

Congratulations 'SA Stumpy'!



On Wednesday 24th November 2004 at the 'SA Regional Awards 2004' held at Renmark, the local Murray Bridge Event 'SA Stumpy Awards' was awarded a commendation award in the category of the 'ARTS' for the Riverland/Murraylands area.



David Altmann, Max & Jacqui Merckenschlager & Mayor Allan Arbon

Mayor Allan Arbon was in attendance and proudly accepted the award on behalf of 'SA Stumpy'. Mayor Arbon later presented the commendation award to a very pleased Max & Jacqui Merckenschlager at the Local Government Centre.

The 'SA Stumpy' Awards (August 2004) was the first of an annual bush poetry event held in Murray Bridge.

The 'SA Stumpy Awards' was born from an idea of one innovative and passionate Bush Poet, Mr Max Merckenschlager. Mr Merckenschlager is the event Co-ordinator, and works with other community members, Council and members of the Community Cultural Development Advisory Committee to the Rural City of Murray Bridge.

Entries from as far a field as Mackay, Queensland were received for the first Annual Stumpy Poetry Awards, which were held on the banks of the Murrundi, (the mighty River Murray) at the Murray Bridge Community Club. It was considered this was the ideal location to hold the poetry event.

The event was held during SALA Week (SA Living Artists) to complement other local offerings, including the Murray Bridge Regional Art Gallery's exhibition.

- Winners of the two open events (written & recital) received a bronze trophy, created by local sculptor Goran Yakas, of our icon the summer ubiquitous Shingleback Lizard, known locally as the "Stumpy Lizard".

- Poetry performances were family-friendly.
- Acapello singing groups, a one-act play and didgeridoo solos were other performance features, adding atmosphere and excitement to the awards concert.

As reported from the Murray Valley Standard – Thursday 12 August, 2004

"People of all ages were enthusiastic about the day and the quality of poetry and performance was truly inspiring. The event was a great community performance. The river site was a magical and a priceless backdrop for the open-air poets breakfast held on the lawns of Sturt Reserve.

Max Merckenschlager (Event – Coordinator) said "the supporting acts were superb. 'Finely Tuned' sang their hearts out and Herman Striegnitz, from Top Ant Production, showed why he is widely regarded as Australia's best didgeridoo player.

Wayne Monjean (on didgeridoo) and Damian Jolly (narrator) had children of all ages excited with their presentation of 'Kangaroo Hunt'."

Accessibility Advisory Committee

The Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) provides information and advice on policies strategies and projects that will assist Council to meet its obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992.

The Committee is made up of community members who have a disability themselves or who work for a local organisation with an interest in the needs of people with disabilities.

The main function of the AAC is the implementation, review and monitoring of the Disability Action Plan, providing a strategic framework for correcting the many difficulties faced by people with disabilities in accessing Council services and facilities.

Achievements of the ACC on access improvements in 2004/2005 are as follows:-

- Instrumental in the development of a new kerbing profile to be implemented late 2004.
- Assisted with the development of the Footpath & Kerbing Management Plan for the Rural City of Murray Bridge.
- Australian Standards – request for the implementation of Australian Standards specifically in relation to gophers & electric wheelchairs.
- Long Island Disabled Facilities.
- Murray Bridge Regional Gallery Disabled Facilities
- International Day of People with a Disability held at the Murray Bridge Regional Gallery.
- Wheelie, Wheelie Good Day – Gopher Information Awareness.
- Review of the Bi-Lo car parking facilities including access & egress.

- Review of the Woolworths access & egress.
- Improvements to Railway Seating.
- Instrumental in the securing of an appropriate accessible public town bus.



International Day of People with a disABILITY was celebrated on the 3rd of December at the newly refurbished Murray Bridge Regional Gallery. 150 people attended to celebrate the achievements of people with disabilities and to recognise the contributions they make in our local community. It was an excellent opportunity to raise awareness about disability issues in Murray Bridge

This year was a very special combined celebration of the first exhibition held at the Murray Bridge Regional Gallery and International Day of People with a disAbility. Stage 2 works have transformed the Gallery into an accessible delight for all mobility-impaired persons. The Gallery now boasts a new disabled toilet, complying disabled ramp and level/flat access throughout the building as well as many other attractions.

A 'Certificate of Recognition' was awarded to the local franchise 'Kentucky Fried Chicken' who have demonstrated their commitment to the community through encouraging disabled people to become members of their work team. Frank Pacecca (Store Manager) was there to accept the Award.

For 'Individual' recognition a certificate and gift voucher was awarded to Ms Brooke Medlow. Brooke is a motivated young lady who keeps her family very busy with her hectic schedule. She is a wonderful advocate who promotes awareness of issues faced by people with disabilities. With the support of her family, Brooke has overcome many social and environmental factors she has faced through life's journey. Brooke is always looking for opportunities to learn and try new things. Well done and Congratulations!



Frank Pacecca (KFC)

Brooke Medlow & Katrina

Store Manager) &
Katrina Webb
Accessible Business
Recognition Award

Webb
Individual Award

WHEELIE WHEELIE GOOD DAY!!

The Rural City of Murray Bridge, held 'Wheelie Wheelie Good Day' on Thursday 11th November 2004. The aim of the day was to provide information to people who drive small wheel vehicles (scooters/gophers) that wanted to know how they fit within the legal framework of the Road Rules.

The day was initiated by the Accessibility Advisory Committee with the help and support Home and Community Care (HACC).

Council's Accessibility Advisory Committee is an advocacy group rather than an action group. The Committee is representative of a cross section of people from our community who have disabilities. Its key functions are to:-

- Identify the kinds of difficulties faced by people with disabilities in Rural City of Murray Bridge.
- Develop and update the Disability Action Plan;
- Assist all areas of Council's operation to recognize the service needs of people with disabilities, incorporate them into basic requirements for providing services, facilities and infrastructure;
- Advise and assist Council to educate the wider community on access difficulties faced by people with disabilities.

"Under the Road Rules, a mobility scooter is classified as a pedestrian (and is not subject to registration and licensing requirements) provided it cannot travel at a speed greater than 10 km/hr (on level ground).

The bad weather initially was a concern, however, it was decided to continue and re-assess conditions prior to completing the practical in the afternoon.

Mayor Allan Arbon opened the day presenting participants with information kits and 'Wheelie Wheelie Good Day' T/Shirts. SA Police Traffic Division (Senior Constable Geoff Capper) with Occupational Therapist Rebecca Tootell delivered the theory section of the training to approximately 40 people. 'All Scooters', Bridge Lawn Mower Centre (Merits) and Bridgeland Motorcycles also attended to provide practical information to participants.



