



Welcome to the autumn edition of Mount Alexander Shire Council's quarterly newsletter. You have received this email because you've subscribed to Shire News, are a ratepayer or live in our shire. If you'd prefer not to receive this newsletter you can [unsubscribe](#). Thanks for reading.

State festival fun

Are you as excited about the Castlemaine State Festival as we are?

The biennial multi-arts celebration kicks off from Friday 19 March to Sunday 4 April with thousands of people expected to make the most of the performances, exhibitions and open studios throughout the festival.

Showcasing works from the region's finest artists and performing arts companies, alongside those by national and international artists, the festival promises to be just the thing we need to bring our community and visitors back together after a difficult year. To reduce the volumes of people at any given time, festival events will be spread over 17 days, rather than the usual ten days to make it easier to meet social distancing requirements.

Take a look at this year's [program](#) for all the festival has to offer.





Mayor's message

Our new Council is working well together and two of our key priorities over the next few months will be developing a Community Vision and Council Plan. These plans set the strategic direction and priorities for our organisation over the coming years.

We want you to be part of the conversation. Over the next few months we'll be asking for your ideas and priorities to shape the future of our shire.

We're already working behind the scenes to plan the development of several medium and long-term plans which we need to finalise before the end of October. We need your help to set the direction and to make sure we really understand our community's needs and aspirations.

Keep an eye on our [Facebook page](#), local papers and [our website](#) to find out about opportunities to get involved. Councillors will also be in the community asking for your thoughts and opinions so please come and have a chat with us and share your ideas.

In the meantime I hope you have the chance to take in some of the wonder of the Castlemaine State Festival. We are fortunate to host this event and I encourage you to make the most of the fantastic, entertaining and often thought-provoking sessions on offer. Get in quick as tickets are selling fast. There are plenty of free events that will bring a welcome dose of colour to the shire after a tough year.

Mayor Tony Cordy



Your NDIS experience

Council is carrying out a feasibility study into the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) within our shire. We want to understand and receive feedback from people living with a disability, and their carers, about how they have found the NDIS, the availability of services and information. The study will inform Council's decision regarding the potential to provide NDIS services in future. We held four community forums on the NDIS in February and are looking for more people to [complete a survey](#) by Wednesday 17 March. You can also collect a printed survey from the Castlemaine Library or Civic Centre. Call our Community Wellbeing team on 5471 1766 to have a survey posted to you or if you would like to speak to the person leading this project.



Frederick St plans

We have developed some concept designs to upgrade Frederick Street and Mechanics Lane in Castlemaine and are looking for your feedback. The plan is to create a shared street to allow safer access for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists. We also want to improve the amenity of the area through landscaping, street furniture and lighting, all while maintaining historical characteristics (and the same number of carparks!).



Getting moving

Have you seen these new signs up around the shire? They feature information on trails, green spaces and bike lanes, with the aim to make it easier for you to walk or ride to your destination. The signs are part of a broader project we have been working on with the Healthy Heart of Victoria (HHV). Head along Forest, Barkers or Campbells creek trails and you'll also see drinking fountains, bench seats, bike hoops and bicycle repair stations installed as part of this project. We know from the 2019 Active Living Census that the most popular physical activity in our shire is walking, so we want to make it as easy as possible for you to get out, do some exercise and enjoy our beautiful outdoors. [Find out more.](#)



Award winners

Congratulations to the recipients of this year's Mount Alexander Shire Australia Day Awards:

- Citizen of the Year – Ian Gallagher
- Senior Citizen of the Year – Lorraine le Plastrier
- Young Citizen of the Year – Jade Bujeya
- Community Event of the Year – The Castlemaine Rotary Truck Show.

The awards recognise the incredible contribution, time and effort that these amazing community members have given

The landscape concept plans are on display in the shared foyer of the Phee Broadway Theatre and Castlemaine Library, Castlemaine Visitor Information Centre on Mostyn Street, along the fence on Mechanics Lane, and on [our website](#).

Take a look at the plans and provide your feedback via a short survey by Monday 22 March. We're also hosting a drop in session on Thursday 4 March. [Find out more.](#)



Bee aware!

Our parks and gardens team were buzzing with action recently, calling in the services of a local beekeeper to relocate two bee hives found in trees at the Castlemaine Botanical Gardens.

The bee keeper set up a collection box next to the tree trunks to capture the bees, which were quarantined before they were sent to their new homes. Arborists removed part of an old English oak tree to protect public safety near the children's playground, with a second hive located in a willow near the creek also requiring removal.

Thanks to our parks and gardens team for their prompt action and to the arborists for braving the bees to remove the canopy and tree sections.



to our shire. Read about [this year's winners](#), our new citizens and the Australia Day – Survival Day activities. We also have some fabulous photos from the community event on [Facebook](#).

