.

A notable "first" in 2013 was a highly successful trip to Melbourne in September, which saw 25 local students enjoy a city camp run by Melbourne Street Art Tours, the only business of its kind in Australia run by street artists.

Council's desire to see local young people given opportunities for part-time work yielded results for a number of interested individuals, with the Shire's new pools contractor employing them over the summer.

GOVERNANCE

Audit Committee

Membership

Council's audit committee is an advisory committee comprising five members – one Councillor and four external independent persons. The current membership consists of:

Councillor:

- Cr Gavan Holt

Independent external persons:

- Mr Ken Belfrage (Chair)
- Mr Rodney Baker
- Mrs Jo Haw
- Mr David Peterson

Cr Holt was reappointed to the committee at the Statutory Meeting of Council held on 14 November 2013.

Mr Belfrage, who was appointed Chair by the Council for the term 1 May 2013 to 30 April 2014, was recommended by the committee to continue as Chair for the term of 1 May 2014 to 30 April 2015 at the Audit Committee held on 22 May 2014. The Council endorsed that recommendation at the Ordinary Meeting held on 27 May 2014.

Mrs Jo Haw's term ended in April 2014 and she was reappointed to the committee until 30 April 2018.

Meetings

Meetings were held in August, November, February and May.

Council's Chief Executive Officer and Director Corporate Services attended the meetings in an advisory capacity.

Other staff were invited to each meeting to provide the committee with an opportunity to hear about their roles and current projects, which gave committee members further insight into the operations of Council.

Audit program

The audit program endorsed by the committee in May 2013 was continued throughout the financial year.

At the Audit Committee meeting on 22 May 2014, the committee asked the Chief Executive Officer to undertake a risk profiling exercise with the management team and other key staff to identify new and emerging risks for Council.

The results will be provided to the Audit Committee in the form of a proposed audit program at the meeting scheduled for August 2014.

Audit reviews

Audit reviews were undertaken in the following areas:

- compliance and knowledge management
- financial policies and procedures
- business continuity planning
- asset management registers (with financials).

During the year, the committee also regularly assessed outstanding audit recommendations from audit reports. At the start of the financial year, there were 30 actions to be completed.

With the addition of 57 actions from the audit reviews, plus three actions from the Management Letter for the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2013, there were 90 actions active throughout the year.

At the end of the financial year, 45 actions remained outstanding.

Along with the audits, during the year the committee addressed the following items:

- A review of the 2012/2013 Financial, Standard and Performance Statements
- Review of monthly Finance Reports
- A survey by committee members to assess the performance and effectiveness of the committee
- Quarterly updates in relation to fraud and any major law suits
- Quarterly reports in relation to risk management
- A review of the Audit Committee Charter
- A review of the End of Financial Year Audit Strategy for 30 June 2014
- A review of the draft budget for 2014/2015
- A review of the Long-Term Financial Plan adopted by Council in March 2014.

Memberships

During the financial year, Council was a member of the following organisations:

- Central Murray Regional Waste Management Group
- Civil Contractors Federation
- Institute of Public Works Engineering Australia
- Keep Australia Beautiful (Victoria)
- LGPro
- Local Government Finance Professionals
- Municipal Association of Victoria (Rural Councils)
- Municipal Works Officers Association
- Planning Institute Australia
- Rail Freight Development Alliance

Freedom of Information Act 1982

The Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Act) provides the community with right of access to documents of Council.

Applicants are entitled to access documents unless they are exempt documents. The Act specifies documents that are exempt.

Requesting a Document

Section 15(2) of the Act outlines requirements for a request which include:

- it must be in writing, and
- it must state that it is an application for the purposes of the Act, and
- it must provide enough information for Council to reasonably identify the document, and
- it must provide details of how notices under the Act may be sent to the applicant.

The prescribed fee for applications under the Act is outlined in Council's Fees and Charges Schedule which can be found on Council's website, www.loddon.vic.gov.au, under Our Documents / Financial Reports / Current Fees and Charges.

