



Government collaboration delivers for cross-border community

A collaboration of funding from the Australian Government, State Governments in Queensland and New South Wales and from the Balonne Shire Council and Moree Plains Shire Council has delivered significant improvements in recreational and tourism opportunities for the cross-border town of Mungindi.

The joint funding has delivered significant upgrades to the Mungindi River Park on the Barwon River totalling \$748,000, including new accessible amenities, parking, playground facilities, barbecue area and shelters, disability access and footpaths, landscaping, solar lighting, bollards and kerbing.

This project was proudly joint funded by the Australian Government under the Murray-Darling Basin Economic Development Program, the New South Wales Government, the Queensland Government and the Balonne Shire Council and

Moree Plains Shire Council.

Balonne Shire Council Mayor Samantha O'Toole said this joint funding collaboration from all levels of government is a great example of how great local outcomes can be achieved when governments combine their efforts.

"The Barwon River is an incredible natural asset, and the upgrade of the Mungindi River Park really does help to create a more welcoming entry to Queensland, which is in line with the various other efforts of Balonne Shire Council to create more welcoming entry points into the Shire," Mayor O'Toole said.

"These upgrades to the Mungindi River Park will also greatly benefit the local Mungindi community on both sides of the border in terms of liveability and improved amenities and accessibility to attract more tourism to the area.

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What's On

AUSTRALIA DAY CELEBRATIONS BOLLON

Join us for breakfast and morning tea to celebrate our local champions and diverse community on Australia Day 2023. Breakfast served from 8am, award presentations will start at 9am, followed by a community morning tea and music.

WHEN: Thurs 26 Jan, from 8am

WHERE: The Park, Bollon

AUSTRALIA DAY CELEBRATIONS ST GEORGE

Enjoy free entry to the St George main pool and splash park between 12pm and 4pm. Free sausage sizzle provided from 12pm to 2pm by the Lions Club of St George.

WHEN: Thurs 26 Jan, 12pm to 4pm

WHERE: St George Pool

AUSTRALIA DAY LONG TABLE ON THE BALONNE

Riversands Long Table on the Balonne is held amongst the vines to showcase regional food and wine. A five-course extravaganza will be paired with Riversands medal winning white, red, sparkling and fortified wines. Live music by popular entertainer Cathy Drummond. For more information visit www.riversandswines.com/long-table-balonne

WHEN: Thurs 26 Jan, 6pm to 10pm

WHERE: Riversands Winery, St George

GREAT AUSTRALIAN BITES

Join us for an afternoon of home-grown entertainment and a feast of local food and produce.

BYO, no glass allowed, all wine must be in a sleeve/cooler.

WHEN: Sat 28 Jan, 5pm to 8pm

WHERE: The Hub, St George

BATTLE ON THE BALONNE

Battle on the Balonne Triathlon series includes Olympic, sprint, sprint teams, corporate/business/sporting clubs challenge, junior events and a 5km fun run. For more information visit www.battleonthebalonne.com

WHEN: Sat 25 Feb to Sun 26 Feb

WHERE: The Terrace, St George

Got a story, event or notice?

Tell us! We can include your information in the newsletter.

Phone: 07 4620 8888

Email: media@balonne.qld.gov.au

2 Balonne Bulletin

A message from the Mayor

As we enter this new year of 2023, it is with a great sense of pride and accomplishment that I reflect on all we managed to achieve over the past year, given the extended period of flooding and disasters that our region has endured throughout 2022.

Our Local Disaster Management Group played a continual role throughout 2022, monitoring and acting to address flooding throughout our Shire. The tireless efforts of everyone involved spanned across all levels of Government and was a heartening sight to witness and to be involved with. Thank you to everyone who contributed.

Cleaning up the day-to-day impacts of the floods has clearly been a stressful year for Council's resources, and we have spent many thousands of hours keeping our road network functioning as best we can.

Since our Local Disaster Management Group finally stood down in December, the remnants and ramifications of that flooding remain a central focus for us as a Council and community to address and fix.

I want to let everyone know that we, as a Council are not just here during the disaster, we are here with you every step of the way to fix the damage created by the flood events. As much as I am proud of what we have achieved to date, I also feel a great sense of anticipation and trepidation about the ongoing challenges we continue facing to recover from the damage left behind and the amount of disaster recovery work that lay before us.

