



Walgett Shire

'RIVERS, PLAINS AND OPALS' NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN 2021



WELCOME FROM THE MAYOR

Welcome to the autumn edition of the Council newsletter.

The Walgett Shire Australia day celebrations were again well attended across the shire with around 550 residents attending the activities in Walgett at the awards presentation breakfast, and pool events at Walgett, Lightning Ridge and Collarenebri. On the day we showed our Australia Day Ambassador Mr. John Moriarty around the shire visiting the Walgett weir, Jimmy Little Memorial, Lightning Ridge pool complex and Walk in Mine. It was an unforgettable day and we were very fortunate to have such an outstanding and inspirational Ambassador as Mr. Moriarty visit the shire.

Last year our communities were faced with the possibility of reduced face to face health services, with a greater dependency on Tele-health, however, I am delighted to advise that Ochre Health the new service provider will be maintaining existing service levels, and furthermore, the Rural and Remote Medical Services (RRMS) will also have a presence in all three (3) towns, they too are continuing to provide medical services. I have met with both service providers in the past few months and I am pleased to say this has been a great outcome for the residents of Walgett Shire.

In the coming month Councillors and staff are set to hit the road with their annual public consultation/presentation tour, visiting all towns and villages to gather information from residents and ratepayers, and present the draft works budget for the next four years. The meetings weren't held last year due to the pandemic. These meetings are a great opportunity for Councillors and staff to meet with local residents and take on board any ideas and issues residents and ratepayers may be facing.

I am delighted to report development approvals for the shire this financial year have sky rocketed surpassing all expectations with around \$28 million dollars of development approved.

On Saturday 4th September 2021 the NSW Electoral Commission will be conducting the Walgett Local government election, and I would encourage those residents interested in becoming a Councillor to access the NSW Electoral Commission website for information and relevant dates for nomination.

Finally, I must take this opportunity to congratulate the residents of Walgett Shire for their on-going compliance with Covid restrictions, social distancing and personal hygiene measures, let's remain vigilant and keep everyone safe from Covid as we enter the cooler flu months of 2021. The Covid vaccine is due to be rolled out in the coming months, and I would encourage all residents to receive the vaccination to protect us from this dangerous virus.

Ian Woodcock OAM, Mayor - Walgett Shire Council

BUILDING A COMMUNITY WE'RE PROUD TO HAND ON



From the back of the pack... now leading the way, Community Services team members George, Sandra and Reburdah.

Change is all about inclusivity, succession planning, capacity building, a strengths based approach... belief!

The adage 'from little things big things grow' is certainly reflective of Walgett Shire Council and its recent rise to the top of the pack in many areas of Local Government,

namely community development, services for youth and individual recognition within the Local Government context.

Despite the recent drought, dry rivers, lack of jobs and other social issues Walgett, Lightning Ridge and surrounding towns and villages just keep ticking along. Many of Council's initiatives in recent times have focused on community solutions for community problems. With our focus firmly fixed on local staff development and the intrinsic value of community, we have seen results delivered far in excess of those, other remote local government areas may be witnessing. The succession planning, community buy-in and an asset-based community development direction has been awarded results. Results on the books that are visible in the streets, an action focus in the Council chambers and positive change is a happening thing within the Shire.

Through the mid 2000 years, Council made a commitment to region's youth and the development of its young people, spurred on by a lack of services and a leadership void in this sector which had led to a rising youth crime rate, one of the worst in the state. A local Youth Development Officer was employed, and three youth centres were opened, along with the formation of a Youth Council as a section 355B committee within Council.

As a result, the youth and community teams now lead the way in services and development of young people across the state. Since receiving its first ever Local Government Award for Youth in 2005 the youth and community teams have been awarded 14 successive State gongs through to 2019, a National Local Government Youth Strategy Award in 2010, runners up in Local Government Excellence Awards in 2020 and the former Youth Development Officer (currently Manager Community Development) for the past five years, receiving the highest individual accolade in Local Government, the 2019 R.H Dougherty Award for Individual Service to Council.

So, what a ride.... outcomes based programs developed by the young people, for the young people have proven a winner. Their ability to connect, build rapport and do as you say is now a given within the Walgett Shire Council. Other awards have seen Council's innovative 'School 2 Work' program recognised at employment awards, and the community development team entreated to share the secrets, the methodologies, with other councils to assist them to build that trust, the belief that is so often a missing link in Local Government and community relationships. Locals know the problems in their communities better than any agency does. By listening and setting achievable goals, taking small steps, creating succession plans, encouraging local input, things have changed. Some say generational change is in place. The community development team believe relationship

building and processes must be genuine, meaningful and facilitate long-term partnerships.



FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

By Chance Road.

- Tenders are underway for refurbishment of the Collarenebri and Rowena Halls.
- A complete refurbishment of the Burren Junction Hall is now complete.
- Reconstruction and sealing of the Gundabloui Road continues.
- Re-turfing of the Collarenebri Sportsground is nearing completion with positive weed control scheduled for cooler months.
- Completion of the Collarenebri Sportsground amenities building is being fast tracked in readiness for the football season.
- Tenders are out for the upgrade of the Collarenebri Showground Grandstand and bar.
- Quotations will be sought in coming months for the upgrade of the Collarenebri Showground kitchen/dining room.
- Rehabilitation of Merrywinebone Road continues
- The Ovals Multi Purpose Centre in Lightning Ridge is under construction and will be at lock-up stage in early April 2021.
- Construction of various footpath cycleway projects continue in Lightning Ridge.
- Construction of box culverts along the 3 Mile Road Lightning Ridge is underway.
- Consultants have developed a draft set of plans for a wetland project in Lightning Ridge, a passive recreational area to the north of town.
- Drainage works to resolve flooding issues continue in Lightning Ridge.
- The Lightning Ridge racetrack has undergone serious maintenance in readiness for the Easter festival.

I would like to remind business houses about the following Council "Main Street Beautification" programs that are currently open to all businesses in Walgett, Collarenebri and Lightning Ridge:

1. Removal of bars from shop windows and doors and installation of appropriate crim safe, or like security doors and window covers. Under this program Council will reimburse to a maximum of \$4,000 per premise upon completion and presentation of receipts.
2. Shop front painting program whereby Council will reimburse the owner to a maximum of \$1,000 per premise toward the purchase of paint. Labour and other costs related to painting the shop fronts is the responsibility of the owner.

The welcomed change in weather patterns has resulted in good rain over the past few months which has brought with it unprecedented plant growth across the shire. Council staff are doing their best to manage the mowing activities to ensure the towns and villages look neat and tidy. The sporting ovals, parks and gardens look amazing with excellent grass cover. Residents may like to assist in making the towns look good by mowing their yards, nature strips, cleaning up vacant blocks, and removing rubbish. A combined effort by all makes our towns and villages more liveable and presentable to the travelling public and tourists.

Michael Urquhart, General Manager

What a start to the new year, with water topping the Collarenebri and Walgett weirs after good rainfall in the catchment, environmental release from storages, and the release of annual water allocation from Keepit dam down the Namoi river.

I am pleased to report the fish way at the Walgett weir is working as planned, with reported sightings of cod and silver perch making their way up the ladder. A number of residents have asked why Council is not opening the weir to the general public, the reason being, the weir is not Council's property, nor is the land, however in saying that, I am currently in discussion with NSW Water seeking access to the weir as a tourist attraction, with a passive recreational area on the weirs southern foreshore including picnic tables and BBQ facilities. Approval from NSW Water is fundamental to the process and consultation is required before we can proceed.

2021 is shaping up to being another big year for the improvement of roads/bridges and Council facilities. Some of the projects in progress include:

- The new picket fence around Walgett No 1 Oval is nearing completion.
- Plans are being developed for a new amenities and grandstand at Ovals 2 & 3 Walgett for DA approval. No funding has been secured for this project.
- Consultants are developing plans for the upgrade of the Walgett swimming pool, amenities and construction of a splash park, once again DA approval. No funding secured to date.
- In the coming months a cycle way is to be constructed along Fox Street from Euroka Street to Alex Trevallion Park.
- Construction of a new toilet/shower facility at Alex Trevallion park Walgett.
- The Walgett Showground face lift continues with tenders closing for the refurbishment of the Colless grandstand, while the Leonard pavilion is being transformed into a modern function centre. Council has just received notification of a grant to refurbish the toilets to the south of the facility, and new fencing is also being installed.
- A new toilet/shower facility is to be constructed in Apex Park Walgett.
- Fox Street, northern entry to the CBD between Montkeila and Warrena streets is scheduled for new stencil footpath with a pedestrian blister in Montkeila Street for access to Apex Park.
- Central Walgett CBD upgrade with bollards, flower pots and new median strips.
- Tenders are being prepared for construction of the 52kms of the Come

FISH WAY BUILT INTO WALGETT WEIR UPGRADE



Walgett Weir.

