

Council News

Spring 2020 edition



Time to make a splash

Pools open for summer fun

Airside ready to launch economic growth

Regional landfill begins operation

Stage 2 of Guyra main street upgrade

Curtis Park playground opening

Dumaresq Dam wall upgrade confirmed

www.armidaleregional.nsw.gov.au

ARMIDALE
Regional Council

Opening hours

Opening hours for Council facilities are progressively returning to normal, as COVID-19 restrictions are relaxed.

At the time of publication, the Armidale Civic Administration Building's opening hours are 9am to 4pm Monday to Friday, while the Guyra CAB is 10.30am to 12.30pm and 2pm to 4pm. Check the [COVID page on Council's website](#) for updates.

Level 3 water restrictions are now in place

- This means residents in Guyra and Armidale can use a hand held hose with a trigger nozzle on Sunday and Wednesday between 6pm & 8pm
- Can use buckets to water the garden
- Can wash vehicles with a bucket before 9am and after 4pm

Second stage starting soon for Guyra main street upgrade

Residents of Guyra are edging closer to having an improved main street, with the \$2.7 million Bradley Street upgrade gaining momentum.

The second stage of road works between Nincoola Street and Mackenzie Street will soon begin, with the design review process now in progress.

Work on the overhead powerlines is also set to commence once designs are finalised.

Armidale Regional Council's Interim Administrator Viv May says it's an exciting step for the long awaited project.

"We are waiting on Essential Energy to finalise the designs for the recommissioning of the building awnings along Bradley Street, which will allow for the removal of the overhead powerlines," he said.

Landscaping between Ollera Street to Nincoola Street is also underway, after it was put on hold last year due to the drought. Recent rainfall has meant planting can now begin.

"The landscaping will breathe new life into the main street, and make the town

more attractive to both locals and tourists," said Mr May.

A mural to be created by Melbourne artist James Price will complement the landscaping, and the community will soon be able to have their say on what design should be chosen.

"Unfortunately the Melbourne COVID-19 lockdown has meant Mr Price can't reveal the designs in person," Mr May said.

"However, he is working on a video presentation that the public can view, which will be displayed for community consultation."

"The artwork is based on works by students from Guyra Central School, so it will be a true tribute to the local community."

Along with the installation of new seats, garbage bins and a footpath earlier this year, a new street stall will be constructed later this month.

The first stage of the road works between Ollera Street and Nincoola Street were completed in October last year, and landscaping is expected to be finished by December.



Airside ready to launch growth

Armidale Airside Business Park was officially launched this month, marking the start of a new era of economic growth for the Armidale region.

Council's Interim Administrator Viv May said the \$6.5-million project will be a huge boost to the region.

"This project will bring more than 200 new jobs to the city, and establish Armidale as an innovative, industrial hub," he said.

The 59-lot business park was jointly funded by Council and the NSW Government, with the first stage of the sub-division now released for sale.

"Stage one consists of 24 fully-serviced and NBN-ready lots that range from 1500 to 25,000 square meters in size, and have been developed for commercial, industrial and air business use," Mr May said.

"This will attract a vast array of different industries to the city, and the flow-

on effects to the economy and local businesses are sorely needed following a tough few years of drought and now the COVID-19 pandemic."

The park will become home to industries such as agriculture technology manufacturing, food production and packaging, warehousing, and airport terminal related services.

Mr May said Armidale has never seen a project of this scale and it plays a key part in Council's economic development strategy.

"The size and capabilities of this business park, along with its proximity to the airport and New England Highway, has the potential to attract large, well-known businesses to Armidale, which not only puts the city on the map, but secures our economic future for decades to come," he said.

For information on land sales, visit www.investarmidale.com.au

Assistance for local women in business

Local business women have the chance to access business development assistance, thanks to a Council initiative in collaboration with the Federal Government.