To give you a brief perspective of just how monumental the amount of disaster recovery works is, we have somewhere in the order of around \$100 million of works in the pipeline over the next 12 to 18 months and have around 1,600km of damaged roads across our Shire that are in need of remediation.

As a Council with a small population covering a large area, most of our funding comes from grants that we've coordinated from State and Federal Governments, and we are constantly prioritising areas of greatest need in line with our Transport Management Plan.

Over recent months, we have submitted numerous applications for the most needed roadways that have incurred damage, and we are working closely with State and Federal Governments to expedite funding so we can deliver permanent longer-term solutions to any damage as soon as possible. In the in-



terim, our Infrastructure Services team has been working diligently to address areas of concern as soon as possible.

On a brighter note, we have now finished works on the Mungindi River Park Upgrades and it has truly been an awesome example of what governments from all levels can achieve when we work together.

The rejuvenation of this park at the entrance to our state has involved funding from the Australian Government, State Governments in Queensland and New South Wales and from the Balonne Shire Council. By working together, we have delivered significant improvements in recreational and tourism opportunities for the cross-border town of Mungindi.

These upgrades to the Mungindi River Park will greatly benefit the local Mungindi community on both sides of the border in terms of liveability and in terms of improved amenities and accessibility to attract more tourism to the area.

I was so happy to hear of the Christmas celebrations that occurred in the improved park facilities during this past festive season. I hope to hear of and participate in many other such celebrations there in the years ahead.

On the same topic of government collaboration, I am pleased to announce that the Balonne Shire Council and the New South Wales Government have reached agreement on a \$1.5 million funding package to secure ongoing drinking water supply for the residents of Mungindi during future severe weather events.

The funding will establish a new artesian bore on the Queensland side of the border to provide an additional water supply for the cross-border town of Mungindi.

It is my hope that these outstanding examples of positive government collaboration set the tone for a positive and prosperous year ahead for our Shire.

Samantha O'Toole

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“During this past festive season, locals in Mungindi held a Christmas event in the upgraded park, which is a great example of the works already helping to bring the community together.

“The new footpath extension will also greatly improve connectivity between these new amenities and the town on either side of the river, to improve tourist access to the town centre.

“Prior to the footpath extension, tourists staying at the park or locals wishing to walk to the river park from across the border had no walking path, other than the bridge, so this has vastly improved pedestrian safety.

“The next step in improving the amenities in this area involves the \$300,000 construction of a new boat ramp at the site to further improve local tourism opportunities by providing boat access to the beautiful Barwon River.

“The new boat ramp will improve safety and reduce environmental damage to the riverbank with the Moree Shire Council securing funding from the New South Wales Government and the Balonne Shire Council set to construct and install the 20-metre boat ramp at the park, providing a site to launch small vessels.”

Roads funding from disasters is on its way

Over the past 14 months, the Balonne Shire has been impacted by several severe weather events that have created major issues for our community, our businesses, and our Council infrastructure, which are eligible for Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) funding.

These severe weather events include:

- Central, Southern and Western Queensland Rainfall and Flooding, 10 November - 3 December 2021
- South East Queensland Rainfall and Flooding, 22 February - 5 April 2022
- Southern Queensland Flooding, 6 - 20 May 2022
- Southern Queensland Severe Weather, October - November 2022

The Balonne Shire Council played a key role in the Local Disaster Management Group throughout this time, in collaboration with a range of other government bodies to monitor and help address community impacts from these severe weather events.

Balonne Shire Mayor Samantha O’Toole said Council has also invested a great deal of hours and expense to deliver emergency works that addressed disaster impacts to our road network.

“We really want to assure everyone that as a Council, we are not just here during the disaster, we are here with the residents of Balonne every step of the way to clean up the mess as well.

“These severe weather events have caused damage to around 1,600km of roads across our Shire that need remediation and created a pipeline of around \$100 million in road works over the next 12 to 18 months.

“We have commenced Di-

saster Recovery Funding Arrangements for this work with the Queensland Reconstruction Authority to address road impacts, but this process can take time.”

The Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) is a joint funding initiative of the Australian and State Governments.

The arrangements provide disaster relief and infrastructure restoration to help communities recover from the effects of natural disasters and terrorist acts.

In Queensland, this program is managed on a whole-of-government basis by the Queensland Reconstruction Authority (QRA).

Activation of the DRFA allows for eligible expenditure to be reimbursed by QRA to activated local governments.