Designated Officer

The name and designation of the officer with authority to make a decision in relation to a request is:

Mrs Jude Holt

Director Corporate Services & Freedom of Information Officer

Telephone: (03) 5494 1207

Email: jholt@loddon.vic.gov.au

Requests

During the year, Council received seven requests under the Act. The following table outlines the summary of how they were processed:

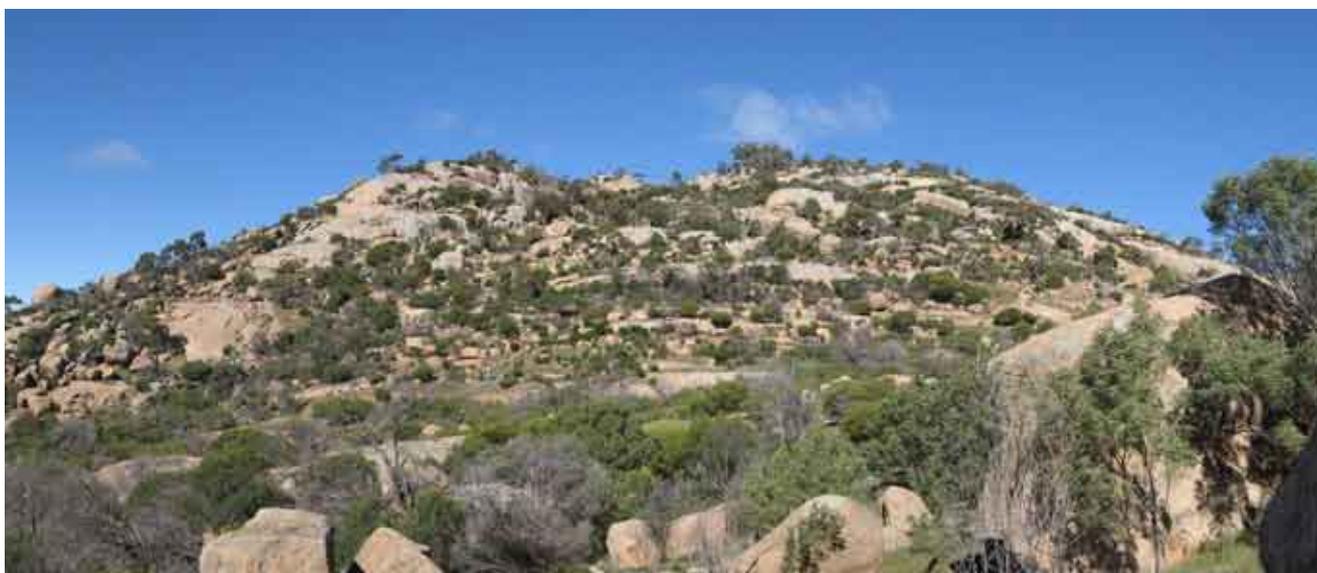
Details	No.
Access granted in full	2
Access granted in part	0
Access denied	0
Request withdrawn	0
Request where no documents existed, applicant advised	1
Request transferred to another authority, applicant advised	1
Request outside the Act, applicant advised	3
Total applications	7

Information Privacy Act 2000

The objectives of the Information Privacy Act 2000 (Act) are to balance the protection of an individual's personal information with public access to personal information and to promote responsible and transparent handling of personal information in the public sector.

Council is committed to the principles of the Information Privacy Act 2000 and to protecting an individual's right to privacy.

For the year 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014, there were no breaches of the Act by Council.



Mount Korong is a landmark in Loddon Shire.

Protected Disclosure Act 2012

The Whistleblowers Protection Act 2001 was repealed on 10 February 2013, with the introduction of the Protected Disclosure Act 2012.

The Protected Disclosure Act 2012 continues the objectives of the Whistleblowers Protection Act 2001 to encourage and facilitate the making of disclosures of improper conduct by public officers and public bodies and establish a system for matters to be investigated.

The Protected Disclosure Act 2012 also provides new mechanisms for making disclosures about improper conduct within the public sector.

Reporting the Act

Under Section 70 of the Protected Disclosure Act 2012, Council must provide information pertaining to activities under the Act in the Annual Report each year.

That information includes:

- how to access procedures established under Part 9 of the Act
- the number of disclosures notified to IBAC under Section 21(2) during the financial year.