Senior Constable
Geoff Capper &
Mayor Allan Arbon



Helen March, trying out
a new Scooter

A successful practical session was completed in the LGC car-park in the afternoon (after the weather cleared) where participants were required to manoeuvre their way through various examples of real life situations (i.e kerb ramps, congested areas, avoid unexpected obstacles etc). All enjoyed themselves and agreed that it was a 'Wheelie Wheelie Good Day'. Due to the success of the day the Rural City will conduct further sessions next year, depending on public demand.



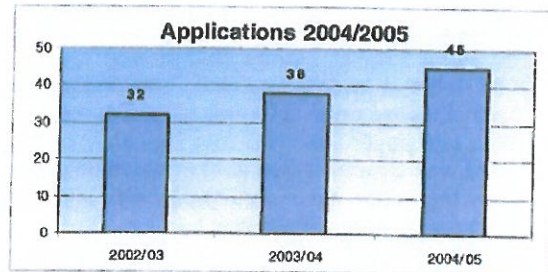
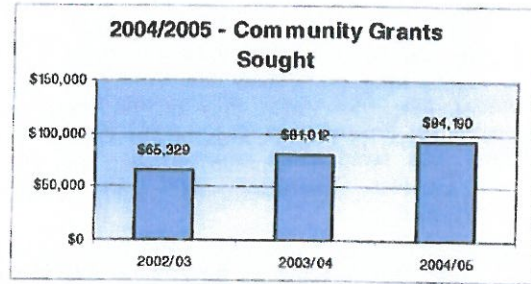
Community Grants

The Community Grants and Donations Committee, comprising Councillors Bruce Pearson, Clem Schubert, Phil Nutt and Council administrative representatives Faith Box and Shane Thompson, meet twice per year to assess applications for support for the Community Grants and Donations Program.

For this financial year (2004/05) a total amount of \$52,700 in grants was made available to community groups.

Distributed Sept 2004	\$26,514
Distributed April 2005	\$25,029
Photocopying Allowance	\$2,000
Advertising	\$237
Grant Returns	\$1,000
Total	\$52,780
Budget available	\$52,700

A total of 45 applications were received from various community groups who sought a total of \$94,190 for this financial year 2004/05 in comparisons to 38 applications and \$81,012 the previous year.



In summary the Community Grants and Donations has been very successful *and* continues to be an important means by which Council (through the Grants and Donations Committee), supports the projects of local clubs and organisations working for the community.

These areas in a broad sense include sport & recreation, environment, community and arts and culture.

YOUTH & INDIGENOUS SERVICES

The Rural City of Murray Bridge is extremely active in the area of youth affairs. Council has acknowledged the importance of this section of the community with over one third of the community aged under 24 years. Council has a range of strategies to help meet the needs of its youth population including:

Youth Advisory Committee (YAC)

The YAC is a committee made up of 15 young people aged 12-25 and facilitated by the Youth & Indigenous Community Development Officer Shane Thompson and Elected Member support from the Mayor and Councillor Phil Nutt.

The YAC has a very strong and active membership which raises awareness of youth issues in the community and seek to implement strategies and solutions to youth issues in the community.



The YAC is thought to be one of the best performing of its type in the State and has recently won ongoing funding from the State Government's 'Office for Youth' to help support the YAC. One of the identified reasons for the success of the YAC is the tremendous relationship between the YAC and Elected Members and Senior Management.

The YAC has played an integral role in all the initiatives outlined below.

Murraylands Youth Website

The Rural City of Murray Bridge won the 2005 National Awards for Local Government 'Youth Engagement' category for a Council with a rate payer base less than 15,000. This award was directly linked to the outstanding work that the YAC achieved with the Murraylands Youth Website.

The Murraylands Youth Website (www.murraylandsyouth.com.au) is truly a 'one-stop-electronic-shop' for young people in the Murraylands.

In the words of its creator, sixteen year old Sam Faulkner "...this electrifying **Youth Website** is a brilliant way for the youth of the Murraylands to communicate with each other, as well as being a goldmine of information about local youth events, youth services and jobs!"

The Murraylands Youth Website has been created by young people for young people and included an extensive community consultation with young people throughout the region by the Rural City of Murray Bridge Youth Advisory Committee.

Supported by over 10,000 promotional products selected by young people to market the website, the project was launched during National Youth Week 2005. Young people, who would normally have no interaction with Council were engaged in significant numbers to be part of this community capacity building project. As a result of the process our young people enjoy outstanding ownership of the website.

The website empowers young people in the community to 'have-a-say' and more importantly be heard! The Councils Youth Advisory Committee uses the feedback from the 'forum' to help participate in and influence policy decision making that affects them.

All the latest news on youth events, how to access youth services and support, where to find help and access local training and employment opportunities are just some of the many features of this comprehensive and relevant youth website!

Geographically the website covers the five Local Government Areas of the Rural City of Murray Bridge, Mid Murray Council, Coorong Council, Karoonda East Murray and the Southern Mallee.

The project features over 70 partnerships and covers the key stakeholders from health, well-being, education, employment, and training. Partners from all three levels of government and all leading community organisations are represented in this exciting project.

National Youth Week (NYW)

This annual celebration of the contribution that young people make to their community and country was huge in Murray Bridge with the YAC playing a significant role in festivities.

Nine Sensational Events in Nine Amazing days saw Murray Bridge host one of the best programs of events for NYW in the State according to SA's project manager Gordon Anderson.

The events were widely promoted in the Murray Valley Standard, advertisements and nightly 'guest DJ' spots on Power FM, the Murraylands Youth Website, schools, businesses and even an article in The Advertiser. The events included:

- **Battle of the Bands** – more than 500 young people rocked the Murray Bridge Basketball Stadium as seven young bands competed for a weekend recording session. The night featured a performance by last year's winner 'Distorted Aggression', 'Air Guitar' and a 'Beat Box' competition. However the night belonged to the band 'Emerge' who finished just ahead 'Endless Conclusions' in the competition.



- **Murraylands Youth Website Launch** – the National Award winning website was launched with an inspiring countdown and 'virtual tour' to start the week of celebrations.
- **YAC with YAC** – over 40 young people attended a night of pizza scoffing, Coca Cola guzzling and fun. Those present identified key issues affecting young people in the community and developed solutions that will be implemented by the YAC in 05/06
- **Sporting Challenge** – The wisdom of the Elected Members and Senior Management prevailed over the youthful enthusiasm of the YAC as the two groups went head to head in

a game of lawn bowls. The night was preceded by a BBQ and networking in a great social event.