Balonne Shire Council is eligible to apply to the Queensland Reconstruction Authority (QRA) for funding relief measures for these activated events:

- Counter Disaster Operations (CDO)
- Emergency Works for essential public assets (EW)
- Reconstruction of essential public assets (REPA)

To date, Balonne Shire Council has completed Counter Disaster Operations and Emergency works for all four events. Counter Disaster Operations have related to vector control and performance of levees during flooding to protect the general public during and immediately after an event.

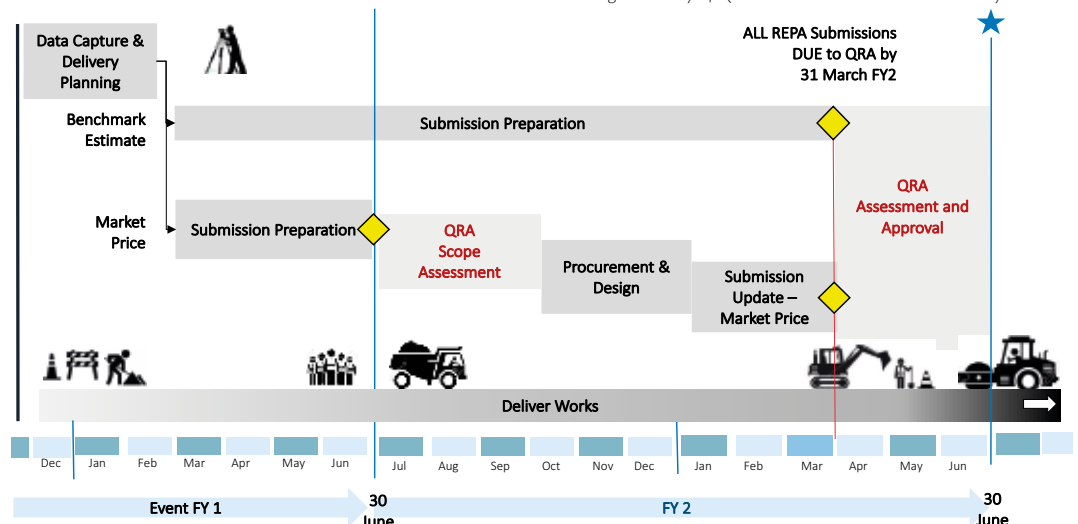
Whilst emergency works are temporary fixes, more permanent reconstruction works, referred to as Reconstruction of Essential Public Assets (REPA), require significant funding and involve returning an essential public asset to its pre-disaster function. REPA works relating to the December 21 and April 22 events have been captured and submitted to QRA for assessment.

Once approved, reconstruction of the works will commence and are required to be completed by 30 June 2024.

The work packages relating to the May 2022 event have all been scoped. The final package of work was submitted to QRA for approval by mid December 2022.

The image shows a typical timeline for scoping, planning and approval of work packages up to the point of construction on the road.

Image courtesy of Queensland Reconstruction Authority.



Cross-border funding agreed for the Mungindi Water Security Project

Balonne Shire Council and the New South Wales Government have reached agreement on a collaborative funding arrangement to secure the ongoing water supply for the residents of the cross-border town of Mungindi on the border of Queensland and New South Wales.

The project will provide an additional secure water supply for the town by establishing an artesian bore on the Queensland side of Mungindi, improving water quality, supply and pressure on both sides of the border.

Funding for the project totals \$1,475,852.00, which includes a contribution of \$418,713 from Balonne Shire Council and \$1,057,139 of grant funding

from the New South Wales Government.

Detailed investigation work and a business case have already been developed by a consultant hydrologist. Once State Government approval is finalised, Council will begin community consultation along with detailed designs of the most suitable options before construction gets underway. It is anticipated that final commissioning will conclude by July 2024.

Balonne Shire Mayor Samantha O'Toole said this will be a unique opportunity to support Mungindi, which is located on both sides of the New South Wales and Queensland state border.

"Currently the township of Mungindi draws its water supply from the Moree

Plains Shire Reservoir in New South Wales," Mayor O'Toole said.

"Establishing an artesian bore on Mungindi's Queensland side supports our commitment to develop sustainable, secure and healthy water resources for our communities.

"This project will improve water security and supply, which will benefit Mungindi on both sides of the border, eliminating the risk of water shortages that are critical for population retention, as well as agricultural and tourism development.

"We will continue to keep the local community informed as the project progresses," Mayor O'Toole said.