In response to this requirement:

- the Protected Disclosure Procedure can be found on Council's website, www.loddon.vic.gov.au, under About Us / Our Council / Governance / Protected Disclosure
- no disclosures were notified to IBAC under section 21(2) of the Act from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014.

Council's Protected Disclosure Procedure references IBAC's guidelines for making and handling protected disclosures and protected disclosure welfare management.

Full copies of IBAC's Guidelines can be found at:

<http://www.ibac.vic.gov.au/resources/protected-disclosures>

Protected Disclosure Co-ordinator

The IBAC Guidelines require a public office to have a Protected Disclosure Co-ordinator, who will have a central role in managing protected disclosures.

The name and designation of Council's officer to whom Protected Disclosure Act matters are referred is:

Mrs Jude Holt

Director Corporate Services & Protected Disclosure Co-ordinator

Telephone: (03) 5494 1207

Email: jholt@loddon.vic.gov.au

In accordance with Council's Protected Disclosure Procedure, disclosures can also be made to Council's Chief Executive Officer.

Victorian Health Records Act 2001

Loddon Shire collects health data, particularly in the community service area, to be used solely for the primary purpose for which it is collected or directly related purposes.

Council may disclose this information to other allied health professionals for continuity of care. If a referral to an allied health professional is required, consent is obtained unless exempted by other legislation.

Carers Recognition Act 2012

The Carers Recognition Act 2012 defines every council in Victoria as a "public service care agency" and therefore a "care support organisation".

As a consequence, councils are required to comply with the Act and to report on this in their annual reports from 2012/2013 and thereafter.

This reporting requirement impacts across a wide range of Council activities, including human resources, HACC, aged and disability services, leisure and recreation, community services and family and children's services.

Council has taken all practicable measures to comply with its responsibilities outlined in the Act.

Council has promoted the principles of the Act to people in care relationships who receive Council services, to people in care relationships and to the wider community by distributing printed material through relevant Council services, displaying posters at Council community venues and providing information to organisations represented in Council and community networks.

Council has also taken all practicable measures to ensure that staff, Council agents and volunteers working for us are informed about the principles and obligations of the Act by including information on the care relationship in Council induction and training programs for staff working in Home and Community Care and disability services.

Council has also done all it can to review and modify policies, procedures and supports to include recognition of the carer relationship.

Best Value

Under the Local Government Act 1989, Council must comply with the Best Value Principles and must report annually to the community on what it has done to ensure that it has given effect to these principles.



Melville Caves, in Kooyoora State Park, is a popular tourist destination.

Section 208B(a):

Quality and Cost Standards

The services delivered to the Loddon community are provided through a range of methods. Council has a strong preference for delivering service by using its own resources, including its own labour, plant and equipment.

This strategy provides Council with the opportunity to maximise control over its service delivery and the quality and cost standards of the products and services it delivers and, above all, ensures that Council is able to maximise local content and local employment engaged in the delivery of our services.

Section 208B(b):

Responsiveness

Council strives to ensure that services are responsive to the needs of the Loddon community.

In 2013/2014, Council planned on a return to “normal” service delivery and resized its workforce according to this new level.

Council has also sought to look after its long-term sustainability and adopted a long-term financial strategy in 2013/2014.

This will ensure that Council has the resources necessary to meet its community’s needs.

Section 208B(c):

Accessibility

Council receives regular feedback about the accessibility of its services. More and more, we find our community expects to be able to access services provided by Council in a number of different ways.

We find that some people prefer to access information online, while others are unable to do so through lack of home computing or internet capabilities. Some individuals require information to be provided in hard copy, while others simply wish to receive verbal advice.

Council continues to look for ways to improve the dissemination of information, access to services and the accessibility of our staff to the Loddon community.

In attempting to support the delivery of services through a number of different media, Council is constantly mindful of the cost pressures that operating multiple delivery platforms causes.

Council’s investment in its Rural Access program continues to improve the accessibility of our services and other services provided by the private sector.

Section 208B(d):

Continuous Improvement

Council’s website has been redesigned to ensure that information to our community is as accessible as possible.

Council has also undertaken extensive work in reviewing the delegations provided by this organisation to its staff and continues to refine the delegations provided to committees established under Section 86 of the Local Government Act.