- **Junior Chamber** – The local chapter of Junior Chamber was launched by the National Membership Manager and the Queensland State President. A small but eager group attended to hear about the exciting opportunities available to young people who get involved.
- **Day of Drama** – The Bridge Players and Singers Youth Theatre group organised a fantastic day of drama workshops and evening performances to kick off the week long activities. More than 50 young people participated in workshops on clowning, singing, drumming and dance which was followed by their performance in the evening.



- **Youth Mural Launch** – the much anticipated youth mural was launched in the Centro Bridge Plaza. The 3.6 metre by 2.4 metre mural was the result of around 50 young people working with a number of agencies to deliver the mural designed by 18 year old Murray Bridge High School student Amy Donnelly. Murray Mallee Community Health played a significant role and Murray Bridge High School students completed the mural under the direction of community artist Jeff Moore.



- **SK8 Event** – Around 300 young people attended Sturt Reserve to try their skills at the mobile Sk8 Park. All ages and

abilities showed their stuff throughout the day.



- **Rock Wall Climbing** – A long line of young people waited patiently for their turn to challenge themselves to climb the 8 metre high rock wall at Sturt Reserve.



Skate Park

Council has been working hard to develop a skate facility in Murray Bridge with the support of the Murray Bridge Rotary Club who organised a petition and have raised \$13,000.

Following extensive community consultation Sturt Reserve has been identified as the most suitable location for the proposed facility. The Skate Park will tie in with other recreational activities and the tourist heart of Murray Bridge at Sturt Reserve.

More than 50 young people have been consulted regarding the design of the proposed facility which will feature both a bowl and street course.

Funding has been actively sought from a number of sources however given the competitive market for funding it has thus far proven to be illusive. Council is confident of securing the necessary funding to turn this dream into a reality for the young people in our community who skateboard, bike ride, and use scooters and roller blades.

Youth Centre

Murray Bridge Council has previously provided its young people with a 'Youth Centre', known as the 'Hang Out'. As a result of the closure of the 'Hang Out' some years ago, a group of youth workers representing several different agencies came together to form a partnership to provide better services to young people. This group of youth workers has evolved to form the Murraylands Youth Sector Network Incorporated with around 70

members on the email list. One of the demonstrated and pressing priorities is to establish a 'youth centre' in Murray Bridge.

The Youth Advisory Committee and the Murraylands Youth Sector Network, the two groups closest to the needs of young people in the region, have both identified the need for a 'Youth Centre' to deliver services to young people, provide a space for recreation and to deliver youth related projects.

The Rural City of Murray Bridge in partnership with the Youth Advisory Committee and the Murraylands Youth Sector Network formed a 'working party' in May 2005 to help progress the project. The 'working party' consists of representatives of these key stakeholder groups and the community.

The goal of the working party is to establish, in partnership with young people, a sustainable 'Youth Centre' in Murray Bridge, which will also provide outreach services to the Murraylands.

Following the recommendation put forward by the working party, the Rural City of Murray Bridge has given 'in-principle' support for the youth centre. To be established in the Railway Station Refreshment Rooms Council requested a detailed business plan including costings associated with renovating the building.

New YAC Initiatives

Through ongoing consultation with young people in the community, the YAC has developed some exciting new initiatives for 2005 / 2006. These include:

- **Beat the Boredom Strategy** – Free regular monthly entertainment events will see local young bands entertain their peers. These events will not only be a platform for emerging young bands but also give young people in the community something to do.
- **Beach Volleyball** – A beach volleyball facility will be created to give young people an unstructured, free recreation activity at a local level. This strategy is in response to the issue of boredom and the lack of unstructured recreation activities available within the community.

Indigenous Affairs

The Rural City of Murray Bridge has been working towards strengthening links with the indigenous community who make up around 4% of the total local population which is significantly above the State average.

Initiatives that the Rural City of Murray Bridge has been involved in include:

- **Pomberuk** – Council was involved in a number of ways in the fantastic cultural centre located in on the banks of the Murray River. Pomberuk features a diversity of information, exhibits and demonstration of the traditional owners of this land.
- **Ngoppon Together** – 'Ngoppon Together' is Ngarrindjeri for 'Walking Together' which is exactly what this small but dedicated community group is working to achieve. Councils Youth and Indigenous community development officer is an integral member of the group who meet regularly to discuss ways to bring indigenous and non-indigenous people together.
- **ReconciliAction Network** – A strategy of the 'Ngoppon Together' group the 'Reconciliation Network' invites all sectors of the community to sign up to working towards reconciliation. This can be through supporting or promoting events, growing and harvesting rushes for the Ngarrindjeri weavers, attending workshops, distributing information, financial contributions or any other way to help the community on our journey towards healing.
- **NAIDOC Week** – Council plays an active role in supporting the National Aboriginal Islander Day Of Celebration. This great week of celebration included the now traditional bridge walk, flag raising ceremony and morning tea at the Local Government Centre and support of several of the other events during the week.
- **Reconciliation Day** – Ngoppon Together organised a very successful event at the Lower Murray Nungas Club to celebrate reconciliation day at a local level. Several hundred people attended this outstanding event and shared a barbeque tea that included fresh Coorong Mullet. The assembled crowd witnessed the signing of an apology and agreement from Ngoppon Together and the acceptance from the Ngarrindjeri people. Local entertainers "Now Walk Tall", Catherine Sumner, Amy and Nathan Rigney were joined by other high profile indigenous performers in a night of sensational celebrations.

The Rural City of Murray Bridge is committed to continue to 'walking together' with the indigenous community to take steps towards a brighter future for all.

CRIME PREVENTION

The primary focus for the 2004/2005 Crime Prevention Program has been to ensure that the solid foundation laid in the past has been built upon.

Council has enjoyed excellent partnerships with a variety of other agencies and organisations to deliver the outstanding programs outlined below. Partners include the South Australian Police, Watch SA, Crime Prevention Unit of the Attorney General's Department, local businesses, Hills Murray Local Service Area Community Safety Committee, Murray Bridge Domestic Violence Action Group, Community Representative, Murray Mallee Community Health, Murray Mallee Men's Service, Child Adolescent Mental Health Service.

Importantly none of the success would have happened without a group of dedicated volunteers including Bob Wheare, Ted James, Kathy Stephens, Denise James, Andrew Hayton, David Stones and Donna Jaensch.

