



Mayor Beresford's January 2023 Council Meeting Wrap-up

Paroo Shire Council held its first general meeting for 2023 this week on Tuesday 17th January. There were a number of Community Grant Applications tabled for consideration and Council approved the following applications for in kind and/or financial support:

- Eulo Hostel Association – endorse waiving hire fee for the Eulo Hall for Christmas Tree event
- Cunnamulla Fishing & Restocking Club – provide \$2,000 towards event expenses for Labour Day Fishing Competition
- Noorama Picnic Race Club – provide in kind assistance and \$2,000 towards event expenses for the 2023 Noorama Races
- Music in the Mulga – waive hire fee for a generator and electricity board and provide in kind assistance with grading of the Pitherty Road.

For the past twelve months Council, through its Economic Development Officer, has had an initiative to attract travelling Australians (grey nomads) to the Paroo Shire to either stay a while or settle down for a longer stay. The initiative has had some success and the Council will be looking to continue the idea during 2023. Many travelling Australians have skills and experience that are under-utilised and Paroo Shire has a shortage of skilled labour so it seems a natural match plus there is the opportunity within the Paroo Shire to set up a home base at a low cost.

The Local Government Remuneration Commission has released its recommended remuneration levels for Category 1 Councillors for the 2023/2024 financial year. The maximum total amount payable for a Council of five members is set at \$353,229, however, Paroo Shire Council has resolved to accept a lesser maximum total amount of remuneration being \$327,717.50, a saving of \$25,511.50.

Paroo Shire has been selected as one of four rural communities in Australia to receive an invitation to participate in the Rural Welcoming Communities Exchange Program being offered by the organisation Welcoming Cities in conjunction with Welcoming America. Funding has been obtained to cover most of the costs associated with the exchange which will connect four rural communities from Australia and four from America to share leading practice in immigrant inclusion and equity. Participation in the exchange is a flow on from the Council's recently completed Regional Partnerships Program which focused on attracting skilled migrants to the Paroo Shire. The Council has approved CEO Cassie White, who has taken a leading interest in the program, to participate in the exchange program. Some of the related topics under study as part of the exchange include approaches to social cohesion and inclusion showing positive health impacts and reduced health disparities, multi sector collaboration and the different roles for local government.



Australia Day Awards and associated functions throughout the Shire were discussed and the award nominations considered. The Award recipients will be announced at the Cunnamulla event on Australia Day. Paroo Shire will have two Australia Day Ambassadors this year, Natasha Johnston (founder Drought Angels) and Professor James Dale (Director Centre for Tropical Plants & Biocommodities QUT). The following Australia Day celebrations will take place in Paroo Shire and everyone is welcome to attend.

Cunnamulla – 7.30 a.m. Cunnamulla Swimming Pool for breakfast (cooked by Councillors)
Followed by announcement and presentation of Australia Day Awards

Yowah – 1.00 p.m. luncheon at the YOMCSI hall

Wyandra – 12 noon BBQ at the Wyandra Beach

Eulo- 6.00 p.m. Street BBQ near the Eulo Store

Items from Council Officers' Reports –

- An audit of all Council's playgrounds, exercise equipment and skate park will be carried out in the near future for assessment against the relevant Australian Standards.
- An additional three staff have been trained as Airport Reporting Officers in order to provide adequate numbers of ARO's to ensure compliance of the Cunnamulla airport to relevant standards.
- Cunnamulla and surrounding towns experienced a power loss for about 30 hours in December due to a pole being destroyed in a storm. Council equipment and traffic control was able to assist Ergon Energy gain access to the damaged infrastructure. The power outage had the potential to impact a number of areas such as sewer, fuel, water supply and vulnerable businesses with cold food storage and a high volume of Christmas stock to maintain. Neighbouring Murweh Shire also helped out by providing some suitably sized gensets to install in some of those businesses. Whilst the lack of power was challenging for Council staff and residents affected, there was a high level of resilience within the community and it was a great example of Council working closely with the community to provide support through the period.
- Council's Youth Officer together with four other service providers accompanied a Boys Group on a recent trip to Brisbane where the group engaged in a number of activities including meeting Wayne Bennett, helping out at a Soup Kitchen and visiting the Brisbane Watchhouse. It is planned to continue to work with this group of young men throughout the remainder of their high school education to assist with growing future leaders for our community.
- The Shire Hall auditorium will be undergoing some repairs following a recent inspection which showed that a section of the ceiling has fallen in. As part of the repair work the whole ceiling will be checked for other areas that might need attention.



- Planning is well underway for this year's two main events, namely the Outback River Lights Festival in April and the Cunnamulla Fella Roundup at the end of June/beginning of July and early bird tickets for this event are on sale until 28th February.
- The Tourism team is also putting together a Calendar of Events for 2023. Please contact the Visitor Information Centre with details of your sporting event or major function.

Contacting Council – should residents wish to contact Council regarding any matter, whether its an enquiry, reporting an issue, making a suggestion or lodging a complaint, please use the email council@paroo.qld.gov.au Our customer service system will acknowledge your correspondence, allocate a reference number and direct it to the appropriate Council officer for attention.

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