Section 208B(e):

Regular Consultation

Council has found that successful consultation with the community requires significant effort and a diversity of approach. A great many people in our community value the weekly Mayoral Column as a source of information and, similarly, look forward to Council’s quarterly Loddon Bulletin.

In 2013/2014, Council continued its investment in media resources and the Shire has been able to engage suitably qualified and experienced staff to assist with the crafting of our messages to the community.

This investment has led to a better uptake of information provided by Council and has promoted a stronger engagement by our community on local issues.

Where possible, Council has maintained its regular consultation processes, including attendance at community meetings – in particular, attending development association and community planning meetings – and supported the various committees of management that operate throughout the municipality.

It is likely that Council will continue to invest in quality media resources.

Section 208B(f):

Regular Reporting

Council continues to report on its activities to the Loddon community through various avenues. Council clearly uses its Annual Report as a formal reporting technique, but also provides regular updates to our community through the quarterly Loddon Bulletins, the weekly Mayoral Columns which are circulated to a wide range of media outlets and through media releases which are commonly picked up by the press circulating throughout Loddon.

Council also uses the many community newsletters to get information out to specific parts of the municipality.

Information to be made available to the public

Under various sections of the Local Government Act 1989, specific information is to be made available to the public.

Council must make available for public inspection documents containing the following prescribed matters:

- a) Details of current allowances fixed for the Mayor, Lord Mayor (if any) and Councillors under section 74 or 74A of the Act;
- b) The total annual remuneration for all senior officers in respect of the current financial year and the previous financial year, set out in a list that states –
 - (i) Ranges of remuneration of senior officers, where the difference between the lower amount and the higher amount in each range must not exceed \$10,000; and
 - (ii) The number of senior officers whose total annual remuneration falls within the ranges referred to in sub-paragraph (i);
- c) Details of overseas or interstate travel (with the exception of interstate travel by land for less than three days) undertaken in an official capacity by Councillors or any member of Council staff in the previous 12 months, including the names of the Councillors or members of Council staff and the date, destination, purpose and total cost to Council of the overseas or interstate travel, including accommodation costs;
- d) Names of Council officers who were required to submit a return of interest during the financial year and the dates those returns were submitted;
- e) Names of Councillors who submitted returns of interest during the financial year and the dates those returns were submitted;
- f) Agendas for, and minutes of, ordinary and special meetings held in the previous 12 months kept under section 93 of the Act, except if the minutes relate to parts of meetings which have been closed to members of the public under section 89 of the Act;
- g) A list of all special committees established by Council and the purpose for which each committee was established;
- h) A list of all special committees established by Council which were abolished or ceased to function during the financial year;
- i) Minutes of meetings of special committees established under section 86 of the Act and held in the previous 12 months, except if the minutes relate to parts of meetings which have been closed to members of the public under section 89 of the Act;
- j) A register of delegations kept under sections 87 and 98 of the Act, including the dates on which the last reviews under sections 86(6) and 98(6) of the Act took place;



The 180m Pyramid Hill offers commanding views of the surrounding countryside.

- k) Submissions received in accordance with section 223 of the Act during the previous 12 months;
- l) Agreements to establish regional libraries under section 196 of the Act;
- m) Details of all property, finance and operating leases involving land, buildings, plant, computer equipment or vehicles entered into by Council as lessor or lessee, including the name of the other party to the lease and the terms and the value of the lease;
- n) A register of authorised officers appointed under section 224 of the Act;
- o) A list of donations and grants made by Council during the financial year, including the names of persons or bodies who have received a donation or grant and the amount of each donation or grant;
- p) A list of the names of the organisations of which the Council was a member during the financial year and details of all membership fees and other amounts and services provided during that year to each organisation by the Council;
- q) A list of contracts valued at \$100,000 (or such higher amount as is fixed from time to time under section 186(1) of the Act) or more –
 - (i) Which the Council entered into during the financial year without first engaging in a competitive process; and
 - (ii) Which are not contracts referred to in section 186(5) of the Act.

The information listed is held at Council's office in Wedderburn.

Local Laws

Council has five local laws in operation -

Municipal Government Local Law No.1 of 2007

Facilitates the good government of the Council, regulates and controls meetings and the use of the Council seal.

