



Delivering information to our region

Council is embarking on a new format of delivering information to our customers. Welcome to the first edition of Council Connect - a monthly two page feature in the Daily Mercury, which provides information on council's projects, activities, initiatives and services.

The monthly publication is complemented by a weekly e-newsletter which is delivered to your inbox and a fortnightly two-minute television update, which airs on Channel 7 on Monday and Tuesday nights.

Corporate Communications Manager Ken Furdek said the innovative approach was a saving to council and would better service the needs of our residents and ratepayers.

"It is important we provide as much information as we can to keep residents and ratepayers informed," he said.

The new strategy, endorsed by council, replaces the production of 48,000 copies of the bi-monthly Infocus resident newsletter, which was delivered to households across the region.

Finance and Technology portfolio councillor Darryl Camilleri said establishing Council Connect

was identified as part of council's Service Level Review.

"The Service Level Review looks to identify savings and find ways to deliver services in the most cost effective way," he said.

"This would ultimately minimise future rate increases."

>> To view the first Council Connect television update, visit our website.

Future dwellings in the region



Mackay Regional Council has drafted a Residential Densities Strategy to cater for the region's continued population growth and changing demographics.

The draft strategy forms an important building block in the development of the new Mackay 200K Planning Scheme and is part of council's vision for a more sustainable region.

Council forecasts that a population as high as 200,000 people will live in the Mackay Regional Council area by 2031 and around 1200 new dwellings are needed each year to accommodate this growth.

Encouraging higher density residential development will improve housing affordability, reduce urban sprawl and meet household requirements.

Council's draft Residential Densities Strategy is available for viewing at all of council's Customer Service Centres and libraries until 5pm on Friday, March 25, 2011.

>> Members of the community are encouraged to lodge submissions before this date. For details, visit our website.

Invaluable experience for students

Over the Summer break university students are often looking for extra work so council put the call out and opened a number of vacation positions in the water department.

Six engineering students grabbed the spots, providing them with the opportunity to put their theoretical learning to the test.

The students, Mitchell Irving, Tim Dalton, Tim Robinson, Anthony Deguara, Matthew Sant and Jonathon Armstrong were paired with industry professionals in order to gain as much practical experience as possible. They each worked on different projects including inflow and infiltration, sewerage pump station upgrades, material schedules and treatment plant operations.

Matthew Sant said the experience has been very valuable to his degree and has provided him with a foot in the door to begin his career.

"Working with council has provided me with the practical experience that you just don't get at university, I have been given the opportunity to work on real projects which has been great for my experience," he said.

Rates notices:
For the half year ending 30 June 2011 rates have been posted and are due and payable by Friday, March 11, 2011. For approved pensioners the due date is Friday, June 24, 2011.

What's on @ the MECC

Gwilym Simcock

> Sunday, February 20 from 7pm @ MECC North Foyer.

Direct from the Perth Festival is British pianist/composer Gwilym Simcock (pictured right), who at 29, already has an enviable reputation as one of the UK's fastest-rising jazz stars. Gwilym moves effortlessly between jazz and classical and his music has been widely acclaimed as 'engaging, exciting, often unexpected, melodically enthralling, complex and wonderfully optimistic.'

"A phenomenal talent, Simcock is a jewel in the crown of the country's jazz scene," (Guardian, UK)



\$30 Admission

\$28 Friend of the MECC

\$20 Students and Youth Under 25

>> For upcoming shows, visit www.mackayecc.com.au.



Swimming is a vital skill for life, that's why Mackay Regional Council's aquatic facilities offer a wide range of swimming programs catering for all ages and skill sets. Current programs available for enrollment include:

> Learn 2 Swim classes - held every afternoon and Saturday mornings at the Pioneer Swim Centre.

> Infant classes - held every Saturday morning at the Pioneer Swim Centre.

> Junior and senior squad program - runs Monday to Saturday.

> Adult Swim for Fitness sessions - run at both Pioneer and Memorial swim centres between Monday to Thursday.

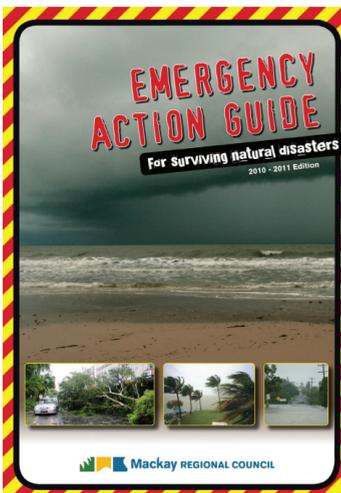
>> For more information on any of the programs listed phone council on 1300 MACKAY.

