



Challenging times

Coronavirus has challenged the way we move about in our world, and has perhaps had the greatest impact on our business community.

Luckily the Pyrenees has remained COVID-19 free, and our good hygiene practices and vigilance has probably contributed to that.

Council has modified services, change the way we do business and most of our office-based staff have been working from home for the past three months.

But small business has perhaps been the most diverse of the sectors, with many turning their hands to new ideas, adapting their business models and keeping smiles on the faces of their customers.

Wimmera Hills Winery decided to use their distillery equipment and expertise to make hand sanitizer in the early days of the pandemic. Operations Manager Jane Baker said community members had come to them asking if they could manufacture sanitizer.

"People wanted it, people wanted to be safe, there was that real urgency," Mrs Baker said. "We had the skills to be able to manufacture what they wanted, also our goal was that our local community was safe," she said.

"It was manic for three weeks, manufacturing, bottling up and selling," she said.

The distillery has returned to making its usual gin, including a new variety, which Mrs Baker said was easier to get done while isolated at the Glenpatrick property.

Hospitality was hit hard by coronavirus restrictions but one business decided closing wasn't an option.

Skinny Sisters Café in Beaufort stayed open through the restrictions, owner Sammi Beaton said she wasn't prepared to sit at home knowing that she could trade.

"I thought about closing, but the thought of "what am I missing if I close? Or that my regulars will find somewhere else to go whilst I'm closed and I might lose them forever," Mrs Beaton said

"I wasn't willing to risk that. I wasn't willing to risk losing everything, when I was able to still be open," she said.

Skinny Sisters produced make-at-home pizza kits, cupcake decorating kits as well as a bit of renovation among their regular meals and coffees.

Mrs Beaton said adapting to customers' needs and being versatile were crucial during lockdown.

"I had many compliments about staying open through it all; heaps of words of wisdom," she said.

"It's honestly what kept me going a lot of the time. Seeing the same regular faces day in, day out. They were great and I'll forever be grateful to them for supporting me through this time."

Council CEO Jim Nolan said the pandemic had changed the way the organisation delivered some services.

"We reduced our face-to-face interactions but we endeavoured to continue services in new ways where possible," Mr Nolan said.

"We started live-streaming Council meetings, offered video consultations for planning and offered contactless library loans, among other measures" he said.

Council has established an Economic Task Force with local business representation to help in economic recovery.



Jane Baker, Wimmera Hills Winery Operations Manager.

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Important road upgrades

Increasing load carrying capacity on key link roads is a high priority for Pyrenees Shire Council. The important part of achieving this goal is updating bridge infrastructure to cope with modern vehicles and increased tonnage.

The latest route to have undergone an upgrade is the Eurambeen-Streatham Road, an important north-south link road across the municipality. Council's Works Team strengthened and widened a section of it earlier this year, and contractors have just completed the replacement of Bridge 59.

Bridge 59 was built using an InQuik bridge system, the first one to be built in Victoria. Pre-fabricated components of the bridge are delivered to the site and then they are concreted in place.

This type of construction has been used in Queensland and New South Wales, where significant savings in construction time and costs have been realised. Council will look to continue the use of this system for other bridge replacements.

Also on the cards for work this year was a section of Langi Kal Kal Road, which was rebuilt and strengthened by the Council Works Team. Langi Kal Kal Road has one of the highest traffic counts of all the Shire's roads. The proposed draft

budget includes an allocation to finish the remainder of the road in the 2020-21 Financial Year.

Council has completed the widening and strengthening of the Raglan-Elmhurst Road, which has also included the installation of safety measures such as guard rails. The completion of the final section is the culmination of ten years' work on the road.



Community connections

Pyrenees Community Care's Maria Kennedy was assigned to provide respite with Jano and Slavica Mernik of Avoca and soon discovered an amazing connection. Maria and Slavica begun to share their family and social history, and their shared language, Slovak. Maria was surprised and emotional to discover a photo of her father with Jano and Slavica.

