

Message from General Manager



Welcome to our first community newsletter. The newsletter provides an overview of what your council is currently engaged in and will be issued every three months. More regular updates can be viewed on our website.

In our first edition it is important to provide an overview of your Council. The Council is made up of elected Councillors and staff. The

twelve Councillors are responsible for:

- Directing and controlling the affairs of Council in accordance with the Local Government Act;
- Allocating resources for the benefit of the area;
- Setting and reviewing Council's policies and objectives;
- Reviewing the performance of the Council and its delivery of services;
- Electing the Mayor and Deputy Mayor; and
- The appointment of the General Manager.

The General Manager is responsible for overseeing the day to day operations (including staff) and implementing Council decisions.

A feature of the newsletter is promotion of upcoming events. If you would like an upcoming event publicised please forward details to:

What's On
Muswellbrook Shire Council
PO Box 122
Muswellbrook NSW 2333

or email: whatson@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au

Council welcomes any suggestions on information you would like to read in future editions. Please send your comments to the Newsletter Editor at the above post office address, call **02 6549 3700** or email council@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au

Facts about your Council

- Current operational budget is 27 million dollars
- Capital budget is 14 million dollars
- Council employs 158 fulltime equivalent staff
- The local road network is 583kms
- Water processed per annum equals 2,100 million litres
- Sewage water processed per annum equals 1,060 million litres
- Tonnes of rubbish to landfill per annum equals 15,000 tonnes
- Tonnes of rubbish recycled per annum equals 8,000 tonnes

Steve McDonald, General Manager

Road and landscape improvements

You may have noticed significant changes have been made to New England Highway over the past few months with a new set of traffic lights at the intersection of Rutherford



Traffic lights being installed at intersection of Rutherford Road and New England Highway in August this year.

Road, median strip improvements and a new cycleway linking Bimbadeen Drive to Rutherford Road. These works have cost in excess of \$800,000 with benefits including increased safety for vehicle traffic, cyclists, pedestrians and workforce as well as improved accessibility, aesthetics and reduced maintenance costs. These new traffic lights will cater for expected traffic growth from the South Muswellbrook commercial area and subdivisions.

Completion of the second stage of the Bengalla Link Road project, a condition of development consent set for Bengalla Coal Mine, is another important milestone. Linking Denman Road to Wybong Road near Roxburgh Road will provide improved access to major mine developments in the area. This road forms part of the Western Roads Strategy, developed by Council in 1997.

Xstrata-Mangoola are providing additional upgrades for Wybong Road, the intersections of Bengalla Link Road and Denman Road, and intersections of Wybong Road and the Golden Highway. These works are being undertaken as a condition of development consent and are intended to significantly improve the standards of access to these areas.

Resealing and gravel re-sheeting programs, totalling over \$1.3M, and the replacement of a major bridge at Widden Brook on the Bylong Valley Way, at a cost of \$1.8M, are also taking place as part of Council's roadworks capital program.

These works are overseen by Council's Community Infrastructure Department, who are responsible for the provision and maintenance of roads, drainage, water, sewage, waste management, parks, sporting fields, passive areas, public pools, community and operational buildings within Muswellbrook Shire.

Neil Pope
Director Community Infrastructure

Environmental reporting

Local governments play a significant role in the environmental management of their area. Annual reports on the environment are produced including topics such as population, air quality, water supply and biodiversity. State of the Environment Reports are permanently available for public viewing in the Environment section on Council's website or at Council's Administration Centre during business hours.

After four years in the making, Local Environment Plan gazetted

The Local Environment Plan (LEP) is a legal planning instrument used to determine land use and control development within the Shire. The LEP contains various planning controls that set a legal framework by zoning land, establishing development categories, defining land uses and addressing issues such as heritage conservation, environmental protection, minimum lot sizes, building density and height limits.

The Muswellbrook Shire Council LEP 2009 was gazetted on the 17th April and is one of the first LEP's in New South

Wales to be made using the State Government's new LEP template.

The LEP should be consulted by anybody proposing to carry out development within Muswellbrook Shire and can be accessed by searching for 'Local Environment Plan' on Council's website or by visiting the Department of Legislation website at www.legislation.nsw.gov.au.

Chris Gidney
Director Environmental Services



Peter Jeuken, Chris Gidney and Mathew Pringle of the Environmental Services team discussing town zoning.

A message from Australia Post

Australia Post is urging Muswellbrook residents to ensure their dogs are secured behind fences, after three posties were bitten by dogs while delivering mail.

Australia Post takes great care to equip posties to stay safe on the job by utilising a variety of safety strategies and wants the Muswellbrook community to play its part in making their posties safe.

Australia Post spokesperson, Scott McIntyre said that by keeping dogs locked safe in yards you can help our posties to avoid potential issues on their daily delivery beat.

"Apart from making sure your fence is sturdy, think about positioning your letterbox somewhere your dog can't leap up towards and if you know you have an aggressive dog, put up a 'Beware of Dog' sign," Mr McIntyre said.

Dog owners are required by law to keep their pets restrained, not only for the safety of their postie, but for the wider community too.

When posties are routinely menaced by a dog, Australia Post writes to the owner to inform them of the problem and if it persists, Australia Post will notify the local council ranger for further investigation.



 POST

Council's new user-friendly website

Council launched their new website and logo last month to coincide with the 30th anniversary of Muswellbrook Shire Council.

"We undertook extensive research to see what information our community would expect to find from their council's website, and how they could find this information easily. Our statistics show that website visits doubled almost instantly once the new site went live." Council's website officer Fiona McBurney said.

New features of the website include the Community Announcements section where you can find latest news at a glance such as traffic alerts and gallery launches, a Residents portal which is full of information specifically for residents such as environmental grant opportunities, waste collection timetables and educational facilities, and a Business portal which is full of information for local businesses and businesses that have dealings with the council.

These new sections are all available from the homepage and every site visitor is encouraged to leave their comments and suggestions by clicking on the Feedback button located at the base of every page.

Visit our new website at www.muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au

Josh Pryor, IT Manager