Women in the Armidale local government area are invited to apply for grants to participate in webinar lessons and one-on-one online consultations, including:

- Women Making Gravy – Edwina Robertson – Social media fundamentals and one-on-one business social media auditing
 - Rugby Australia: Head of Marketing – Emilie Jirsch – Dominating digital & pivoting your business model during COVID-19
 - GRO Events - Dimity Smith – Hosting professional, engaging, and successful events online & COVID safe event management
 - The Rural Woman – Rebel Black – Money management tools: Financial management toolkit
 - The Rural Woman – 12-month access to 'Bloom' online networking platform
- "We're really hoping women in rural villages and areas will be among the applicants looking for assistance with their initiatives," Council's Interim Administrator, Viv May, said.

Applications opened on 15 October, in honour of International Rural Women's Day, and will close on 12 November.

They will be assessed by an independent panel. [Further information on the program is available on Council's website.](#)

Water is a valuable resource and we shouldn't waste it!

The NSW State average is 180L per person per day for average water use. Make this water use target our new normal!

HOSES
Use a trigger nozzle on your garden hose

RAINWATER TANKS
Install a rainwater tank and connect it to the laundry & toilets

PLANTS
Group plants with similar watering needs and water when needed

MULCH
Mulch your veggie patch and flowerbeds to reduce moisture loss

WATERING
Check the weather and only water after 4pm and before 9am

For more tips visit www.armidaleregional.nsw.gov.au/savewater

Make 180L per person per day our new normal!

Smart Approved WaterMark Advice

Input invited for Dumaresq Dam redevelopment

A plan to upgrade recreational facilities at Dumaresq Dam is on public exhibition until 3 November.

The Dumaresq Dam Redevelopment Plan Stage 1 includes proposals for camp sites, shower and toilet facilities, a kiosk, new boat ramp and jetty.

"The vision is to create an environmentally friendly Regional Nature Conservation Park where the community and visitors alike could reconnect within the natural environment and participate in passive recreational activities," Council's Interim Administrator, Viv May, said. "The limited camping area would include primitive sites without power but would be accompanied by picnic shelters and barbecue facilities.

"An outdoor community stage and viewing platform at the water's edge are also included in the plan. We want to have the redevelopment plan finalised and adopted so we're ready to move when funding for the project becomes available."

The redevelopment plan was informed by a Dumaresq Dam Upgrade Plan which was adopted in 2016 and included extensive community consultation.

In 2018, Council commissioned Local Government Engineering Services (LGES) to undertake a precinct planning exercise and provide detailed infrastructure designs for implementation. LGES's recommendations and designs included separating camping sites and pedestrians from traffic movements, site drainage and the overall layout to maximise views of the dam from each of the facilities. The investigations in 2018 also included assessments of biodiversity, cultural heritage and the need to upgrade electrical services.

The current plan focuses on the picnic area and entrance road. However, walking tracks and interpretive signage throughout the conservation reserve will also be upgraded when funding becomes available. The reserve will be managed for the conservation of wildlife habitat and as a critical linkage between core koala habitat to the west through to Mount Duval Nature Reserve to the north of the Dumaresq Dam reserve.

The BackTrack Youth Works program will play a pivotal role in managing the Dumaresq Dam Conservation Reserve.

The redevelopment plan can be viewed on [Council's Your Say Armidale website.](#)

Aquatic centres



Pools a safe bet for summer fun

Guyra Swimming Pool and Monckton Aquatic Centre opened this month for the 2020/21 summer season, with a detailed COVID Safety Plan in place to protect community health.

Both facilities are undertaking a range of additional measures to protect pool users from COVID-19, including additional cleaning and the provision of sanitising stations.

"The 1.5 metre social distancing rule will be strictly monitored at all times, and the numbers of people allowed in each area may be limited," Council's Co-ordinator of Public & Town Spaces, Richard Morsley, said.

Advisory posters are displayed throughout both facilities, along with regular messages over the public announcement system to remind people of social distancing and hygiene requirements.

With residents experiencing a tough year, Council is looking to stage family fun days and live music at the pool to add some summer cheer. Keep an eye on [Council's website](#) and [Facebook page](#) for event announcements.