"It brought a tear to my eye and a smile to my face," Mrs Kennedy said. "I told her my maiden name was Andrasik and she told me that she knew my parents well and how they loved to dance in their Slovak Social Club that they all attended in Laverton, Melbourne," she said.

Mrs Kennedy's parents have passed away, leaving her without the Slovak language in her life. Maria is now able to speak with Jano and Slavica while providing respite in their home.

"It has enriched my life knowing that Slavica is happy and cannot believe a Slovak girl is living in Avoca and going to visit her," she said.

Maria is one of many Pyrenees Community Care staff members who are continuing to work and provide services to our elderly and vulnerable community members.



Helping emergency services

Emergency services rely on up to date addressing to find you when you are in need of their help. Many people have been involved in the construction of wind turbines across the Pyrenees, which presents a challenge on how emergency services might find them while working if they get hurt.

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning approached Council about how we might help. Council set about assigning a rural address for turbine entrance points, and put this information in a mapping system.

There are now 22 turbine entrance points with numbers for the wind farms. The information is in VicMaps, which is accessible by emergency services and members of the public.

This is just one small way to make the community safer.



New mobile library van

Council is excited about the next stage in the development of a new mobile library bus! Pyrenees Shire Council received funding from the Living Libraries program from the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning to buy and fit out a dedicated vehicle. The fit-for-purpose vehicle will have benefits for the community as well as saving time and physical labour for staff.

"We'll be able to take the bus to more communities, and users will be able to access a greater amount of materials," CEO Jim Nolan said.

"The bus will be an extension of our libraries in Beaufort and Avoca, and our staff will be able to pick up the keys and head out the door, saving so much time in packing and unpacking a normal car," Mr Nolan said.

The Renault Master Bus, pictured, is being fitted out in Melbourne and country Victoria.



Admiring the new Pyrenees Libraries mobile outreach bus is Peter O'Rourke, Pyrenees Shire Library Services Co-ordinator, Tammy Nugent Smith and Camille Broadbent, from Beaufort Library and Resource Centre.

Koori Art Trail video

Council has been working on the implementation of its first Reconciliation Action Plan. Participating in National Reconciliation Week was one of the planned activities, but due to COVID-19, initial plans were put on hold for a later time.

One of Council's Reconciliation Action Plan committee members had a great idea on how to encourage reconciliation. This is where the idea of taking a virtual walk around the Koori Art Trail was born.

Our staff member April Ure, walked around Beaufort Lake with a time-lapse camera. The video produced showcases each artwork on the trail, and offers those not able to get out and about a chance to experience the walk.

Council shared the video via our website, YouTube and Facebook, you can access it via <https://www.pyrenees.vic.gov.au/Community/Reconciliation>



October Council Election in Pyrenees

Council will go to the polls in October, and you will be provided with a postal ballot pack to cast your vote.

The Victorian Electoral Commission will carry out the 2020 elections for all of the Councils which are having elections.

Pyrenees has five elected Councillors across five wards; one member in each.

Potential Councillors will need to undertake an election candidate training session, one of which is coming up on Wednesday, July 22 at the Beeripmo Centre. This face to face candidate information workshop will be put on by the Victorian Local Government Association. Register via their website: <https://www.vlga.org.au/civicism/event/info?reset=1&id=154>

Key components of the sessions are:

- Module One – Basics of Local Government
- Module Two – Election Candidacy

The VLGA also offer a Pre-Candidate Training Prospectus which is available at their website - <https://www.vlga.org.au/sites/default/files/Training%20prospectus171219.pdf>

Council has also organised a similar session with the MAV for potential candidates, this is proposed for August. Please keep an eye out on our website for confirmed details.

The VLGA advise that candidates should start early in their preparation for local government elections. The new Local Government Act 2020 requires all candidates to have completed the mandatory training session which we are facilitating as detailed above.