The upgrade of the Walgett Weir, including a new fish way, has been an exciting project for the shire and is nearing completion. The fish way is part of the Walgett Weir Water Supply Security Project which includes raising the level by 1.0m, upgrading the access road, and removal of the old Namoi Weir 10. Planning of the project has been underway since 2014,

during which time Council has undertaken an extensive analysis of alternative solutions, design, cost estimates, review of consultation with stakeholders and approvals. The estimated cost of the project is \$8,801,458 of which \$5,214,458 will be funded by Safe and Secure Round 1 with Water Security for Regions contributing \$3,587,000. The fish way has been operational since 23rd December 2020.

Walgett Weir Water Supply Security Project and Walgett Weir Fish way project are complementary and will achieve the following objectives:

- Increase the drought security of Walgett's water supply through the provision of increased weir pool storage that can be drawn upon during drought periods
- Improve fish passage in the Murray Darling Basin through the provision of a fish way.
- Eliminate two fish barriers, reduce the maintenance burden, and eliminate the need to transfer water as part of drought management operations. The raised weir will increase the volume of the weir pool from 1763ml to 2907ml, resulting in a total increase of 1145ml. The raised weir will make weir 10 redundant, which will eliminate the maintenance burden and the need for the pumped transfer of river water as part of drought management operations.

Walgett Weir 11A and Namoi Weir 10 presented barriers to fish migration. They were ranked by Department of Primary Industries Fisheries as the second highest priority fish passage barrier in the Murray Darling Basin. This project will open up an additional 205km of upstream habitat and overcome the issues associated with fish movement.

What's On

MARCH

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| | International Women's Day 8th – 11th March 2021 | Spirit of Places Festival Free Pool Day 12th March 2021 | Walgett Outdoor Markets 13th March 2021 |
| Lightning Ridge New Residents Event 15 March 2021 | Walgett & Colly Mud Trials 13th & 14th March 2021 | Outback Outloud workshop Outback Arts 22nd - 23rd March 2021 | Harmony Day/Week 22nd – 26th March 2021 |
| Being Your Best You Workshop 29 March 2021 | A little bit of blue Puppet show 4pm 3-10yrs Sporto Tuesday 30th March 2021 | | |

APRIL

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|---|---|---|--|
| | Lightning Ridge Easter Festival 2nd - 4th April 2021 | - Black Opal Bull & Bronc Ride Friday 2nd April 2021 | - Lightning Ridge Races Saturday 3rd April 2021 |
| The Edge Festival 3rd April 2021 | Spirit of Places Festival Big Day Out Lightning Ridge 7th April 2021 | Murray Darling Basin Communities Leadership Program Collarenebri 8th - 9th April 2021 | Youth Week 1st – 24th April 2021 |
| WAMS 35 year celebration 14th – 15th April 2021 | WAMS Opening of new building 14th April 2021 | Youth Week/WAMS Walgett Community Event | Festival of Small Halls to Burren Junction School of Arts Hall on 30 April 2021 |

MAY

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| Walgett & District Annual Show 8th - 9th May 2021 | Reconciliation Week 27th May – 3rd June 2021 |
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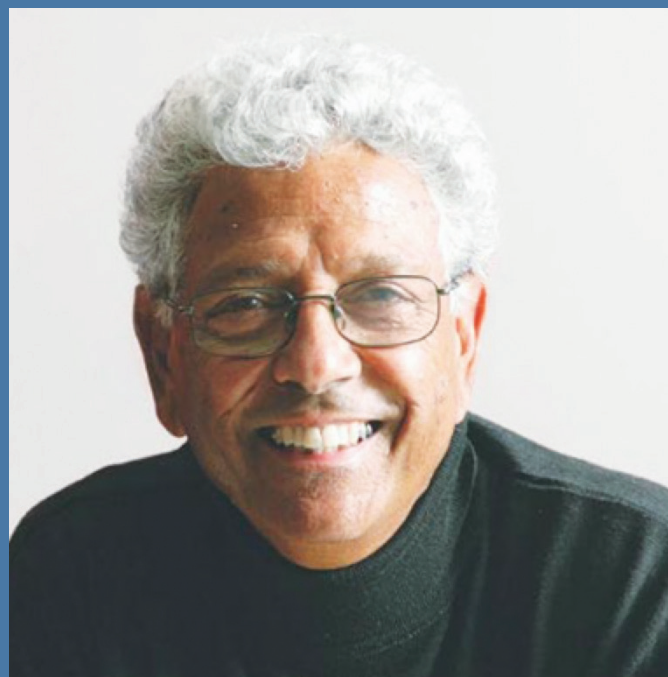
JUNE

