

## Item 11: Community

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### 11.1 Community and Cultural Services - October to December 2021 Quarterly Report

REPORT BY THE MANAGER, COMMUNITY & CULTURAL SERVICES  
TO 16 MARCH 2022 ORDINARY MEETING  
GOV400098, COS300010

#### RECOMMENDATION

##### That Council:

1. **receive the report by the Manager, Community & Cultural Services on the Community and Cultural Services - October to December 2021 Quarterly Report; and**
2. **note the recent services provided and activities coordinated by Council's Community and Cultural Services Department.**

#### Executive summary

This report aims to familiarise Council with services and activities provided by its Community and Cultural Services Department and to inform it of issues and events of note that arose during the period 1 October to 31 December 2021.

#### Disclosure of Interest

Nil

#### Detailed report

Details of Community and Cultural Services' quarterly activities, events, milestones and points of note are contained within the attachment to this report. Of particular interest:

- A number of face to face community oriented events and activities were either cancelled or postponed due to restrictions arising from COVID-19;
- COVID-19 has also had a negative impact on Council's potential to engage and continue to engage volunteers;
- Mudgee Community Transport was the winner of the Community and Volunteer Services category at the receive Magnificent Mudgee Business Awards;
- Council has secured a further \$240,000 to continue operating its Family Day Care Scheme over the next three years. This is of particular note given Family Day Care continues one of the more cost effective child care options for local families across the region.

#### Community Plan implications

**Theme**      **Looking After Our Community**

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Goal	Effective and efficient delivery of infrastructure
Strategy	Provide infrastructure and services to cater for the current and future needs of our community

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## Strategic implications

### **Council Strategies**

Not Applicable

### **Council Policies**

Not Applicable

### **Legislation**

Not Applicable

## Financial implications

Not Applicable

## Associated Risks

Future operations of the Meals on Wheels service will need to be carefully considered going forward, having regard to a number of factors, including the introduction of local competition.

FIONA SHEARMAN  
MANAGER, COMMUNITY & CULTURAL  
SERVICES

SIMON JONES  
DIRECTOR COMMUNITY

15 February 2022

*Attachments:* 1. Community & Cultural Services Quarterly Reports - Detail.

### APPROVED FOR SUBMISSION:

BRAD CAM  
GENERAL MANAGER

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

### Gulgong and Mudgee Interagency

Interagency meetings are held every month and guest speakers during this quarter included representatives from:

- The HAPPE Ears For Early Years project which provides free, safe and simple hearing checks to children aged 0 - 6 years who do not yet attend full time school as well as ongoing advice and support to parents and carers.
- Redwoods Work Collaborative which gets young people connected and supported towards meaningful employment.

Local issues discussed and which affect the community services sector include the increase of domestic violence, and mental health due to the pandemic and isolation and the lack of services in this area.

### Kandos and Rylstone Interagency

Kandos and Rylstone Interagency meetings continue on a 6 weekly rotation via TEAMS. Issues and events discussed are the continuing post bushfire programs supporting local communities, COVID-19 impacts and continuing roll out of various NGO programs, including The Foundation of Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR) Heartbeat of Rural Australia.

Rylstone Family Fun Day had to be cancelled due to continuing lockdowns and other events planned to substitute the cancelled Fun Day also had to be cancelled.

A guest speaker from Nanna's Community Eats attended the November meeting. The project was developed to address issues identified by the Kandos Charity Shop (and partner shops) following regular feedback from patrons of isolation and other stressors, including financial stresses. Nannas Community Eats operates with donations from Henbury Golf Club (use of their commercial kitchen) and Rotary, with subsidies from Rylstone Uniting Church and Vinnies with an initial target of providing 50 meals a week. The group now provides 60 meals per week with older single people, young families and people on low incomes being the predominant beneficiaries of the service.

### Online Interagency Information Sessions

Due to the Pandemic and Public Health Orders not allowing face-to-face meetings, Council Community Development Officers organised four online information session through Microsoft TEAMS.

The sessions targeted four important topics:

- *Identifying Services Sector Risk presented by Mid-Western Regional Council Community Recovery Officer;*
- *Mental Health presented by Marathon Health;*
- *Volunteering (gaining and keeping volunteers, presented by Bathurst Neighbourhood Centre; and*
- *Measuring Outcomes presented by Sector Engagement Manager at FAMS*

**Wirimbili Indigenous Plants Community Garden project**

The working group completed the scope of works and lodged a proposal letter to NIAA (National Indigenous Australian Association). The group was then invited to complete a formal grant application for seed funding (\$20,000) to begin the Community Garden and develop an Indigenous medicinal and culinary plants garden in the vacant block adjacent to the Aboriginal Cultural Centre in Kandos. The Group was given verbal confirmation of gaining the grant at the end of December 2021 but have still yet to receive formal written confirmation in order for work to begin.

## COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

### Statistics

Mudgee Community Transport provided 981 trips for eligible clients during the October to December 2021 quarter, totally 86,617 kilometres. Four requests for transportation were denied due to lack of resources (vehicles or drivers at capacity). Subsidised taxi vouchers are made available to clients unable to accept community transport bookings to meet their needs.

Having to adjust processes has seen a reduction in the number of trips provided during this reporting period. Examples include, only able to transport one passenger at a time, rather than conduct shared trips, cancellations for non-essential appointments, cancellations of day programs, Sydney specialist cancelling regional client's appointments and clients hesitant to leave home during lockdowns.

### Volunteers

Twenty volunteers contributed to the service during October to December 2021. One volunteer, unfortunately, withdrew due to the requirement from funding bodies that all volunteers should be double vaccinated (or possess a formal medical contraindication).

One new volunteer, however, completed induction and commenced driving.

The increasing amount of contractual requirements concerning verification, screening and checks that a volunteer must complete prior to being able to commence service can be quite burdensome and creates difficulty in recruitment.

Volunteer driver first aid courses were cancelled for the third time due to COVID restrictions for face to face training. Training will take place once restrictions are eased and allows for the best training environment for first aid.

### General

Service NSW's Seniors Regional Travel card is becoming an increasingly popular means of paying for community transport as clients become increasingly aware of its availability

Mudgee Community Transport was deservedly awarded the overall winner of the Community and Volunteer Services category in the Magnificent Mudgee Business Awards.

## CULTURAL SERVICES

Mudgee Arts Precinct was opened for only eight days before the statewide lockdown. As a result our program was heavily impacted. Guido Maestri's *Stories from Homedale* was extended until 9 January 2022, with planning and development of Linda Jackson's exhibition *Retreat Regeneration Reflection* being brought from its original date to fill a subsequent gap that emerged in the program.

### Guido Maestri

Our inaugural exhibition 'Stories from Homedale' received hugely positive feedback and although affected by lockdown, it was possible to finally combine the building and exhibition opening with Guido Maestri, the Minister for the Arts Don Harwin, Federal Member for Calare, Andrew Gee, and Member for Dubbo, Dougal Saunders in attendance. Fellow painter and Archibald Prize winner, Ben Quilty was also present and hosted an exciting conversation with Guido about his arts practice for all present.

### Arts education

Mudgee Arts Precinct launched the first of its educational videos supported by the Museums & Galleries of NSW's Let's Get Digital program. Guido Maestri's '*Making Conversations*' video was an educational resource promoted throughout the state lockdown, enabling the new exhibition to have a continued presence even though the doors to the gallery remained closed. The video has had 296 views.

The statewide lockdown also meant that the Precinct was closed throughout the September/October school holidays. In response, the Cultural Team developed a suite of online creative activities that could be completed from home. These activities aimed at introducing new ideas, attempted to inspire, enrich and promote creative experimentation for all ages.

### HSC exhibitions

In November and December, Mudgee Arts Precinct hosted two local HSC Exhibitions for Mudgee High School and St Mathew's Catholic School. These important exhibitions were held in the Community Gallery Space and Seminar Room, highlighting the incredible talents of our local senior students, whilst also providing a professional platform to display their creative projects.

### Visitors

Visitor numbers to the Precinct were impacted by lockdowns in the September-December period.

Quarter	Visitors
September - December 2021	6720

### Digital marketing

During the period of September - December 2021, Mudgee Arts Precinct continued to develop its digital audience.

**Facebook**

Facebook Page Reach	Facebook Page Visits	New Facebook Page Likes
6,699	960	196

**Instagram**

Instagram Reach	Instagram Profile Visits	New Instagram Followers
2261	1094	307

**YouTube**

Views

296

**Mudgee Town Hall Cinema**

The Mudgee Town Hall Cinema cancelled its screenings throughout October and November due to COVID-19 restrictions. In December, the cinema re-opened with restricted ticket sales due to NSW Public Health orders. Screenings were also paired back to allow Rotary volunteers to undertake COVID compliant cleaning in between sessions.

<b>Film</b>	<b>Ticket sales</b>
Respect (accessible screening)	42
Respect	106
Moonbound	87

### **FAMILY DAY CARE**

Mid-Western Regional Family Day Care has been providing education and care to the families in our local community for 28 years.