Opening hours

Monckton Aquatic Centre

Weekdays: 6am to 7pm (Daylight Savings Time)

Weekends & Public Holidays: 10am to 7pm (DST) Except Christmas Day

Guyra Swimming Pool

Monday, Wednesday & Friday: 6.30am-8am & 10am-6pm

Tuesday & Thursday: 10am-6pm

Weekends & Public Holidays: 10.30am-5.30pm

Benefits filter in from new pump

The Monckton Aquatic Centre team is particularly pumped about the start of the new summer season, with new filtration equipment installed for the centre last month.

The upgraded pumping system includes variable-speed, highly-efficient electric motors that will help cut energy consumption and bring significant cost savings.

The state-of-the-art motors will also provide greater flexibility for centre management by enabling staff to adjust the flow and speed of filtration in response to water quality levels. Filtration can be sped up during times of peak usage, then slowed during quieter periods to conserve energy.

The 30-year-old pumps they replaced could only operate at maximum capacity.

"The custom-designed new system, built onsite by supplier J.A.C. Pump Services with Council's boilermaker, has the potential to cut energy consumption demands by half," Council's Co-ordinator of Public & Town Space, Richard Morsley, said.

It will also save money and enhance safety during maintenance of the aquatic centre's filtration system. Maintaining the filter strainers on the old system required operators to enter a confined space that was a major safety issue.

Until the system could be replaced, Council was therefore required to engage professional divers to access the strainers.

"The suction strainers are now in the plant room alongside the pumps, allowing operators to easily access and clean them," Mr Morsley said.



UV filter brings cleaner pool water

Guyra Pool users will enjoy even cleaner water thanks to a UV filtration system installed earlier this year.

The \$50,000 system was fitted at the end of the 2019/20 pool season and was used for the first time as Guyra Pool management prepared for this season's opening on 5 October.

Council's Director – Businesses and Services, Scot MacDonald, said the new system would enable Council to keep

the pool water quality well above quality standards, irrespective of the original water source.

"With Council now moving to diversify our town water supplies, this system will enable us to treat water that has been sourced from Guyra Dam or Malpas Dam," Mr MacDonald said.

"Treating with water using an ultraviolet system helps to improve chlorine levels in pool water, which reduces eye irritation."

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Waste services

Regional landfill brings long-term waste solution

Waste trucks have started delivering to a new regional landfill facility that is expected to meet the Armidale local government area's landfill needs for the next half a century.

The \$12 million Waterfall Way Regional Landfill became operational this month and is designed to accept up to 15,000 tonnes per annum of general solid waste.

The new landfill is not open to the public. Waste will continue to be sorted through Armidale and Guyra's waste management facilities to ensure Council maintains a high level of waste diversion from landfill through organics processing and sorting of recyclables.

Director - Businesses and Services Scot MacDonald said it has been a long road to developing the new regional landfill facility but absolutely necessary as the existing landfill cells in Armidale are at capacity and the Guyra landfill cells are in need of extensive rehabilitation to meet current environmental standards and have not been operational for many years.

"Our community expects a high standard of environmental



management and Council has delivered a landfill that minimises the impact on the environment and meets current standards rigorously managed by the NSW Government," Mr MacDonald said.

The [Operational Plan and Budget for 2020/21 Financial Year](#) includes a harmonisation of waste service charges to align Armidale and Guyra residents and introduced new charges for the operation of the new regional landfill.

Fee aims for better bag use

A small subsidised charge has been introduced for replacement City to Soil compostable bags, to help ensure they are being used for their intended purpose.

The \$2 charge per roll was introduced in July after an audit examining the number of bags provided by Council and the number of bags used in the kerbside bins found many are not being used for the City to Soil service.

"Council is continuing to subsidise the bags to ensure they are readily available at a low cost," Council's Acting Manager Waste Services, Mike Brooks, said.

"That \$2 charge is less than half of the cost to Council to purchase the bags in bulk and each roll is a year's supply for the average household.

"When people are required to pay for something, even if the fee is small, they are more inclined to use it effectively."