The following initiatives have been extremely successful in making our community a safer place over the past 12 months.

Your Home Your Castle

Residential Break and Enter is a serious problem in Murray Bridge which has one of the highest rates in country South Australia. Council has responded with the 'Your Home Your Castle' strategy to counter this issue.

Local intelligence leads us to believe we have quite a transient population and many of the criminals find it easy to travel from outside our area and target our residents and then leave again. Previously the local Police have been unable to supply accurate details.

48 residents requested audits during the current year. Some residents were non victims, who requested an audit after hearing about the program from their neighbour, Watch SA or because of media coverage.

Some residents requested upgrades, after having an audit some time ago. Additional referrals were received from the Murray Bridge Police but some residents completed their own security upgrade. All referrals were contacted by the Community Safety Officer and were offered the services of the Your Home Your Castle program.

Specific outcomes for this project include over 200 audits, improvements to residents' home security and significant media exposure.

Motorsafe City

Car theft has been a continuing problem in the Rural City of Murray Bridge.

The Rural City of Murray Bridge has the third highest rate of vehicles stolen in country regional centres in South Australia. In the period from January 2003 to March 2005, 179 vehicles were stolen. (Statistics provided by National Vehicle Theft reduction Council June 2005)

Specific outcomes for this program include significant media coverage throughout the program, a 10% reduction in car theft (according to the data provided by the Murray Bridge Police), the 250th Immobiliser installed recently, a waiting list of people wishing to have an Immobiliser installed, increased sense of security and well being for car owners. Residents have completed a survey on the day of installation and letters of thanks have been forwarded to the Council.



250th Immobiliser Installed May 2005

Pictured from left to right: Bob Wheare (volunteer); Brad Carr and Briohny Newman (car immobiliser recipients), Rodney Bensch (Wittwer Motors), Heather Courtney (Community Safety Officer).

Graffiti No Tolerance Project

Graffiti has been an unpleasant feature of the City's appearance in the past. In 2000 the Graffiti Trailer Project established by Neighbourhood Watch was introduced. The development of this project was in response to a perception by the community and Neighbourhood Watch that graffiti had increased throughout the City.

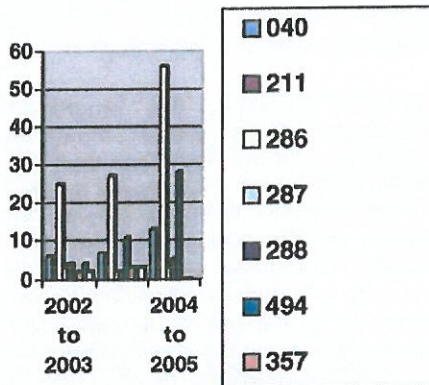
The removal of graffiti is dependent upon reporting by members of the public and the response of the Graffiti Trailer Team to removed graffiti as soon as possible after it is reported.



Volunteers Bob Wheare and Ted James ready to keep Murray Bridge Graffiti free.

Specific outcomes for this project include, increased community awareness and reporting of incidents of graffiti in Murray Bridge, apprehension by Police of perpetrators of graffiti in Murray Bridge and continued media coverage.

Graffiti Removal 2002 – 2005



Transition House Community Domestic Violence Intervention Program

Domestic Violence remains a serious concern in the Rural City of Murray Bridge.

There are still no resources specific to domestic violence available locally for survivors.

There is always a need in the community for appropriate and up-to-date information and intervention strategies regarding domestic violence.

Research from the Northern Domestic Violence Project, Crime Prevention Unit, and Attorney-General's Department "estimated that up to 50% of families are affected by domestic violence."

A collaborative and consumer friendly approach to the issues of Domestic Violence has consistently been requested as a significant part of dealing with this community problem.

Since the police have been provided with domestic violence awareness training, every victim of domestic violence has been provided with a referral to counselling.

Currently programs to address perpetrators' violence rely on sporadic funding. Problems experienced by organisations that run perpetrator programs include a difficulty in achieving attendance by perpetrators to domestic violence programs, budgetary constraints, and constraints on the number of programs that can be offered throughout the year.

Specific outcomes for this program include a reduction in the incidence of repeat offenders, improved sense of safety and well being for family groups, assistance for many families with strategies to manage violence. Local intelligence suggests a reduction in domestic violence incidents in Murray Bridge however this is yet to be confirmed statistically.

New Initiative – Data Dots

Recently the Council has agreed to support the use of **Data Dots** for identification of Residents valuables and household items. This will mean that the Council will subsidize by paying half the cost of purchasing Data Dots.

The Council has budgeted \$5,000 in the 2005/2006 financial year to start the program and already some residents have enquired about securing the Data Dots.

As the Data Dot program grows and more people take advantage of the Council's great offer, stolen goods will become easily detectable. This should result in a significant reduction in break-ins and will make recovery of stolen goods easier to recover and the process will be more efficient and quicker for the local police.

Data Dot will assist Neighbourhood Watch to grow, as \$10 for each Data Dot application will ensure ongoing financial support for each Area's programs.

Many of the residents in the 4 new proposed Neighbourhood Watch areas are shack owners from out of town. Shacks have been the target of many break-ins over the years and this will assist and make the apprehension of and retrieval of the stolen goods more effective.

A fundraiser/ sponsorship program is underway to secure participation from the local businesses and community groups.

We believe that we may be the first regional city in South Australia maybe to undertake such a program.

In the next year, 4 new Watch SA areas will be established in the outlying areas of the Rural City of Murray Bridge. These will include Jervois, Wellington, Myponga and part of Callington.

As mentioned above, the introduction of these 4 new areas, where many of the residents are older retired people and also families from Adelaide. Local Neighbourhood Watch areas such as these will benefit the residents as more people become involved.

REGIONAL ART GALLERY

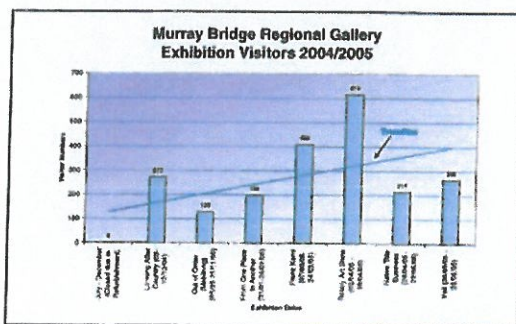
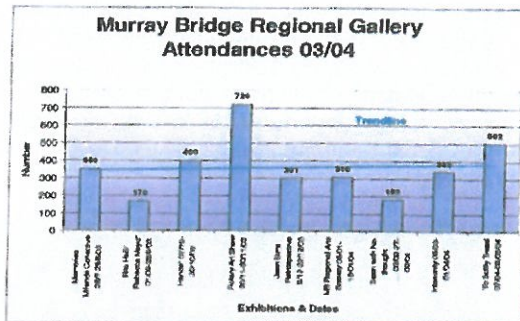
December 2004 saw the completion of Stage 2 of development and the first exhibition and event held in the new and fabulous Vicki Nottage Sculpture Court.