Streets and Roads Local Law No.2 of 2010

Provides for the management, control and regulation of roads and surrounding properties for the safety and convenience of road users.

Municipal Places Local Law No.3 of 2006

Allows people to enjoy the use of municipal places, controls and prevents nuisance behaviour, protects community assets and promotes the safe use of recreational facilities.

Environment Local Law No.4 of 2008

Provides a safe and healthy environment by regulating activities that may be dangerous or unsafe and provides services that enhance the quality of life in the municipal district.

Livestock Local Law No.5 of 2005

Provides for the control and welfare of livestock and to minimise the spread of disease, weeds and damage to road reserves in the interests of road safety.

Copies of the local laws are available for inspection on Council's website, www.loddon.vic.gov.au, or at Council's office in Wedderburn.

Strategic documents adopted

During the year, Council endorsed the following policies, guidelines, strategies and plans:

July

- Councillor Code of Conduct

August

- Levels of Authority

September

- Review of Neighbourhood Safer Places
- Loddon Visitor Information Centre Business Plan

October

- Recreation Reserve Oval Mower Assistance Policy
- Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013/2017
- Loddon Shire Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2013/2018
- Swimming Pool Development Plan 2014/2018

December

- Social Media Strategy
- Community Care Strategy

March

- Long-Term Financial Plan
- Strategic Document, Policy and Procedure Framework

Committees appointed by Council

Under section 86 of the Local Government Act 1989, Council may establish special committees comprising Councillors, Council staff and other persons.

The purpose of establishing a committee is to delegate some of Council's functions and responsibilities to a local level.

Council's committees are made up of dedicated community members who give their time and energy to the committees they represent.

Some committees manage facilities, while others exist to promote tourism and economic development within the Shire.

By instrument of delegation, Council may delegate any of its functions, duties or powers to a special committee, although there are certain functions that cannot be delegated and these are listed under the Act.

Council respects and appreciates the contribution made by our volunteers which enriches our community and provides a much broader range of services and activities than Council could provide on its own.

Council's current list of Section 86 committees of management include:

- Boort Aerodrome Committee of Management
- Boort Development Committee of Management.
- Boort Memorial Hall Committee of Management
- Boort Park Committee of Management
- Boort Business and Tourism Council Committee of Management
- Bridgewater on Loddon Development Committee of Management
- Bridgewater on Loddon Memorial Hall Committee of Management
- Campbells Forest Hall Committee of Management
- Dingee Progress Association Committee of Management
- Donaldson Park Committee of Management
- East Loddon Community Centre Committee of Management
- Inglewood Community Sports Centre Committee of Management
- Inglewood Lions Community Elderly Persons Units Committee of Management
- Inglewood Riding Club Committee of Management
- Inglewood Town Hall Committee of Management
- Jones Eucalyptus Distillery Site Committee of Management



Wedderburn Community House progress.

- Kingower Development and Tourism Committee of Management
- Korong Vale Mechanics Hall Committee of Management
- Korong Vale Sports Centre Committee of Management
- Little Lake Boort Committee of Management
- Loddon Southern Tourism & Development Committee of Management
- Mitiamo Municipal Recreation Reserve Committee of Management
- Pyramid Hill Memorial Hall Committee of Management
- Pyramid Hill Swimming Pool Committee of Management
- Serpentine Bowls and Tennis Pavilion Reserve Committee of Management
- Wedderburn Community Centre Committee of Management.
- Wedderburn Engine Park Committee of Management
- Wedderburn Mechanics & Literary Institute Committee of Management
- Wedderburn Tourism Committee of Management
- Yando Public Hall Committee of Management

During the year, Council disbanded the Boort Resource Information Centre Committee of Management.