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| | Country education Foundation Info Evening 6pm at Sporto 3rd June 2021 | Rowena Cracker Night 6th June 2021 | Walgett Outdoor Markets 19th June 2021 |
| PJ O'Brien Memorial Race Day 19th June 2021 | | | |

JULY

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|---|---|-------------------------------|
| Lightning Ridge Opal Festival 28th - 31st July 2021 | NAIDOC Week: 4th – 11th July 2021 | Carinda Races 17 July 2021 |
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WALGETT SHIRE COUNCIL AUSTRALIA DAY CELEBRATIONS



Walgett's Australia Day Ambassador, John Kundereri Moriarty AM.

The day commenced at Walgett Sporting Club with a community breakfast where over 100 local community members joined in, and was followed by the official award presentations by guest Australia Day Ambassador, John Moriarty.

This year's Walgett Shire's Australia Day Award recipients were as follows:

- Citizen of the Year – Chris Clemson (Walgett)
- Student Citizenship Award – Joint winners: Ashley Sharpe & Sam Yeomans (Walgett)
- Health Award – Christian Mpofu (Collarenebri)
- Business Award – Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service (WAMS)
- Young Citizen of the Year – Jayda Seaton (Lightning Ridge)
- Volunteer of the Year Award – Daniel Walford (Walgett)
- Lifetime Achievement Award – Christine Corby (Walgett)

Mayor Ian Woodcock said today he was pleased with the support for the event from the local community. A highlight of the day was the address by Australia Day Ambassador John Moriarty who also took the time to tour the Walgett and Lightning Ridge communities.

Council's General Manager Michael Urquhart said 'It was a great opportunity to reflect on how fortunate we are to live here in Australia and to celebrate contemporary Australia as well as acknowledge our history'. Mr Urquhart was very pleased that around 550 people attended the four Australia Day events held in the Shire.

"I would like to congratulate not only the winners of the various awards but the many others who were nominated as well. I would also like to thank everyone who submitted nominations for this year's awards and the Walgett Sporting Club for hosting this year's celebrations" Mayor Ian Woodcock concluded.

YOUTH CENTRE COLLABORATION COMES TO FRUITION



Artist's impression of the new Walgett Police Citizen's Youth Club.

Exciting news for the Walgett Shire is the soon to be built Police Citizens Youth Club (PCYC) which will be the new home of Walgett Shire Council's Youth Development Centre.

The primary focus of the new facility will be to offer the region's young people opportunities to participate in activities and programs run by the PCYC. Council will work in partnership with the PCYC to improve opportunities for local youth and the community by offering a range of quality activities and programs in a safe, fun and friendly environment. The seed for the venture was sown many years ago when the PCYC partnered with Council to provide a remote service to communities, delivered via a small, mobile activities van. A need was very quickly recognised in the shire, for a purpose built young people's facility to, as PCYC founder William Mackay is so eloquently quoted on the PCYC website: 'provide suitable places where...[young people]... could meet, play, and engage in sport, giving them a chance in life and preventing them becoming street corner loafers'. PCYC and Council believe the new facility is the missing link for the region's youth. With youth services in place to collaborate on providing continuity of service, young people will be engaged, giving them the best opportunities and service support that will wrap around them into adulthood. Investing in our future leaders is vital to sustaining community wellbeing in the years to come.

CUSTOMER ACTION REQUEST SYSTEM

Walgett Shire Council implemented a new Customer Action Request System in 2016 to allow anyone to lodge online requests via Council's website (www.walgett.nsw.gov.au) under the "Customer Request" link.

