

councilconnect receives top accolade...

A decision to embrace social media and improve the way council communicates with local residents has proven to be a winner, with Mackay Regional Council collecting a National Communication Award.



Council was awarded the Brand Communication Award for its Council Connect initiative by Government Communications Australia.

Government Communications Australia is a national organisation that represents media, marketing, events and public relation professionals working in Local Government across Australia.

Mayor Col Meng said the recognition was testament to the commitment and hard work of council's small communication team.

"Staff really embraced the new format and have dedicated many hours to achieving our objectives," he said.

Council Connect is a fully integrated branded print,

television and digital media strategy which aims to inform our local community about council's projects, events and facilities.

Mr Furdek said judges labelled Council Connect as "forwarding thinking" and "something unique" for Local Government in Australia.

"Council produces a fortnightly television infomercial, which is shown on Channel 7 and WIN TV and then uploaded on to our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/mackayregionalcouncil) and YouTube channel,"

"This gives local residents access to it at a time that suits them," Mr Furdek said.

Council also produces monthly print features in the Sarina and Pioneer Valley local community newspapers

and Daily Mercury. This is complemented with fortnightly eNewsletters. Residents are encouraged to subscribe to receive the eNews via council's website, www.mackay.qld.gov.au/eNewsletters.

And it all comes at a saving to the community, resulting in an 8 per cent reduction in costs compared to the traditional bi-monthly magazine style publication, In Focus that was previously distributed.

CEO Peter Franks said council supported the innovative format because it was more cost-effective and efficient.

>> Council is continually looking at ways to improve what we do and how we do it to benefit the community.



Have your say!

Feedback on Welcome Centre - closes Friday

Help us ensure those who migrate or move to the Mackay region feel welcome and settle with ease.

Anyone who has moved to Mackay or any businesses or industry professionals who have dealt with employees migrating to the region are invited to let us know their thoughts on the process.

Feedback is being taken by council's Connecting Mackay website - www.connectingmackay.com.au/welcomecentre.

>> Deadline for feedback is Friday, April 6.



Nominate our sporting people

Sporting stars both on and off the field are being sought to nominate in the North Queensland Sports Foundation Sports Awards, open now!

There are four categories available for nomination including Senior (18 years and over), Junior (must be under 18), Service to North Queensland Sport (non-paid volunteers only) and North Queensland Athlete with a Disability.

Successful applicants have the chance to pick up sporting apparel, trophies and cash prizes between \$500 and \$2000.

>> Nominate online at www.mackay.qld.gov.au/sportstarawards by Monday, March 26 at 5pm.

Easter Laneway Festival heads into the nooks and crannies of the City Centre



Make sure you see the City Centre transform on Easter Sunday (April 8) from 10am to 10pm!

Mackay's newest event, the Mackay Telegraph Easter Laneway Festival is set to delight, intrigue and inspire residents and visitors to the region.

The day will be bursting at the seams with events and activities including a Mad Hatters Tea Party, Easter Egg hunt, outdoor cinema at the Old Town Hall Park and a handful of hidden laneways bursting with entertainment.

The Mackay Telegraph Easter Laneway Festival is something you definitely don't want to miss. Come along and unlock the secrets of our City Centre this Easter Sunday.

This unique event is brought to you by the Mackay Telegraph and Mackay Regional Council in partnership with City Centre businesses.

>> For further details head to www.mackayfestival.org.au

Harmony Day welcomes new Aussie citizens



The Mackay region will welcome over 70 new citizens tonight (Wednesday, March 21) at a Citizenship Ceremony to be held at the Mackay Entertainment and Convention Centre.

Today marks Harmony Day; a special day where all Australians celebrate our cultural diversity. Harmony Day provides the opportunity to celebrate what makes each Australian unique and share what we have in common.

The continuing message for Harmony Day is that 'Everyone Belongs'.

Harmony Day began in 1999, and since then more than 25,000 Harmony Day events have been held.

So why not get together with work colleagues, friends and family to celebrate the cultures that make our region a great place to live. Host a morning or afternoon tea this week with each person bringing along a plate of food from a different culture.

>> For more information or ideas visit www.harmony.gov.au.