Image (from left to right): Maree Edwards MP – State Member for Bendigo West, Young Citizen of the Year – Jade Bujeya, Citizen of the Year – Ian Gallagher, Senior Citizen of the Year – Lorraine le Plastrier, Mount Alexander Shire Mayor, Cr Tony Cordy, Community Event of the Year – The Castlemaine Rotary Truck Show, President Christine Barkla. Photo by Diana Domonkos.



Let's get cooking

We recently completed upgrades to the kitchen at the Elphinstone Hall, and it's looking fantastic! Working in partnership with the Elphinstone Hall Community Asset Committee (pictured), the hall has a full kitchen upgrade to meet modern commercial kitchen standards.

The refurbishment includes a new dishwasher, oven and matching range hood, along with new kitchen joinery, fixtures, benches, lighting and vinyl flooring.

Improvements at Elphinstone Hall will help attract new user groups to the facility, support more events at the venue, and create revenue streams from small businesses such as catering companies interested in hiring the facility from the committee.

Young people wanted

We're recruiting for young people aged between 12 and 25 to join our Youth Advisory Group (YAG). The group plans and delivers local events and projects that directly benefit young people. They have delivered some fantastic projects including a youth awards festival, film competition, young makers' markets and more.

Members of YAG not only make a positive difference to the shire, but also receive training in areas such as public speaking, advocacy and event management. [Apply](#) before Friday 26 March.

Don't forget to pop in to the next Young Makers Market on Sunday 7 March to support our young creative people! It will be held in conjunction with the Castlemaine Artists' Market at Western Reserve.



Service continues

A valuable support service designed to help people who are experiencing loneliness, or are socially disconnected from other people during COVID-19 is set to continue in the shire, thanks to a recent funding boost.

Residents who are looking for support can access social, emotional or practical support through the Victorian Government's COVID-19 Community Activation and Social Isolation (CASI) initiative.

The service has supported many projects over the last few months including mental wellbeing cards, iso-breaker walks and youth activity packs.

We have received funding from the Victorian Government to deliver the program in the shire until June 2021, in



New Harcourt bridge

Thanks for your patience while works were underway to replace the bridge on Eagles Road in Harcourt. The new bridge is now complete and open for use, providing safer access for pedestrians and motorists as they travel within Harcourt. The bridge has a pedestrian footpath on the eastern side, extended guard rails and crash terminals. We also widened the waterway slightly to reduce the risk of flooding and added rock beaching to prevent erosion. We have removed the 20 tonne load limit.



Parking at the res

We're about to start an analysis of parking and traffic at Expedition Pass Reservoir on Golden Point Road to look at ways to improve pedestrian and traffic safety.

Expedition Pass Reservoir is a popular swimming and recreation spot a few kilometres outside of Castlemaine, and attracts a high number of visitors each year. We know there are concerns with parking and road safety in this area and are looking for your input.

Complete this [survey](#) and let us know your ideas to improve parking at the site.

partnership with the Australian Red Cross and the Department of Health and Human Services. We are also working with a wonderful local network of organisations and volunteers who are keen to lend a hand and provide support to our community.

Find out more or access the service via [our website](#) or call 1800 512 446 to speak directly to a community connector.

Central Vic PCP is asking how well you and your community managed through the pandemic. They want to know what worked, the main challenges and the best ways to provide support to people who need it. Complete the survey to go into the draw to win one of two \$100 supermarket vouchers.

Take the COVID-19 survey



Dine out picnic style

Have you seen the new picnic tables in Castlemaine and Harcourt? The solid-timber structures were hand-crafted by members of the Newstead Men's Shed (pictured), and are located at the entrance to the Castlemaine Market Building, on the grass opposite the Castlemaine IGA Supermarket, and at Stanley Park in Harcourt.

We're working in partnership with local businesses and associations to identify other temporary sites within the shire for future outdoor dining and entertainment experiences. Our vision to bring outdoor spaces back to life includes sites like Maldon's Old Bank Corner in the lead up to the Castlemaine State Festival. We have a few other locations in store too so keep a look out for more information soon!



Fencing the shire

There are a lot of new fences going up around the shire thanks to funding from the Australian Government's Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program.

You may have strolled past the new perimeter fence at Western Reserve in Castlemaine. The new fences along Forest and Hargraves streets makes this centrally located reserve look even better while improving community safety.

We've also replaced the fence around the oval at Bill Woodfull Reserve in Maldon (pictured). The new fence not only looks fantastic, it's much safer and meets today's AFL football standards. Maldon residents may have also noticed the new fence at the Maldon Neighbourhood Centre which provides greater security for the adjoining community garden. We'll soon be installing downpipes off the hall and a new water tank and pump so local gardeners can use fresh rainwater on the bountiful community garden.



Apply for a grant

If you have a fabulous idea for an event or festival apply now for an Events Grant. Our Venues and Events Team have answers to all of your event questions and can advise on how to meet COVIDSafe requirements. Apply by Monday 8 March. [Find out more.](#)



News in brief

Missed the latest news from Council? Here are some recent hot topics:

The proposed supermarket is something that many people are talking about. Our planners need some more technical information before the matter will go before Councillors for a decision. [Here's an update](#) on where things are at.