Gallery Statistics

Statistics for 2003-2004 - 3438 visitors

The 2004-05 period has seen 2101 visitors (figures cover a 7 month period due to gallery redevelopment)



Income

Door Donations	\$201
Gallery Sales	\$3096
Gallery Hire	\$200

Total **\$3497**

Donations

Donation of Artworks by Jan Clifford	\$1600
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Expenditure

Basic equipment was purchased for the gallery. One artwork was purchased at a significant cost reduction, to add to our growing permanent collection.

Major Purchases

Moveable Walls	\$5000
PA System	\$1926
Logo	\$1345
Total Plant & Equipment	\$6929
Total Function Costs	\$2453
Miscellaneous expenses	\$3494
Advertising Costs	\$2385
Payments to Artists	\$3096

Capital Development \$498,509

Exhibitions

2004

Looking After Country (CASA)

December 3 to Dec 12

Days open 14

Visitors 272

2005

Out of Order (CASA) & Dads and Kids at Mobilong

Jan 5 to 25

Days open 16

Visitors 129

From One Place to Another (CASA)

Jan 31 to Feb 24

Days open 20

Visitors 198

Franz Kempf (CASA) & For Vicki - Local Artists

March 7 to March 24

Days open 15

Visitors 408

Rotary Art Show

April 2 to 10

Days open 10

Visitors 615

Native Title Business (CASA)

April 26 to May 22

Days open 18

Visitors 214

Veil (CASA)

May 30 to June 26

Days open 20

Visitors 265

Gallery Collection

From humble beginnings, the gallery now has 14 artworks in its permanent collection.

Italian Artist Giuseppe Morrocchi learnt of the Gallery via the Country Arts website and donated two of his conceptual research artworks and posted funds in euro to frame the artworks.

Jan Clifford, a Committee Member, has donated two of her silk leaf wall hangings to the gallery. The hangings formed part of the exhibition *"Seen with no thought"* and is appreciated by the Gallery's many visitors.

The gallery had a budgeted allowance to purchase an artwork in 2004-05, after some consideration and due to a huge price reduction, the Gallery Management Committee decided on a Rita Hall work purchased from Country Arts SA, from the Touring exhibition of Rita's titled *Pushing the Envelopes*.

We have added 8 items of value to our collection, with 1 item purchased and 7 donated. We thank our generous donors, their support is truly appreciated.

The gallery devised a collection Policy to ensure the quality of items collected and their relevance of the collection to our region. The policy was adopted by Council in March 2005

Volunteers

The gallery is well supported by volunteers, however, as many of our volunteers are retirees, the roster can be sometimes a little hard to fill. Overall, support is encouraging. The Gallery's aim is to have a strong and committed group of volunteers, with specific tasks and responsibilities - a goal we are working towards.

The Gallery's volunteers are very much valued and appreciated.

Marketing

A logo has been adopted by The Gallery Management Committee and approved by Council.

We are proceeding with the printing of a marketing brochure and business cards. We will also have our own letterhead, and fax headers and other stationery. All marketing materials and stationery will also bear the RCMB logo as well as the logos of our funding bodies - Country Arts SA and The State Government.

Destinations TV filmed the Gallery as part of the Destinations TV Murray River Feature in June 05. The program is aired on the WIN network and NBN Imparja. The average viewing audience is 400,000 per week. The benefits of this coverage will have an impact on our visitor numbers over a period of time.

We anticipate that the appointment of a Project Manager - Marketing and Special Events to the RCMB will also provide further tools to promote the Gallery within our region and beyond.

Media releases relating to current exhibitions are published in The Murray Valley Standard and announced on local radio Power FM/5MU.



Stage 2 Development

A period of enormous growth and potential for The Murray Bridge Regional Gallery.

December 2003 saw the completion of Stage 2 of development and the first exhibition and event held in the new and fabulous Vicki Nottage Sculpture Court.

Stage 2 construction added major improvements to the existing gallery and the addition of facilities such as the foyer area and office, disabled toilets, disability access ramp, air-conditioning and of course the impressive Vicki Nottage Sculpture Court.

The Gallery was officially opened by His Excellency Mr Bruno Krums AM Deputy Governor of South Australia and was attended by 300 guests. The evening was a huge success and provided an opportunity to launch the Gallery to the local community and the broader arts community.



Programming

With the addition of the Sculpture Court, there is flexibility with programming and an opportunity to hold more than one event at a time.

The program is filling, with bookings as far ahead as 2007.

The Gallery hopes to secure a touring Pro Hart Exhibition in 2007 with negotiations currently underway. With the profile of the Gallery increasing, it is timely to present an exhibition of this quality to our community and visitors to our region.

Summary

Through Australian Business Arts Foundation we are currently liaising with two professional people from KPMG who have donated their services via Advice Bank to help us in developing a Business Plan for the Gallery.



This will be the template from which we will work and develop strategies to achieve desired outcomes.

The Gallery is building bridges between the local art groups in our community and has encouraged all groups to use our community facility.

We have held community events in conjunction with our current exhibitions and invite community groups to approach us with ideas of further events and celebrations.

We are exhibiting the work of local artists regularly, and hope to entice emerging artists to join art groups and also become involved with the Gallery.

DEVELOPMENT & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

The Development & Environmental Services Unit administers policies and legislative requirements on behalf of Council and has significant influence upon the quality of life our community enjoys and upon the environment in which we live. The department can be split into four broad areas of activity:-

- Land use planning
- Building control
- Public & Environmental Health
- Local laws

Activity in these areas extends from day to day operation and implementation by staff, through to policy advice and strategic

direction setting in liaison with the elected Council.

In all, there are over 15 separate pieces of formal legislation which the staff administer and/or must have regard for. This is in addition to the various policies and regulations which sit under these Acts.

There are also a number of major projects which broadly come under the heading of Regulatory Services, which include:

- Rubbish collection
- Landfill management
- Waste water management

Rubbish Collection

Council has continued to expand its wheelie bin household collection services within the bounds of the equipment availability and Environmental Protection Agency guidelines for operating hours. Council will be investigating further expansions of the service into rural areas which will require the use of a second rubbish collection vehicle.