Grants

During the 2013/2014 financial year, Council gave grants and funding to the following clubs:

- 'About Boort' newsletter
- Bears Lagoon Serpentine Football Club
- Bears Lagoon Tennis Club
- Boort Bowls Club
- Boort Cemetery Trust
- Boort Community Centre
- Boort Historical Society
- Boort Lakeside Croquet Club
- Boort Memorial Hall
- Boort Netball Club
- Boort Power Boat and Ski Club
- Boort Scouts
- Boort Tennis Club
- Bridgewater on Loddon Development
- Bridgewater Recreation Reserve
- Campbells Forest Hall
- Dingee Bowling Club
- Donaldson Park, Wedderburn
- Dunolly & District Field & Game
- Eddington Community Centre
- Inglewood & District Lawn Tennis Association
- Inglewood Community Sports Centre
- Inglewood Golf Club
- Korong Vale Bowling Club
- Loddon Plains Landcare Network
- Loddon Shire Development Committees of Management
- Mitchell Park, Pyramid Hill
- Mitiamo Football & Netball Club
- Newbridge Recreation Reserve
- North Central Football League
- Recreation Reserves in Loddon Shire
- Rheola Cemetery Trust
- Serpentine Bowling Club
- State Emergency Services
- Tarnagulla Community Centre
- Tarnagulla Community Planning
- Tarnagulla Urban Fire Brigade
- 'The Korong Newsletter'
- Wedderburn Bowling Club
- Wedderburn College
- Wedderburn Community House
- Wedderburn Golf Club
- Wedderburn Hockey Club
- Wedderburn Men's Shed
- Wedderburn Tourism

Events Sponsorship Scheme

- Boort Agricultural & Pastoral Society
- Boort Bowling Club
- Boort Development
- Boort Golf Club
- Boort Indoor Bias Bowls
- Boort Ladies Bowls Club
- Boort Ladies Golf Club
- Boort Lawn Tennis
- Boort Business and Tourism Council
- Bridgewater on Loddon Bowling Club
- Bridgewater on Loddon Development
- Bridgewater on Loddon Football Club
- Calivil Bowling Club
- Calivil Golf Club
- Dingee Progress Association
- Dunolly & District Field & Game
- East Loddon Historical Society
- Inglewood & Districts Health Service
- Inglewood Bowling Club
- Inglewood Development & Tourism
- Inglewood Lions
- Inglewood Riding Club
- Jarklin Golf Club
- Jones Eucalyptus Distillery
- Korong Vale Bowling Club
- Loddon Darts
- Loddon Shire Nature Tourism
- Loddon Southern Tourism & Development
- Pyramid Hill Bowling Club
- Rheola Charity Carnival
- Wedderburn Band Cricket Club
- Wedderburn Bowling Club
- Wedderburn Community House
- Wedderburn Golf Club
- Wedderburn Harness Racing Club
- Wedderburn Historical Engines & Machinery Society
- Wedderburn Men's Shed
- Wedderburn Tourism

Youth Development

- Dingee Progress Association
- Loddon Valley Netball Association
- Wedderburn College

COUNCIL CONTACTS

MUNICIPAL OFFICES

41 High Street, Wedderburn, 3518
 Local call: 1300 365 200
 Phone: (03) 5494 1200
 Fax: (03) 5494 3003

37 Peppercorn Way, Serpentine, 3517
 Phone: (03) 5437 7999
 Fax: (03) 5437 8407

If you are deaf, or have a hearing impairment or speech impairment, contact us through the **National Relay Service**

- TTY users phone 133 677, then ask for 03 5494 1200
- Speak and Listen users phone 1300 555 727, then ask for (03) 5494 1200
- Internet relay users connect to the NRS, then ask for (03) 5494 1200

Office hours: 8.15am - 4.45pm
 Monday to Friday (except public holidays)
 Internet: www.loddon.vic.gov.au
 Email: loddon@loddon.vic.gov.au

MUNICIPAL TIPS

Boort Landfill, off Boort-Quambatook Road
 Tuesday 8.00am - noon
 Sunday 1.00pm - 5.00pm

Dingee Transfer Station, Lawry's Road
 1st April – 30th September
 Third Sunday 10.00am - 2.00pm
 1st October – 31st March
 First Wednesday 8.00am - noon
 Third Sunday 10.00am - 2.00pm

Inglewood Landfill, off Inglewood-Salisbury Road
 Wednesday 8.00am - noon
 Saturday 8.00am - noon

Newbridge Landfill, off Newbridge-Tarnagulla Road
 Wednesday 1.00pm - 5.00pm
 Sunday 1.00pm - 5.00pm