Family Day Care Educators are self-employed and, therefore, Council's Family Day Care Coordination Unit is supporting 14 locally owned and operated small businesses. The Educator breakdown as at 31 December 2021 is one in Gulgong, one in Kandos, seven in Mudgee and five in Wellington.

Family Day Care applied for Round 3 of the Community Child Care Grants and was successful in acquiring \$240,000 over the next 3 years to support the Coordination Unit to seek out appropriately qualified and experienced educators for the Scheme.

The Coordination Unit is continuing to receive calls for families requiring care in all towns. As at 22 December 2022 there were no vacancies for children across the whole Scheme. Mudgee, Kandos and Gulgong have steadily maintained full capacity for 0-5 year olds in the past quarter.

A waiting list exists of approximately eight families who require care for their children, as well as another 12 families waiting on additional places with their current Educators. The Coordination Unit continues to receive calls seeking vacancies in 2022 and already have children requiring care.

As at 22 December 2021, Mid-Western Regional Family Day Care remains one of the cheaper child care options for our local families due to the flexibility of charged hours and the option for weekend and overnight care.



## MEALS ON WHEELS

### Main meals

Oct	549
Nov	555
Dec	603
TOTAL	1707

### Frozen meals

Oct	26
Nov	24
Dec	21
TOTAL	71

Demand for meals was higher this year during the Christmas period due to many clients not travelling to visit family.

### Clients

36 active clients during reporting period.

15 new referrals to MOW- 5 commenced and receiving service. 10 clients not commenced, all not wanting service at this time.

5 clients moved to higher assistance – residential aged care or respite

3 cancelled service.

### Volunteers

It is now mandatory for all staff and volunteers to be fully vaccinated, required by NSW Health Commonwealth Home Support Program. This requirement has seen a drop in volunteer numbers.

### General

Engagement of a new supplier of fresh meals with a less than traditional menu has resulted in some clients cancelling their service either temporarily or permanently. New referrals, however, continue to be received from the Federal My Aged Care portal and current clients appear happy with meals being provided.

Until recently, Meals on Wheels has been the only daily supplier of delivered hot meals in Mudgee. An increase in Home Care Packages has seen competition arise from Lite'n Easy, now an approved provider of meals for Home Care Package recipients. Some clients are electing to use this option over Meals on Wheels, however Meals on Wheels is still the only provider who delivers on a daily basis and provides a hot meal; two factors that the competition does not currently have capacity to address. Lite'n Easy's menu selection, however, is extensive and the company has the capacity to more broadly advertise its service and provide more cost effective meals. Strategies need to be explored to ensure Mudgee Meals on Wheels remains a viable service going forward.

## RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE

### **Community Resilience Network (CRN)**

The CRN is a deliverable through Resilience NSW to enable the community and Council to have an established network of assistance available for use during and after an emergency Event.

The CRN will work alongside the Local Emergency Management Officer and Local Emergency Management Committee.

Contacts within Resilience NSW and Emergency Services have been identified to establish how this will look and operate.

### **COVID-19**

Regional Emergency Management Committee wellbeing meetings were attended to ensure that Council and the LEMC were briefed on the developing conditions and made aware of any resources that were available in the event they were needed.

### **Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council / Australian Institute Disaster Resilience Conference**

The Resilience NSW Strategic Plan was released, as well as an announcement of future use of Community Recovery Officers being successful in local government.

### **External stakeholders**

The Community Recovery Officer attended meetings with external stakeholders, including those from Department of Primary Industries/ Gateway, Rural Fire Service, Resilience NSW, community members from impacted areas.

Community meetings have been largely positive, although concerns still exist around the capability to be prepared for the next emergency.

### **YOUTH SERVICES**

Youth Services activities were heavily impacted by COVID lockdowns and restrictions during the September-December 2021 quarter.

The Youth Council did not meet during this period however Youth Services consulted with Youth Councillors and coordinated their feedback into programming during lockdown.

All activities planned for the September school holidays were cancelled and a new online program was developed. This included a photography competition, scavenger hunt, blu-tack sculpture competition, online trivia and the mailout of craft kits. Engagement with online activities was pleasing, with 141 youth participants.

The Inspirational Speaker programme talks with young Indigenous woman, Kiara Harris, which were scheduled for the last quarter of 2021, were once again postponed due to COVID restrictions. It is hoped the talks will proceed in Term 1 of 2022.

Youth Services resumed limited face-to-face activities in December, including regular monthly programs Book Bouncers, Crafternoon, Manga & Anime Squad and Level Up. A series of Christmas-themed activities, including Gingerbread House construction and Christmas Bauble decoration, were also held in Mudgee, Gulgong, Rylstone and Kandos.