In addition, the use of industrial bins was reviewed. Some bins were removed from service due to over-use, abuse and safety risks to the public, as well as vermin, odour and litter concerns. Alternative service options were considered with free access permits to landfill being issued to affected residents in the interim.

Landfill

Development of the Brinkley Landfill continued with ongoing negotiations with the EPA over cell liners. Additional measures have been put in place to reduce the risk of windblown litter and future plans for cell placement, fencing, litter patrols were also developed. Of note was the use of the Lions Club to assist Council in litter collections and Council is very grateful for their willingness to assist in this regard.

Waste Water Management

Council has been active in investigating and supporting some common effluent wastewater solutions for riverside shack communities. This work is part of a broader project to provide household waste water management solutions for up to 10 communities within the Council area.

Development Assessment

The Development Assessment unit has processed over has processed more than 830 applications for development in the past year which included proposals for such things as carports and household extensions, through to multi million dollar industrial developments requiring in depth technical, environmental and economic assessment. The variety and number of applications received reflect the growing interest in Murray Bridge and nearby townships as a desirable place to live, work and play. The conflicts that can sometimes occur as a result of increased and intensified land use present an

exciting and challenging prospect for Council to manage, but also signify a time of prosperity and growth for the area.

APPLICATIONS FOR NEW DWELLINGS	
TOWN	NO OF DWELLINGS
Murray Bridge	143
Riverglen	1
White Sands	1
Woods Point	1
Wellington	3
Monteith	2
Greenbanks/Sunnyside	3
Mypolonga	8
Monarto	9
Rockleigh	2
Callington	5

DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS 1 JULY, 2004 TO 30 JUNE		
NATURE OF DEVELOPMENT	Applications Received	% of Total
Class 10 buildings (sheds, verandahs, carports etc)	324	38.9%
New Dwellings (single dwellings, multi-dwelling arrangements, retirement village units)	178	21.4%
Land Divisions (including Community Title & S 49)	118	14.2%
Residential extensions/alterations, habitable outbuildings	63	7.6%
Commercial uses (shops, offices, consulting rooms)	48	5.8%
Industrial Uses (workshops, motor repairs)	20	2.4%
Other (animal keeping, swimming pools, temporary accommodation signage)	81	9.7%
TOTAL	832	

Plan Amendment Reports (PARs)

Council has prepared several PARs which include the Minor Townships PAR, Minor (Light Industry) PAR, Rural PAR, Residential (Narooma) PAR and National Foods PAR.

The Minor Townships PAR and the Minor (Light Industry) PAR have undergone agency consultation and are expected to be ready for public consultation in the near future. The Country Township Zones of Mypolonga, Jerois and Monteith are the subject of this PAR. Affected land owners within the proposed new zones will be notified during the public consultation

process. The Light Industry PAR reflects the current use of land near the Adelaide/Maurice Roads.

The Residential (Narooma) PAR has undergone public and agency consultation. This PAR addresses the land between Jaensch Road and Long Island Road, between the River Murray and Narooma Boulevard. It will provide design guidelines for future residential development on this prominent site. Discussions are currently being held with government agencies to determine the boundaries of the Flood Zone and the new Residential (Narooma) Zone.

Development Compliance

This area of planning, which involves enforcing conditions of development approvals and unauthorised changes of land use and building work, is often reactive in nature. This has been true this year, with planning staff leaving and replacements being very difficult to find, taking many months to achieve. However, staff continue to negotiate effectively with individual landowners to achieve an acceptable outcomes, without resorting to legal action.

Development Assessment Panel

The Panel is the decision making authority for Council in relation to Development Applications and was instituted in July 2001. The Panel has eight members, three of whom are elected members. The Mayor is also a member. The remaining four panel members comprise qualified persons (not staff) and community representatives. One of these positions has been vacant for several months.

The Panel held 13 meetings during the year and considered 36 reports. 19 approvals were granted, 6 applications were refused and 11 were deferred seeking further information.

Environment Resources & Development Court

No applications were appealed to the Court.

Building Services

Council's Development Assessment Officer (Building) carried out audit inspections of building work throughout the Council area in accordance with the Building Inspection Policy.

Council's Building Fire Safety Committee includes representatives from the MFS/CFS and is responsible for the checking of fire safety provisions in new and existing buildings. Of particular interest to the Committee are those types of buildings that may constitute a high fire safety risk, such as boarding houses, motels etc.

Inspectorial Services

Council's After Hours Service answered over 640 calls this year. These calls were predominately dog related enquiries. Other calls were general enquiries, depot related matters, burning complaints, compliance issues, wandering stock, alarm call outs and By-Law infringements.

Dog Registrations

The total number of dogs registered for the period was 5111. Council's Rangers responded to 464 wandering dog complaints of which 120 dogs were returned to the owners. 183 dogs were impounded with 76 being claimed by their owners, 107 unfortunately were euthanised (as well as 19 cats) and 54 were successfully placed in new homes.

Rangers investigated 30 dog attack/harassment situations and 50 noise (barking) complaints. Staff also dealt with a number of wandering stock issues.

Council has conducted a broad advertising program to make people aware of when dog registrations are due.

Flammable Matter

76 notices were issued for flammable matter during the 2004/2005 Fire Danger Season. Wherever possible, property owners were contacted personally or by telephone, which resulted in considerable savings to Council for notice costs and postage.

Domestic Burning

Council became part of Schedule 1 of the Environment Protection Authority's Domestic Burning Policy in May 2004. This is working well.

Parking

The problems with parking around schools is now being addressed.

By Laws

Council has a number of By-Laws. These relate to:

- Permits and Penalties – the means of setting penalties and fines for breaches of By-Laws.
- Council Land – use of, or control of, Council owned or controlled land other than streets or roads.
- Roads – control of roads vested in Council.
- Moveable Signs – control of sandwich boards on footpaths.
- Dogs – for the management of dog numbers in private homes.
- Lodging houses – for the control of licencing and regulation lodging houses.
- Taxis – to be repealed (not yet completed).

- Building sites – to control building waste.

Order Making Policy

The Policy is a tool for enforcing matters deemed to be a nuisance or danger to the public, which may include matters such as wandering stock, the keeping of bees and noisy animals. Fines may be imposed on persons who fail to comply with an Order issued under the Policy.