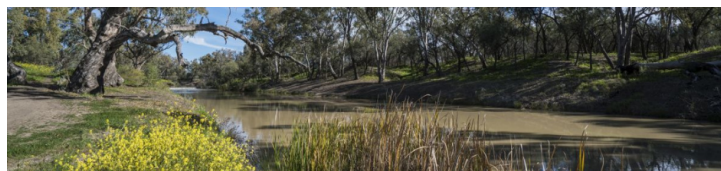
The system provides multiple options ranging from general enquiries through to road matters or any complaints or concerns that people may have within the Shire.

Once a customer action request (CAR) is lodged an acknowledgement e-mail is sent to the person who lodged the request and the CAR is then received by Council's customer service staff who prioritise and allocate the task to a staff member for action. Council encourages members of the public to use this free service for any enquiries, complaints or concerns that they may need Council assistance with.



WE'RE BIG ON ROAD RENEWAL

Walgett Council is thrilled by the recent funding announcement enabling the long-awaited construction and sealing of the missing 54.9km on the Come By Chance Road. The Commonwealth & New South Wales Government's and Council are all co-contributors to the project which is estimated to cost in the order of \$12.7 million. Mayor, Ian Woodcock OAM said the Come By Chance Road from Walgett to Pilliga is an important road in Walgett Shire's road transport network and plays a major role in the transport of cereals from local properties to grain receival depots within the region. Its total length is 99.1km of which the first 40.2km out of Walgett is currently sealed, as is the last 4.0km at the approach to Pilliga. The remaining 54.9km of road are formed earth. This project comes on the back of another big construction and sealing project on the Gundabloui Road from Collarenebri to Mungindi. This project is also funded collaboratively with all three levels of government supporting the project to the tune of around \$4.5 million. The Gundabloui Road is classified as a regional road and traverses eastward between Collarenebri and Mungindi for 84.7km. The road is currently sealed for 62.7km from Collarenebri with the remaining 22km formed earth. In the current 2020/2021 financial year, Council has begun the upgrade of the 12km section from the existing (Mungindi end) of the sealed section towards Collarenebri under the Fixing Country Roads program and the Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity programs round six. The project commenced in July 2020 with Council managing the project using local resources. Approximately 7.5km of the total 12km section has been completed. The remaining 14.5km will be sealed in next financial year depending upon the grant availability.



Join us for the MURRAY DARLING ASSOCIATION'S BASIN COMMUNITIES LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Collarenebri, NSW
8-9 April 2021



Valued at \$4,800 per participant, fully funded places are still available.



APPLY ONLINE | www.mda.asn.au

Engage & Create
Building vibrant and safe regional towns

MOBILE OFFICE TAKES SAFETY MESSAGE TO THE FOUR CORNERS

Grass roots innovation is grist to the mill at Walgett and when mixed with a genuine desire to improve worker's safety across a 22,000sq km workplace the result is one out of the box.

The project evolved organically over several years finally coming to be known as 'Taking the office on the road'. Council reaped rewards for their ingenious and practical modification of the Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) Officer's role last year, seeing a reduction in work related injuries and winning the prestigious LG Professionals New South Wales Risk Management Excellence Award.

The project involved fitting out a dedicated motor vehicle that could be used as a quick response unit for emergency situations, allow risk management compliance in the field checks, and provide a mobile office and WHS training centre for the outdoor staff.

When the idea of the mobile office was first thought of many of the benefits and outcomes were not foreseen such as increasing the availability and accessibility of the WHS officer to field staff. The outdoor staff have responded positively to the van turning up on site, whether conducting an audit or a small group training session, helping with paperwork. Staff can voice any concerns to the WHS officer in site without the inconvenience of having to pack up and travel back to town reducing downtime and inturn increasing productivity. It was initially hoped that providing WHS education and assistance at the worksite, would result in fewer workplace injuries, a reduction in downtime and a very positive spin on risk management, all of which have proven to be the case.

The award for excellence, which recognises outstanding achievements for risk management innovation, was an outstanding achievement showcasing Council's on-going commitment to raising the bar on organisational risk management compliance, and it once again showed the professionalism and dedication of staff toward the development of a continuous improvement environment. The project also received a commendation in the Statewide Mutual Risk Management Excellence Awards for 2020.



Walgett Council has taken workplace health and safety into the field.