If prospective candidates cannot make this session, they could attend sessions at other councils, a list of which is available - <https://www.vlga.org.au/events-training/2020-candidate-training-dates>

There are some important dates to take note of in the lead up to the election:

- Election offices open to the public on Wednesday 16 September.
- Nomination period opens on Thursday 17 September and closes at 12 noon on Tuesday 22 September 2020.
- The election will all be via postal vote and the election date itself is Saturday 24 October.
- Close of voting for postal elections is 6 pm on Friday 23 October.
- Postal vote receipt period closes at 12 noon Friday 30 October.
- Counting and declarations will take place between Sunday 26 October to Friday 13 November.

Project updates

Small and large projects are happening across Pyrenees Shire; from building the Lexton Hub to small renovations at local halls.

Council is working with communities and funding partners including State and Federal governments, to deliver these important projects.

Here's a snapshot of the projects, some of which are underway and some will start once the weather improves:

Carngham Female Friendly

Changerooms: this is a new building next to the netball court which incorporates changerooms for players and umpires, storage facilities and a viewing platform - Tenders have closed for this project and Council is working on appointing a builder to complete these works.

Snake Valley Linear Park: the first stage of this project is to build the skatepark. Council has assessed the tenders and is expecting to award the project shortly.

Lexton Hub: this is a brand new community multi-purpose building that will house sporting and social activities. Council is working on the practical elements of this project, such as ensuring septic and wastewater requirements will be catered for.

Avoca Playground: the design has been put into a tender process, the next step is for Council to evaluate the documentation and then send it out to the market for tenders.

Avoca BBQ Shelter: this project has just had an engineering overview for the building permits, expect construction to start on this soon.

Avoca footpaths: construction on footpaths from North Street to Rutherford Street and ending at Burnett Street is expected to start July/August (weather permitting).

Avoca safe crossing points: detailed design work for the four crossing points is underway, once completed the design will be shared with the community.

Avoca Shire Hall: upgrade work is continuing, with fire safety the focus for the entire building.

Drought projects;

Minor renovation works at Trawalla, Brewster, Snake Valley, Landsborough, Barkly, Moonambel and Carranballac: Council is working with the hall committees at these locations on minor works. The plans including a new barbecue shelter at Snake Valley, kitchen amendments at Carranballac, a portico for Brewster, flooring maintenance at Landsborough, access improvements at Barkly and Moonambel and window replacements at Trawalla.

Beaufort Lake Foreshore revamp: work is underway on designs for the foreshore area, and Council has met with a landscape architect.

New cabin at Beaufort Lake Caravan Park: a new cabin which will meet DDA Compliance is to be installed at the park. Plans are to be drawn up for the project.

Avoca Country Golf Bowling Club: A new synthetic green will be installed, with work underway. New shade shelters at the north and south ends will also be installed ahead of the bowls season opening in October.

Avoca Lions Park: The parking area at the Avoca Lions Park has been sealed.

Natte Yallock Carpark: This project involves the sealing of the carpark surface to improve accessibility, especially during winter months. Council is seeking quotes on the work.

Pyrenees Futures Plans at Lexton, Snake Valley and Waubra: Design elements are near completion with a range of new features and upgrades within the townships of Lexton, Snake Valley and Waubra. This includes greater public seating, signage upgrades, tree planting, road safety measures and path/lighting improvements. These ideas came through the Pyrenees Futures consultation process with the respective town residents.

Bore upgrades: a new bore has been drilled at Moonambel at Wright Street, and others have been drilled and cased at Crossroads and Waterloo. Tank pads have been completed at Homebush, Avoca, Homebush Pump Lane and Waterloo and Council is awaiting the delivery of tanks.

Council has developed a page on the website for up to date news on these projects; www.pyrenees.vic.gov.au/projects2020 You can also call us on 1300 797 363.



Pyrenees Shire Council acknowledge the people past and present of the Wadawurrung, Dja Dja Wurrung, Djab Wurrung and Wotjobaluk tribes, whose land forms the Pyrenees Shire. We pay our respects to the customs, traditions and stewardship of the land by the Elders and people of these tribes.