Litter

Illegal dumping of waste/litter continues despite Council's efforts to control it. Whenever rubbish or litter is dumped, Council's officers search for some evidence of the offender's identity in the rubbish so action can be taken against the offender. Fines are heavy for this offence and in certain circumstances Council will take court action against offenders. The cost to the community for this illegal activity is very high. If litter is seen, it should be reported to Council. Members of the public should never rummage through dumped rubbish as needles are often found and Council officers carry protective equipment for the handling of these items.

Environmental Health

Immunisation

Council continues to provide a comprehensive immunisation service. Monthly clinics are held at the Local Government Centre. Vaccinations are carried out at pre-schools, kindergartens, Child Care Centres and the two High Schools in accordance with the NHMRC immunisation schedule by Council's immunisation nurse. Approximately 900 vaccinations were given to High School students this year.

Meningococcal vaccinations were carried out in the high schools this year and for years 1 to 5 in all primary schools within the district.

Influenza vaccinations were also given at several workplaces and the Council Immunisation Nurse also assisted with a Government funded program for the Aboriginal population.

Food Safety

Inspections of food premises continued throughout the year. Four Improvement Notices were issued against food businesses during the year relating to structural items. Seven food complaints were received during the year.

A salmonella investigation was carried out in conjunction with the Communicable Diseases Control Branch of the Health Department in late December 04 and early January 05. This was in relation to a total of 13 cases of salmonella food poisoning occurring in a nursing home in the District. These occurred over the Christmas/New Year period and following a thorough investigation, interviews and food sampling, a single source of infection was not found.

Occupational Health and Safety and food hygiene training for food businesses was undertaken during the year which was provided free and was well attended by food handlers from food businesses and community groups.

It is anticipated that another environmental health officer will be employed in the second half of 2005 which will help to increase the number of food premises inspections undertaken.

Public and Environmental Health

To maintain adequate levels of public and environmental health in the community, Council's Environmental Health Officers have been engaged in the following activities in the past twelve months.

- Provision of sharps containers to the public.
- Communicable disease interviews and investigations.
- Mosquito surveillance, education and control.
- Public swimming pool testing.
- Approval of new septic tank systems and upgrades to existing systems. In the past 12 months Council has approved 92 new septic tank systems and 29 upgrades.
- Pollution prevention and control incorporating odour, insects, animal wastes and stormwater.
- Water sampling from public facilities.
- DrumMuster chemical container collections.
- Reporting to Department of Health.
- Inspections of commercial premises.

Chemical Container Collection

A successful DrumMuster collection was conducted in November 2004, at the Brinkley Landfill. This was well supported by local farmers and provided a valuable community service for the removal and recycling of used plastic and steel agricultural chemical containers.

Waste Oil Disposal

The public are continuing to make use of the free automotive oil collection facility at the Brinkley Landfill and increasing volumes of automotive oil are being collected. A service will shortly be in place for the collection and recycling of used oil containers at the facility. This will help to prevent used oil containers with oil remnants still in them being deposited in land fill (picture attached of oil facility).



CORPORATE & COMMUNITY SERVICES

Rating

As a result of further new subdivisions, building development and revaluations, there was a 25.63% increase in capital valuations within the Rural City of Murray Bridge, giving a total capital value from \$1,074,395,280 in 2003/2004 to \$1,350,337,640 for 2004/2005.

Residential properties have continued to experience a strong growth, whilst the commercial and industrial properties have a major review of revaluations undertaken by the Office of the Valuer General during the 2004/2005 financial year.

Council has continued to formalise rate capping in cases where the amount of general rates for 2004/2005 were greater than 25% over the amount of general rates payable for 2003/2004 under Section 166 (1) of the Local Government Act 1999. Discretionary rebates can be applied to provide relief to a ratepayer who would have received a substantial rate rise due to a capital valuation increase. This has been offered to the principal ratepayer of an assessment for residential properties – apart from those properties which were not the principal place of residence of the ratepayer. Other categories offered for rate capping were industrial, commercial, primary production, and other. Postponement of rates for those who experience hardship which can be due to the increase of capital valuations has also been offered, in line with guidelines for payment arrangement alternatives suggested by the Local Government Association for councils to assist their ratepayers who may be in financial difficulties.

BPAY and Australia Post payment facilities, offered as payment arrangement alternatives, have proven to be very popular with the general public and have been well utilised for 2004/2005. The seven day a week, twenty four hour per day telephone payments and payments through Council's web site payment facilities have also increased, which indicates that ratepayers are appreciative of the "one stop payment facilities" which have been offered to them. Ratepayers also utilise the cheque and cash facilities offered

through Australia Post and at the Local Government Centre.

Rating rebates of varying percentages are also provided by Council to sporting and community bodies, private schools, conservation and heritage areas and retirement villages in line with Sections 161 to 166 of the Local Government Act 1999, other rating legislation and Council's Rating Rebate Policy. An industrial incentive rebate is also provided to assist business under Section 166 of the Local Government Act.

Fact sheets compiled and provided by the Local Government Association have also assisted ratepayers to understand "what do we get for our rates?" – a commonly asked question. A services guide, listing important Council and Emergency Services telephone numbers has also been provided to ratepayers.

The Rating Policy is attached as Appendix 2.

Geographical Information Systems (GIS)
Geographical Information Systems have now been utilised internally within Council since 1999 with online mapping available to the public through Council's website since 2003. The systems are information rich and continue to feature frequently updated spatial and attribute data. Other successful and productive movements within the GIS area of Council include:

- Testing and evaluating in a real environment of the new Corporate accessed GIS system "Exponare Enquiry" which will replace the existing "Easimaps" GIS system. The new system which is anticipated in being rolled out in early 2006 will allow faster and more efficient flow of GIS data over the network and in particular between the separated geographical locations of the users.
- Commitment to continually maintaining over 100 feature rich spatial and attribute datasets has once again allowed many users to efficiently and accurately plan and carry out their daily duties.
- Maintaining accurate and comprehensive GIS data has allowed efficient planning of infrastructure upgrades and maintenance plans, and in recent times this has allowed the ability to react efficiently to the recent flooding issues.
- The 2004/2005 year has also seen over 700 housing allotments being mapped into the GIS system for use by Council departments for planning, building and infrastructure purposes.

Asset Management

The Rural City of Murray Bridge owns and operates a vast portfolio of land, buildings and community facilities. This management regime includes the daily liaison with Council's residents, community and sporting groups in relation to the operation of these assets.

During the 2004/2005 year, Council has taken stock of its physical asset portfolio with a view to operating and managing these assets more effectively and to maximise a higher return from these. This ensures both equality across our ratepayer base and that other wider utilised essential services can continue to be funded.