Planning update

The Mackay Region Planning Scheme currently being developed will shape the future of our region.

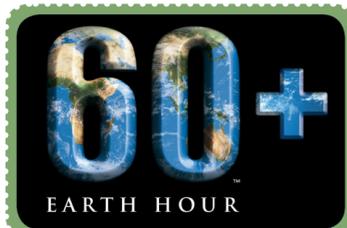
This will be the first planning scheme to cover the entire region from Bloomsbury to Koumala, Eungella to Mackay and everywhere in between. The planning scheme will provide a strategic and detailed direction for managing development and land use in the region. It is expected the draft planning scheme will be available for public consultation later in the year.

>> To stay informed, sign up for the planning scheme eNewsletter, www.mackay.qld.gov.au/planningscheme.

Did you know?

Reducing our water consumption by 10 per cent would defer the need to invest in new water infrastructure for four years. The saving is immense so council will look to install automatic meter reading, leak detection and a social marketing campaign to encourage us to reduce our consumption.

Switch off for Earth Hour



With just 10 days to go until Earth Hour, Council is calling on residents and businesses across the region to be part of the annual event by turning off their lights on Saturday, March 31 from 8.30pm to 9.30pm.

Last year saw hundreds of millions of people across 135 countries participate in the initiative.

Council will be doing its part once again by ensuring as many non-essential

lighting fixtures at a variety of facilities will be switched off during the scheduled hour.

Residents can always work towards a more sustainable future by reducing their water consumption, recycling right and making greener choices where possible such as walking to the corner shop instead of driving the car.

>> Visit www.ecomackay.com.au for more tips and tricks.

Volunteering at council

Volunteering is a rewarding activity that allows you to give back to your community whilst making new friends and learning new skills. Mackay Regional Council has a number of facilities and areas that are in need of volunteers to lend a helping hand.

- > Artspace Mackay
- > Greenmount Homestead
- > Historical Centres/Museums
- > Library Services
- > MECC
- > Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens
- > Mackay Region Festival of Arts
- > Natural Environment activities
- > Orchid House
- > Sarina Sugar Shed



>> If you want to volunteer, go to www.mackay.qld.gov.au/volunteering to register your interest.



Get to know your neighbour

This Sunday (March 25) marks the 10th annual Neighbour Day celebrations where people are encouraged to get to know those who live next door. Neighbour Day provides a great reason for residents to take the time to have a chat, cuppa or barbie with those who live over the fence or down the street.

Mayor Col Meng said you never know when you might need the help of those around you, especially during times of need such as natural disasters or emergencies.

"A neighbour can provide more than a cup of sugar; they can be a helping hand during a clean up or great company at a weekend barbecue with friends and family."

There are no costs to participate in Neighbour Day and by visiting the website www.neighbourday.org you can download a free kit containing invitations, name tags, posters and a 'how to' guide.

>> For more details on Neighbour Day, visit their website.



A snapshot of our history...



As Mackay is celebrating its 150th anniversary this year, Mackay Regional Council is promoting a monthly image from our Library Service's Heritage Collection at the Mackay City Library.

Image for March (pictured left) River Street, Mackay after the 1918 cyclone.

Damage and debris in River Street after the cyclone and tidal surge of January 20-21, 1918. Buildings (right to left) Prince of Wales Hotel and annexe, Shepherd's Anvil Stores, River View Hotel and Hossack's. The prominent two-storeyed building on the left hand side of the photography is Paxton's Warehouse.

>> To view the Heritage Collection visit the Mackay City Library, for opening hours phone 4961 9387.

Egg-cellent Easter activities available for the kids...



Entertain the kids these holidays with the following great activities across the region.

Artspace Mackay
> Colourful collage creation (April 11 to 12 from 10am to 3pm) \$20 per child

Aquatic Facilities
> Holiday Intensive Sessions (April 2 to 5) \$48 at the Pioneer Swim Centre
> Mission Inflatable (April 11 and 18)

Libraries
> Eggcellent Easter Crafts (April 2 to 5) Free of charge

Botanic Gardens
> Seed Mysteries (April 3, 4, 5, 10, 11 and 12 from 10am to 12noon) \$5 per child

>> For more info, activities, or to book, call 1300 MACKAY.