Mr Brooks said many households are correctly using the compostable bags and do a great job with City to Soil.

"However, the bags collected from Council and used for other purposes – or just not used at all – are effectively being subsidised by our ratepayers, with no benefit to effective waste management," he said.

Money collected from the \$2 charge will be directed back into the City to Soil program.

Guyra bin audit identifies need for greater organics diversion

An audit of Guyra residential kerbside bins found that waste in the red-lid general waste bin contained, on average, around 40% organic waste that could be reused.

While there were a number of positive findings from the audit, it did identify the potential to divert a lot more organics waste from landfill through Council's successful [City to Soil program](#). By weight, loose food waste comprised the largest component of material in the red-lid bin and represented an additional 2.4kg of organic waste that could be redirected to City to Soil.

The audit in mid-June coincided with the first anniversary of Council's extension of the City to Soil kerbside collection to Guyra and evaluated how effectively the service has been adopted by households in that area.

A contract auditor assessed the contents of green-lid and red-lid bins at 100 randomly

selected homes, to quantify levels of contamination in the organics waste bin and check the landfill waste bins for organic waste that should be directed to City to Soil.

In response to the audit results, Council will soon launch a renewed community information campaign about City to Soil and the items that should go in the green-lid bin. The campaign will incorporate Guyra and Armidale, with recent anecdotal evidence indicating there has been a drop in diversion rates of organic waste from red-lid bins in the Armidale kerbside collection areas in recent years.

Council's City to Soil program has been a national leader and a benchmark in organics diversion and reuse and the information campaign will aim to ensure strong community support continues to drive the program's excellent results.



New signage to appear on the region's Cleanaway kerbside waste collection trucks, as part of a renewed community education campaign for City to Soil and recycling.

Works scheduled for Dumaresq Dam safety

The Dumaresq Dam wall will be strengthened to protect the dam's future and the safety of people downstream, following an announcement of State Government funding for the works.

The NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) will provide 50 percent of the estimated \$8.1 million cost, with the Member for Northern Tablelands Adam Marshall helping to secure the funding.

Council will fund the remaining 50 percent, with work expected to start in early 2021.

Dam Safety NSW assessments found the Dumaresq Dam wall did not meet current safety standards and was at risk of failure during an extreme flooding event, posing a threat to people downstream.

Extensive community consultation in 2014 revealed overwhelming support to retain



the dam at its current height to maintain the popular recreation area.

Interim Administrator Viv May said the recreational area around the dam is considered by the Armidale community as a valued public space with huge potential for development and improvement.

"It's an area of natural beauty with a wonderful walking track, including parkland areas popular for family gatherings and water activities," said Mr May

"Redevelopment plans for the recreation area have been drawn up and Council is actively exploring funding opportunities."

Calling Armidale's passionate ambassadors

Are you an Armidale region ambassador? Are you passionate and knowledgeable about the region, its history, art galleries, national parks and the many attractions our local government area has to offer visitors?

The Armidale Visitor Information Centre is looking for additional volunteers to welcome visitors and help promote the area.

"Many of our volunteers retired from their roles in recent months, so we are looking for some new friendly faces to help out," the Visitor Information Centre Manager, Katrina George, said.

"Our volunteers love the fact they meet and greet so many holiday makers exploring our region.

"In many cases, our volunteers are the first point of contact for people travelling here."

An average of 200 people visit the Armidale VIC each day, with many more during busy holiday periods.

The centre is open Monday to Saturday and volunteers typically provide four hours of their time each week.

"The volunteers' role is to ensure visitors have the knowledge, maps and information to explore our region, have a great time while they are here, and hopefully extend their stay for a few additional nights," Ms George said.

To find out more or register your interest, drop into the Visitor Information Centre during business hours or contact Katrina George on 6770 3906.



Wealth of volunteer input helps to reopen museum of mining history

Hillgrove Rural Life and Industry Museum has reopened to the public after a nine-month closure.

A group of keen volunteers and Council staff gave the 125-year-old building a spring clean on Saturday in preparation for last month's reopening.