Stay vigilant and be prepared...

The Mackay region has felt the brunt of floods, cyclones and unseasonable rain and this year is no exception with the region already being placed under threat of two tropical cyclones - Anthony and Yasi.

Council's Emergency Action Guide provides valuable information on how to best prepare for the storm season. Storm surge inundation maps are also included, the zones for the region are purple, grey, orange, pink and brown.

Collect a copy from council's Customer Service Centres or download a copy at council's website.



>> For more details on how to prepare for the storm season, visit our website.

Lend a hand at Bucasia Beach

Working with the community to manage coastal areas is a major part of the Mackay Coasts and Communities project, a joint initiative of Mackay Regional Council and Reef Catchments.

A series of working bees are planned for 2011 to provide opportunities for the community to get involved in the management of their local beach. By taking part in coastal activities, residents can meet their neighbours, have fun, learn about coastal processes and contribute to the improved condition of local dunes and beaches.

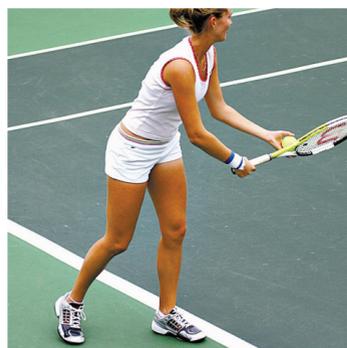
The next community working bee will be held at Bucasia Beach on Saturday, February 26 from 8am to 10am.

The focus will be on weed control, so come along and pull out some weeds and help make a difference to the condition of the coastal vegetation.

Follow the signs from the northern end of Waverley Street and head towards the beach via the access track near the end of the street. Weeds will be targeted between the access track and the swimming enclosure. Wear sturdy shoes, protective clothing and a hat.

>> For more information on the Coasts and Communities Project or to find out when the next activity is planned for your local beach, visit our website.

Grants close this Friday



With only a few days remaining community and sporting groups need to get their grant submissions in now. This round is the last chance to gain monetary support for the 2010/11 financial year and it closes on Friday, February 18.

Over six categories are available for submission including Community Organisation Development, Community Facilities Upgrade/Development, Sport and Recreation Development and much more.

For assistance in completing an application, phone council's Community Development Program on 1300 MACKAY.

>> To view the application form, policy and guidelines, visit our website today.

Libraries tick all the boxes...

Mackay Regional Council library services recently surveyed 800 customers across all of their six branches to gauge customer satisfaction about their library experience and the service provided by staff.

As an incentive to complete the survey, residents went into the draw to win a \$100 prize. Congratulations to the lucky winner from the Sarina Library, Mrs Shirley Butler.

Results were extremely positive with 98 per cent of customers satisfied with their local library branch and service. The survey also identified the top five reasons to visit the library which included to borrow items, for internet use, to attend Storytime (2 to 5 year olds stories, song and craft program), to read the newspaper or a magazine.



Photo caption: Libraries Manager Jan Kilbourne and Cr Karen May present Shirley Butler with her prize.

>> For more information on opening times, locations and what's on offer at your local library, visit our website.

Sport Expo a huge success



The Sports Expo and Sign-on Day held at the Mackay Entertainment and Convention Centre on Sunday (Feb 13) proved to be a big hit with over 4000 people attending.

The expo was a one-stop shop for sporting information with 80 clubs and recreation groups on hand for families. Council looks forward to making this an annual event!

>> For sports, recreational and facilities information, visit our website or alternatively sign up for Recreational Services monthly e-newsletter to stay up-to-date with the latest news.

Project Snapshot - Glenpark St

Glenpark Street intersection with Evans Avenue, Nth Mackay

Start date - 14 January 2011 Expected completion - 18 March 2011

Cost - \$800,000

Scope of project - Traffic signalisation and walkway with retaining walls and minor road works at the turning lanes. Works include minor earthworks, drainage, pavement widening and sealing, electrical installation of traffic lights, installation of signage and line marking, landscaping, retaining wall construction and traffic control.



>> For more information on road works and traffic disruptions, visit our website.