Council appoints Workforce Development Officer

Balonne Shire Council has created a new position for a Workforce Development Officer to boost workforce participation, job opportunities and to assess and address any workforce shortages across the Shire.

This new position will essentially provide a concierge service connecting local employers and job service providers with support services, new grants programs and jobseekers and to align a local skilled workforce that matches the needs of the local business community across the Balonne Shire.

This new position will help to build on the nationally awarded success of our collaboration with Country Universities Centre to improve educational opportunities by also aiming to improve the creation and access to job opportunities in the Shire. Council has appointed Angelina Niven to the role.

Balonne Shire Council Mayor Samantha O'Toole said that some of the biggest challenges facing our shire include retaining people in our communities, upskilling our workforce in a changing environment and attracting skilled labour.

"We've received national praise for our efforts to improve access to educational opportunities in the region, and this role creates the natural next step of aiming to improve access to more job opportunities in the Balonne

Shire," Mayor O'Toole said.

"Angelina will play a key role in developing our skilled workforce and supporting current and future economic growth across the shire.

"We are encouraging any business owners, potential future business owners, service providers and jobseekers to contact Angelina directly for an initial discussion regarding workforce requirements, challenges and to seek any assistance."

For employers, some of the programs and initiatives offered will assist with recruitment and retention training; promoting employment opportunities; accessing training and skill development for staff; and help with accessing workforce development services and funding.

For jobseekers, this program will assist with outlining current and emerging education and training opportunities; available employment opportunities and career pathways; and skills development and experience.

Angelina can be contacted by calling 4620 8839 or 0499 816 151 or emailing angelina.niven@balonne.qld.gov.au.

The project is proudly funded by the Queensland Government through its Growing Workforce Participation Fund.



Angelina Niven, Workforce Development Officer - Balonne Shire Council

Campground upgrades for Thallon

Thallon's campground is set to receive a major overhaul in line with the Thallon Campground Masterplan to create a more user-friendly and attractive facility for the local tourist market.

The upgrades will include a more functional and user-friendly layout, the construction of picnic shelters, a communal camp kitchen that will be open to community and visitor usage as well as improved accessibility with a footpath connecting amenities and the kitchen.

The construction work will also see upgrades to existing power mushroom heads and installation of additional mushroom heads throughout the campground.

Landscaping will form part of the upgrades with the installation of an irrigation system, greenscaping and tree planting to beautify the area.

Works have commenced and are expected to be finalised by around July 2023.



An artist's impression of the communal camp kitchen planned for Thallon campgrounds.

Community Consultation for Bollon Remembrance Wall

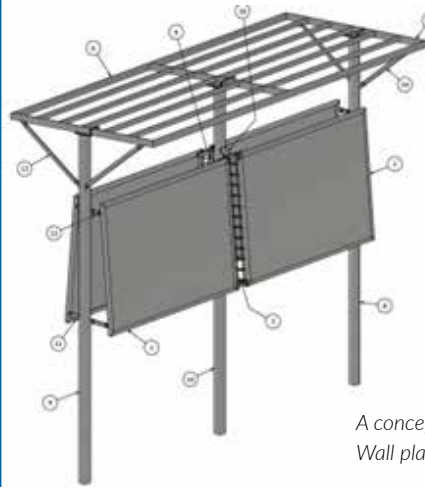
Thanks to a generous donation by the Wilson family of Bollon, a Remembrance Wall is being planned for construction at Bollon Cemetery.

To support this donation, Balonne Shire Council invites residents to participate in a community consultation session to have their say on the placement of this new addition to the cemetery.

Balonne Shire Council will be in contact with the local community to arrange a consultation with Council representatives to help determine the most appropriate location.

The Balonne Shire Council acknowledges there are many people that may not live in the area but have connections to

the Bollon Cemetery that may like to give feedback regarding the location of the remembrance wall. If any residents are aware of anyone outside the Shire who has a connection to the cemetery, they should encourage them to get in touch with Council.



A concept drawing of the Remembrance Wall planned for Bollon Cemetery.

FREE ENTRY!