Council cemented its commitment to open and transparent consultation with the adoption of the new **Community Engagement Policy** at the Council Meeting in February. The policy establishes a clear standard for the exchange of information between Council and the community through a range of methods and to guide decision-making. Read the policy on [our website](#).

Roadsides around the shire will be safer thanks to a \$70,000 grant to develop a **Strategic Roadside Fire Management Plan**. The plan will focus on actions including the assessment of roadside vegetation and current management practices, as well as identifying joint projects to reduce fire risk. The Mount Alexander Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee received the grant from Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and the Country Fire Authorities Safer Together Program. Work on the plan starts this month.



We also offer Quick Response Youth Grants for people aged between 12 and 25. If you have a great idea for a project that will benefit young people then get cracking and [apply now!](#) Quick Response Youth Grants are available year-round.

Easter bins

There are some changes to the kerbside bin collection over Easter. There will be no kerbside waste or recycling collection on Good Friday – Friday 2 April. Bins will be collected the following day – Saturday 3 April, and as usual on Easter Monday – Monday 5 April. Bin collection on the Labour Day public holiday on Monday 8 March will be as usual.

Upcoming budget

Want to have a say on Council's 2021/2022 budget?

Here are the key dates:

- 12 noon on Wednesday 21 April – The budget goes on public display.
- 5.00pm on Wednesday 19 May – Public submissions close.
- 6.30pm on Tuesday 15 June – Council considers the budget for adoption.

You'll be able to find the budget and how to make a submission on [our website](#) from Wednesday 21 April. In the meantime, we'll also set the date for a Meeting of Council to hear submissions. Watch this space!



Pet rego due soon

Don't forget that dog and cat registrations are due on Monday 12 April. Pet owners will receive a reminder in the post soon. If you have a new furry friend don't forget to register them with Council. You can find the registration [form online](#) or pop in to see our friendly Customer Service Team in the Civic Centre. Don't forget to bring in

Pools close soon

Did you catch the inflatable fun at your local pool recently? Just a reminder that our outdoor pools at Castlemaine, Harcourt, Maldon and Newstead will close for the season at 6.00pm on Monday 8 March. Thank you to YMCA Victoria for managing the pools over summer and to community members for your hard work and organising activities throughout the season. If you have used our pools over summer we're keen to hear your feedback on the season, activities and facilities. Pick up a survey from pool kiosks or [complete it online](#).



Long weekend fun

The shire will be bustling with events over the Labour Day long weekend from Saturday 6 to Monday 8 March. There'll be an art exhibition along with two, huge markets and a farmers market for all your fresh produce needs. The Castlemaine Artists Market on Sunday is a monthly showcase of Central Victorian artists, crafters and artisans. This vibrant market is dedicated to supporting skilled makers creating individually designed and handmade pieces.

The market coincides with the Castlemaine Farmers Market, where you'll find fresh fruit and vegetables, delicious meats and cheeses, and scrumptious cakes, jams, preserves and chocolates. There's also fine wine and beer, plants, livestock and much more.

Further afield, the much-loved monthly Maldon Market on Sunday, has a broad selection of home-grown and hand-made goods. Over in Newstead, pop in to see the art exhibition Cut N Paste at the Newstead Arts Hub, which showcases the work of local artists who work in the field of montage and collage.

proof of microchip, and check our website to see if you are entitled to a discount.

You may be eligible for a discount if your pet is desexed, a working dog, or is more than ten years old.

Not sure about registering? If your dog or cat goes missing your pet's microchip and registration details will help us to reunite you. Your pet registration fees also help to support the local animal welfare centre and fund our Animal Management Team to act on dog attacks, investigate nuisance animals, capture roaming livestock and much more.

Don't forget the Castlemaine and Maldon Visitor Information Centres are open every day (excluding Christmas Day) from 9.00am to 5.00pm. Call them on 5471 1795 or visit them [online](#).

Image: Richard Baxter Photography.

Council meetings

We are looking forward to welcoming the community back to our meetings, which will be held at the Town Hall in Castlemaine. COVIDSafe measures will be in place. Upcoming meetings are:

6.30pm on Tuesday 16 March

6.30pm on Tuesday 20 April

6.30pm on Tuesday 18 May.

You can also watch meetings via [YouTube](#). To raise a question at the Council meeting email our [Governance Team](#). Find [meeting agendas](#) or get in touch with your local [councillor](#).

What's on

As COVID-19 restrictions change, stay up-to-date on what to see and do via our tourism website. There's lots of information and ideas for local fun, accommodation and places to eat and drink.

You can also find an [event or attraction](#), or [add your own](#).

For updates on local events and things to do follow Castlemaine, Maldon and Surrounds on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

You can also follow Council on [Facebook](#) for our latest news and updates.



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