Pyramid Hill Landfill, off Cemetery Road
 Tuesday 1.00pm - 5.00pm
 Sunday 8.00am - noon

Wedderburn Transfer Station, off Godfrey Street
 Thursday 8.00am - noon
 Sunday 8.00am - noon

MUNICIPAL LIBRARY

North Central Goldfields Regional Library Corporation
 HQ 259 Hargreaves Street, Bendigo, 3550
 PO Box 887, Bendigo, 3552

Telephone: (03) 5449 2790
 Email: mobile@ncgrl.vic.gov.au
www.ncgrl.vic.gov.au/libraries/mobile

Mobile Library timetable

Monday	
Dingee	9.45am - 10.15am
Mitiamo	10.30am - 11.15am
Tuesday	
Bridgewater	9.00am - 10.00am
Inglewood	10.30am - 12.30pm
Wedderburn	2.00pm - 4.30pm
Wednesday	
Korong Vale	9.30am - 10.30am
Boort	11.00am - 1.00pm
Thursday	
Newbridge	9.00am - 9.30am
Tarnagulla	10.00am - 10.30am
Moliagul	11.00am - 11.30am

MATERNAL & CHILD HEALTH CENTRES

Boort Maternal & Child Health Centre
 King Street, Boort, 3537
 Mobile: 0409 166 891
 Phone: (03) 5455 2192
 Thursday 9.00am - 4.00pm

Dingee Maternal & Child Health Centre
 Bush Nursing Centre, King Street, Dingee, 3571
 Mobile: 0409 166 891
 Phone: (03) 5436 8274
 Monday, weeks 1 & 3 9.00am - 4.00pm

Inglewood Maternal & Child Health Centre
 75 Grant Street, Inglewood, 3517
 Mobile: 0409 166 891
 Phone: (03) 5438 3192
 Tuesday 9.00am - 4.00pm

Pyramid Hill Maternal & Child Health Centre
 Northern District Community Health, Victoria Street, Pyramid Hill, 3575
 Mobile: 0409 166 891
 Phone: (03) 5455 7065
 Monday weeks 2 & 4 9.00am - 4.00pm

Serpentine Maternal & Child Health Centre
 Chapel Street, Serpentine, 3517
 Mobile: 0409 166 891
 Phone: (03) 5437 7906
 Wednesday weeks 1 & 3
 9.00am - 4.00pm

Wedderburn Community Centre
 24 Wilson Street, Wedderburn
 Mobile: 0409 166 891
 Phone: (03) 5494 3490
 Wednesday, weeks 2 & 4
 9.00am - 3.30pm

KINDERGARTENS

* All preschool hours are from 8.45am - 1.45pm

Boort Preschool
 123 - 127 Godfrey Street, Boort, 3537
 Telephone: (03) 5455 2292
 Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday
Three-year-old group
 Fridays 9.00am - 11.00am

Dingee Preschool
 785 Dingee-Serpentine Road, Dingee, 3571
 Telephone: (03) 5436 8401
 Monday, Wednesday & Thursday
Three-year-old group
 Tuesday 10.00am - 12.30pm

Inglewood Kindergarten
 75 Grant Street, Inglewood, 3517
 Telephone: (03) 5438 3533
 Tuesday, Thursday & Friday

Pyramid Hill Preschool
 67 Kelly Street, Pyramid Hill, 3575
 Telephone: (03) 5455 7230
 Mobile: 0497 903 467
 Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday
Three-year-old group
 Tuesday 8.45am - 1.45pm

Wedderburn Kindergarten
 77 Ridge Street, Wedderburn, 3518
 Telephone: (03) 5494 3183
 Mobile: 0458 943 183
 Wednesday, Thursday & Friday
Three-year-old group
 Wednesday 8.45am - 11.45am



Postal Address

PO Box 21 Wedderburn Vic 3518

Telephone

(03) 5494 1200

Fax

(03) 5494 3003

Email

loddon@loddon.vic.gov.au

Website

www.loddon.vic.gov.au

Municipal Office

37 - 41 High Street Wedderburn Vic 3518

Office Hours

Monday to Friday 8.15am - 4.45pm