GREAT AUSTRALIAN BITES

SATURDAY 28 JANUARY 2023
5-8 PM | ST GEORGE HUB

JOIN US FOR AN AFTERNOON OF HOME-GROWN ENTERTAINMENT AND A FEAST OF LOCAL FOODS

qld.gov.au/australiaday australiadayqueensland australiadayqld greastralianbites

Presented by In partnership with



AUSTRALIA DAY



THURS JAN 26

JOIN US FOR BREAKFAST & MORNING TEA TO CELEBRATE OUR LOCAL CHAMPIONS & OUR DIVERSE COMMUNITY ON AUSTRALIA DAY 2023

THE PARK BOLLON START FROM **8:00AM**

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL 07 4620 8888 OR EMAIL CDO@BALONNE.QLD.GOV.AU

Out and About in Balonne

Council supported numerous community Christmas events across the region, giving residents an opportunity to enjoy a festive-season celebration with family and friends. Here are a few snaps from recent events.



2023 Council Meetings

January							February							March						
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15	16	17	18	19	20	21	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
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30																				

July							August							September						
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30	31																			

October							November							December						
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ENVIRONMENT COLUMN

Prevent the spread of Parthenium Weed

Invasive weeds are a constant source of attention for our Environment team and Parthenium Weed is of particular interest during the current summer season.

Parthenium is recognised as a Weed of National Significance and a category 3 restricted invasive plant under the Biosecurity Act 2014. The Act requires everyone to take all reasonable and practical measures to minimise the biosecurity risks associated with invasive plants under their control.

Parthenium normally germinates in spring and early summer, produces flowers and seeds throughout its life and dies around late autumn. Parthenium seeds can spread via water, vehicles, machinery, stock, feral and native animals and in feed and seed.

Parthenium costs Australia's beef industry \$16.5 million per year and cropping industries several million dollars per year. We take the control of this invasive weed very seriously in the Balonne Shire and have detailed our strategic actions to limit and control the spread of this weed in our Biosecurity Plan 2019-2024.

When Council recognises any incidence of Parthenium Weed infestation, we act to alleviate the spread on Council land, road reserves and stock routes. Recently, we became aware of a localised incidence of Parthenium in the Shire and acted quickly to treat the road reserve to limit the spread of this invasive weed.

If you have noticed any incidence of Parthenium Weed on Council's road reserves or stock routes, please contact the Environment team on 4620 8888.

For further information on Parthenium Weed contact Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23 or visit biosecurity.qld.gov.au.





ROADS UPDATE

Works/Project currently underway:

ROAD MAINTENANCE PERFORMANCE CONTRACT WORKS

- Slashing on various main roads
- Rest area servicing across numerous sites
- Surface Correction Emulsion
- Flood damage works on Castlereagh Hwy (Dirranbandi to Hebel) - stabilised patches on flood-affected crossings.

TRANSPORT AND MAIN ROADS PROJECTS:

- Carnarvon Highway/NoondooThallon Intersection – culvert installation adjacent to GrainCorp. Line-marking scheduled for Feb 23.
- Balonne Highway Heavy Vehicle Breakdown Pad – line marking and signages works
- Balonne Highway Pavement Rehabilitation – scheduled to begin on March 23.

LOCAL ROADS

- Mulga Downs – Bollon Crew
- Minnum Road – St George Crew
- Ramillies Road – Dirranbandi Crew

CALLING ALL COMMUNITY GROUPS!

WE WANT TO HELP YOU!

ARE YOU A NOT-FOR-PROFIT OR COMMUNITY ORGANISATION BASED IN THE BALONNE SHIRE?

WE CAN HELP WITH:

- GRANTS UP TO \$3000
- EVENT PLANNING
- EVENT PROMOTION
- DONATIONS
- IN-KIND ASSISTANCE

For more information call our Community Development team on 07 4620 8888 or email cdo@balonne.qld.gov.au

www.balonne.qld.gov.au/community/home

Do you have issues with wandering dogs?

Download the Snap, Send, Solve app and send Council a service request.

It's as easy as taking a photo and sending it to us with details of the owner if known, the location, time and your name and contact details.

This will allow us to investigate and respond to sightings of wandering dogs in our towns.

Balonne Shire Workforce Development Job Opportunities!

St George - Goondir Health Services | Part-Time Playgroup Facilitator (4 hrs p/w) x 1

\$32/hour
Apply online www.goondir.org.au/about/employment or email hr@goondir.org.au for an application form

St George - Goondir Health Services | Part-Time Playgroup Support Officer (4 hrs p/w) x 1

\$22/hour
Apply online www.goondir.org.au/about/employment or email hr@goondir.org.au for an application form

St George - Balonne Shire Council | Project Engineer

\$9K5-\$105K pa
Apply online <https://www.leadingroles.com.au/job/project-engineer-6/>

Connecting Workforce to Business in Balonne