The working bee swept, vacuumed and dusted inside and outside the former school house and began the process of refreshing and revitalising the displays, which feature artefacts and photographs from the village's heyday more than 100 years ago.

Hillgrove was a thriving gold mining town at the turn of the 19th

Century, home to six pubs, four churches and a population exceeding 3000 people.

The museum displays capture those heady days of mining and rural life in the village and surrounds, which went into decline as the gold mines ceased to be profitable at the start of the 1900s.

Visit Council's website for opening hours.

Volunteers are always welcome to assist at the museum.

Interested people can contact the museum's Interim Coordinator, Bronwyn Clarke, at bclarke@armidale.nsw.gov.au or 0438 752011.



High time for playground fun

The sights and sounds of Curtis Park have been transformed, with construction of the new playground now complete.

At the time of publication, the playground was scheduled to be open to the public in late October.

Visit Council's website for further information.

The new Armidale playground features a nine-metre-tall SkyTower, a SkyRider flying fox, Geo Climbers and sensory equipment.

Several additional items of play equipment have also been added in response to a community survey conducted by Council

and cost savings achieved during the project. The highly anticipated project also includes two trampolines, a Bushwood Balance Trail, and a Tropicana Bungalow, which were the top ranking items in the community survey conducted in June.

Rubber soft fall was laid, secure fencing was erected and finishing touches were made to the barbecues and shelter during the final weeks of construction.

Council engaged Moduplay to design, construct and install the new playground, after receiving \$999,700 in State Government funding for the project.

Leash reminder for dog owners

Council's Rangers have received an increased number of complaints about unrestrained dogs in and around public open spaces in recent months, as more people are getting out in the warmer weather.

Dog owners are reminded about the need to keep their pets on a leash whenever they are in a public area – other than designated leash-free areas.

"We have been receiving complaints about unleashed dogs in and near reserves, parks, sporting ovals and cycleways," Council's Acting Team Leader – Rangers, Ian Chetcuti, said.

"There are a number of designated off-leash exercise areas for dogs in Armidale and each of them are equipped with watering points and poo bags."

[Visit Council's website to see the locations of each off-leash exercise area.](#)

"We will be conducting frequent patrols of other areas where unleashed dogs are known to be a problem," he said.

"Penalty notices will be issued to people who are allowing dogs to roam off-leash or who are not complying with signs about dogs in parks."

He said roaming dogs were also leading to an increase in the number of dog attacks on livestock, particularly with the development of rural residential housing developments. "Owners have a responsibility to ensure their dogs are contained in a secure yard," Mr Chetcuti said.

"There are serious penalties for owners of dogs who escape from their yard and injure or threaten people or other animals."

Council has been contacting owners of dogs deemed to be dangerous or a restricted breed, advising them of the need to obtain a new annual permit. The NSW Government recently introduced the new permits for restricted dog breeds, dogs that are registered as dangerous and pet cats that aren't desexed. Visit the [Office of Local Government website](#) for details.

Site approved for preschool

A new purpose-built and larger Guyra Early Childhood Learning Centre (ECLC) moved a step closer last month, when the September Ordinary Council Meeting approved the site for the facility.

The meeting endorsed locating the centre behind Council's Guyra administration building, clearing the way for a development application for the facility to be publically advertised this month.

Visit Council's Your Say Armidale website to read more about the new Early Childhood Learning Centre, including community feedback to a survey on the centre design, and to see Council's 'On Exhibition' items.

The new facility will enable the ECLC to double its maximum number of enrolments, to 58 places in the Long Day Care and Preschool centre and 30 places for before and after school care and vacation care.

Council's Interim Administrator, Viv May, said that will increase the number of local families that can access the centre's services and strengthen its long-term financial viability.

"Locating the ECLC at that site will be central to creating an educational and community hub in the centre of Guyra, complementing the library, Council's Civic Administration Building and The Hub community centre," Mr May said.