WALGETT QUARTERLY MARKETS 2021



13TH MARCH APEX PARK 8:30AM
19TH JUNE APEX PARK 8:30AM
14TH AUGUST APEX PARK 8:30AM
13TH NOVEMBER GRAY PARK 6:30PM

New Stall Holders Welcome

Follow Us on Facebook @walgettm Markets or visit the webpage:
<https://www.walgett.nsw.gov.au/community/walgett-community-outdoor-markets/>

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO HAVE A STALL
CONTACT 02 6828 6139 OR EMAIL TOURISM@WALGETT.NSW.GOV.AU



Save the date

2021 NSW Local Government elections

**Saturday
4 September**

Voting is compulsory

elections.nsw.gov.au/lge21
1300 135 736



2020 SHOP LOCAL COMPETITION

WINNERS!

Congratulations to:

Sally Barton
Deb Manning
Foxy
Teresa Shepherd
Errol
Colly Ambros
Peter Scoles
Lyn Douglas
Duncan Farming
Michael O'Brien



CALL 02 6828 6139 TO CLAIM YOUR PRIZE

YOUTH & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ACROSS THE SHIRE

Towards the end of 2020, a community meeting was facilitated by Councils Community and Youth Development teams in Walgett to review a program developed and delivered over the last 4 years in regards to keeping young people occupied during the holiday period and engaged in the coolest place in town, the local pool.

The Beat the Heat program participation numbers from events staged recorded over 1200 young people, parents and caregivers engaging in the free opportunities. Local services have supported in a variety of ways offering transportation to those outlying villages, cool drinks, ice blocks, pool entry costs and catering. Now school has resumed the Beat the Heat program has ended recording outstanding outcomes for its fifth successful year.

A huge thank you to Council Youth Workers, Walgett CDAT team, Walgett PCYC staff, Mission Australia, MPREC and the REDI.E team, Mackillop Family Services, Walgett Aboriginal Medical Services, pool manager Kimball Riley who have been working together to deliver an engaging and outstandingly attended programs.

Council have received support funding to work towards offering opportunities for the youth and community engaged over the summer, with free pool events, morning teas, park events and a trip to Narrabri cinema on the program. Two separate successful funding opportunities through the Office of Regional Youth and Department of Planning and Environment have allowed provision for two separate initiatives, Smash n' Splash Initiative and The Spirit of Place program to be delivered across communities.

In Walgett there will be two (2) smash and splash events and three (3) the Spirit of places festival free pool days which includes free entry to the pool, bbq meal, music, games and activities and lucky door prizes. Also a Mega Morning Tea held at the memorial park which will include lucky door prizes, live band, games and activities.

In the community of Lightning Ridge there will be two (2) Smash and Splash events which includes a trip to Narrabri cinema, and a free pool day which includes free entry to the pool, bbq meal, music, games and activities and lucky door prizes, there will also be three (3) Spirit of Place events which will include free pool days and a Big Day Out at Lightning Ridge Opal Park with live entertainment, games and activities and lucky door prizes.

In Collarenebri there will be three (3) Smash and Splash events which includes a trip to Narrabri cinema, a trip to Lightning Ridge swimming pool and a free pool day which will include free entry to the pool, bbq meal, music, games and activities and lucky door prizes, there will also be three (3) Spirit of Places Festival held at the swimming pool which also includes free entry.

The Walgett Shire community development team wish to inform residents and organisations of several up and coming planning meetings and events to soon be implemented throughout the communities.

During March the Shire will be supporting and partnering with service providers to assist in the planning and implementation of events including International Women's Day (8th March), Seniors Week celebrations 17th – 24th March, and Harmony Day 21st March along with NSW 2021 Youth Week planning meetings.

Councils Manager Community Development Mr. George McCormick said, "We are encouraging services and organisations to be a part of these significant events, the more services and organisations involved will add value to offering our communities engaging, enjoyable, meaningful events.

For more information contact Council's Manager of Community Development Mr George McCormick 02 6828 6107 or gmccormick@walgett.nsw.gov.au



ENGINEERING UPDATE

Footpath construction along the Fox street (eastern side) between Euroka street and Alex Trevallion park under commonwealth Government Drought Community Program commencing from 1st March 2021.

Kerb/gutter in Dundas Street (north side) in Namoi Street west side between Cedar and Arthur street and Euroka Street southern side between Albert and Namoi Street under Roads to Recovery program completed Road works between Euroka Street and Wee Waa street commenced from 15th Feb 2021

Collarenebri and lightning ridge skate parks have had shade sails installed,

Update of new play equipment in Grey park

Turfing of the Walgett Cemetery has begun