The resolution endorsed a recommendation to locate the ECLC building at the north of the site, to maximise natural light in the building, minimise energy consumption, locate outdoor play areas away from residential dwellings and minimise noise impacts.

The decision also endorsed traffic access to and from the facility from Moredun Street.

"After conducting a preliminary traffic study and liaising with neighbouring residents and businesses, access from Moredun Street was recommended as the best option," he said.

"That will enable the centre's drop-off bay to be located in the centre of the site, next to the building, to assist with traffic flows and keep children away from the road."

Mr May said a more detailed traffic study would be undertaken to help finalise the site design and identify recommended road modifications to further assist traffic flows and road safety.

Council meetings

The general public is welcome to attend any Armidale Regional Council meeting:

- Wednesday 28 October 2020, 4pm in Armidale
- Wednesday 25 November 2020, 4pm in Armidale
- Wednesday 9 December 2020, 4pm in Guyra

Seating is limited during COVID restrictions. Register by emailing executiveoffice@armidale.nsw.gov.au

Workshops and closed sessions (in private) are not open to the public.



Live Streaming

Council meetings are now streamed live on our [youtube channel](#) or via our website!

Participate at a Council meeting

Public access is available for members of our community to voice their opinion on an issue at Council.

Public access will only be granted for items listed on the agenda.

Each address will be limited to a maximum of two (2) speakers for and two (2) speakers against the agenda item.

The address is to be no longer than five (5) minutes.

How to apply

Requests must be submitted by 12 noon on the day prior to the meeting.

A form is available on our website under 'Participate at a Council Meeting'

Contact Us



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Visit a Customer Service Centre @

135 Rusden St, Armidale or
158 Bradley St, Guyra

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Solar lights for safer cycleway

New solar lighting along the Armidale cycleway is now in place from Markham Street to west of Niagara Street.

All 49 lights have been erected and are now operating to improve pedestrian and cyclist safety along a 1.3km stretch of the cycleway.

Council received \$450,000 in funding through Round 3 of the Federal Government's Safer Communities Fund, for a two-part project:

Replace five CCTV analogue cameras in Armidale's Beardy Street Mall with digital cameras and upgrade the network's include optic fibre infrastructure

Install and commission solar lights on the cycleway within the Armidale CBD precinct

A location was identified for new solar lighting along the Armidale Cycleway, between Markham Street and the Donnelly Street bridge, following advice from Armidale police because of the high number of users on that section and police records of previous incidents.

Cost efficiencies identified during the detailed design process, in consultation with the designer, Lightning Art & Science, and the tender submission from contractor JLE have allowed the number of solar lights to be increased to 49. They will now cover an extended section of the cycleway totalling 1.3km – 44 from Markham Street and Niagara Street and a further five lights on the western section from Niagara Street.

Harris Park lights

The local sporting community recently celebrated the construction of new field lighting at Harris Park sportsground in Armidale.

Member for New England Barnaby Joyce and Interim Administrator Viv May joined sporting community representatives to officially switch on the lights, which will enable night training.

The project to install six 25-30m high steel poles and cost-effective variable intensity LED luminaires received \$190,000 in funding from Sport Australia under the Community Sport Infrastructure Program, with a \$70,000 contribution from Council and \$90,000 from developer contributions.

Harris Park is well utilised by a number of sporting clubs including athletics, soccer and cricket.

Business grants

Council is offering a helping hand to small businesses across the region that have been significantly affected by drought, fire, or the COVID-19 pandemic.

Applications are open for \$2,000 grants to eligible local businesses, as part of the \$900,000 NSW Government Drought Stimulus Funding. Businesses must be locally owned and operated, and be planning to use the cash boost for expansion or improvement of their online services. The assistance is also available for business start-ups.

Interim Administrator Viv May says the grants could not come at a better time.

"The drought has taken a huge toll on small businesses across the region, and now there is the added burden of the bushfires and COVID-19," he said. "Through these grants, Council hopes to ease some of the unforeseen financial strain that many people are facing during this period."

A total of 50 grants are available and successful applicants will be notified by November 16.