The financial year saw the asset management division liaising with the state government in relation to the eventual procurement of the South Terrace retail precinct land, which is nearing finalisation.

Asset management also manages the daily permitting of Outdoor Dining facilities occupying Council's footpaths within the city centre, under Permit arrangements, to ensure maximum coverage of risk management principles. This Permit system helps to promote Murray Bridge's Mediterranean climate and lifestyle and to inject further invigoration into the town with the alfresco lifestyle.

Policy formation and procedural frameworks are constantly being undertaken to accurately plan, measure and forecast the usage and the resultant expenditure for the operation of Council facilities into the future and to adequately budget for these community assets.

Volunteers are an essential element of the Council's operations with relation to its buildings and facilities assets. Our volunteers operate some of the Council's most important assets on a daily basis thus delivering a wider range of services to both our own community and visitors to our region. Without these volunteers the Council would have to limit its service delivery.

During the year the Council worked with the members of the Roundhouse to ease the burden of operating under a Management Committee regulatory auspice. This has enabled volunteer members to enjoy their passion for the building – as volunteers without the onerous task of formal Committee meeting procedures. Council staff will be assessing all other Section 41 Management Committees over the coming year.

The wider functionality of Asset Management ensures that Council's buildings are compliant with relevant legislation to ensure the public safety and safe environment best practices. It is the Council's aim to not only benchmark against these mandatory legislature guidelines but to achieve a higher quality assurance in relation to our facilities.

During 2004/05 the Council embarked on the commencement of upgrading portions of the Railway Precinct of Murray Bridge beginning with the former Train Control building. The refurbishment of the building has given it a new lease on life. We are happy to welcome the first tenants in this building – the Vietnam Veterans. We are hoping that they will be joined by many other groups to share this building shortly.

Council also negotiated the disposal of the former works depot on Thomas Street to a private purchaser following a public advertisement process. This will free up much needed capital funds to allow the ongoing implementation of capital and strategic projects to be funded to achieve greater community benefits.

The financial year saw the adoption of the much anticipated Community Land Management Plans as required under Section 194 of the Local Government Act. Essentially these plans set down policy direction and broad governance principles that Council, in consultation with its community, strategically set for all land which is governed by this classification. Two plans were compiled, for Reserves and for Community Facilities. These plans are available at the front counter of Council for inspection, and will be updated and amended periodically with further public consultation.

The Long Island toilets were complemented by the addition of a disabled toilet extension during the year, thus providing amenities that were previously not available.

Contract Management

The Contract Management Portfolio within Council ensures that Council is competitive in the market in relation to procurement of materials and services.

Council negotiates and works within a commercially competitive and contestable contracting environment which ensures competitive neutrality, fair trading and competition and advantageous commercial outcomes for Council. This is in line with the National Competition Policy which came into effect in 1996.

The Council's contract procedural guidelines ensure that Council receives the broadest delivery of materials and services for all expenditure of Council. This allows the funds of Council to be more effectively managed.

Procurement, tendering and contracting policies are in place to ensure that the full cost of Council operations are allowed for when Council services are tendered for. The

principles of contract management are applied to maintain transparency, fair competition whilst maintaining appropriate documentation of process, equity and probity.

During the 2004/05 year, the Council let 45 contracts for materials and services worth \$3.1 million.

National Competition Policy

Council had no significant business activities during 2003/2004 relating to the National Competition Policy.

Tourism, Marketing & Events

TOURISM

Regional Figures

Recent figures released by the South Australian Tourism Commission show that The Rural City of Murray Bridge's involvement with Murraylands Tourism Marketing continues to reap viable rewards.

Our region has much to celebrate with 2004 figures compared with the previous year show:

- Day trip visitation has increased 25%
- 15% increase in interstate visitors
- 6% increase in intrastate visitors

In addition, the Murraylands was the only region in SA other than Adelaide to record an increase in daytrip spending (\$28m to \$37m) in 2004 as compared with the previous year.

(Source: Murraylands Regional Tourism Profile 2004)

Visitor Information Centre

The Murray Bridge Visitor Information Centre, under the supervision of Mrs Joyce Holmes, has once again successfully increased visitor and enquiry figures for the 2004/05 year as shown in table below:

General Enquiries	Number	Annual increase
Visitors	21 311	716
Tel/ Fax/ Email enquiries	4792	128
Total	26103	844
Overseas visitors	2831	215

Ticket commissions for the year were as follows:

Ticket Commissions	Amount (\$)
MB Passenger Service	\$7290.21
Premier Stateliner	\$1206.37
Firefly	\$101.00
TOTAL	\$8597.58

The figures above indicate that the Visitor Information Centre does indeed contribute as a revenue generating unit of The Rural City of Murray Bridge.

The Visitor Information Centre Co-ordinator supervises a group of 25 volunteers who contributed to a total of 4056 volunteer hours in the past twelve months. Certainly without this superb community contribution, the Murray Bridge Visitor Information Centre could not continue to provide such services to the town and region.

Highlights

The Murray Bridge Rail and River Heritage Walk has been a major project of the Visitor Information Centre. This mapping will contribute as a tourism attraction and well-being exercise for visitors and residents alike. The completed maps and directional signage are due for completion and launch in September 2005.

MARKETING

Media Coverage Highlights

In addition to coverage in print media, (including the Murray Valley Standard, The Advertiser and various local publications) and radio, (including 5MU, POWER FM, 5AA, SAFM, 5AD and tourism channel 88), the Rural City of Murray Bridge received exciting TV coverage on Destinations TV, funded by the SA Murray River project.

The film crew covered Monarto Zoo, the Murray Bridge Regional Gallery, Sturt Reserve, Cottage Box Chocolates and Willow Point Wines. The program was viewed by an estimated audience of 450,000 viewers.

Recruitment

Due to burgeoning activity and an ever increasing need, the Rural City of Murray Bridge followed through on its commitment to recruit a dedicated staff member to be assigned to the Marketing and Special Events portfolio.

A position entitled "Project Manager – Marketing and Special Events" was advertised in May through web and print media and attracted an overwhelming number of quality applications from the local area, interstate and even overseas. The successful applicant, Ms Sarah McCallum, will commence in July 2005.

EVENTS

The Rural City of Murray Bridge has continued to support through infrastructure and sponsorship, a great number of community events. Examples of events receiving support in the 2004/05 year include the following:

- NAIDOC 2004
- Murray Bridge Agricultural and Horticultural Show
- Plough Day 2004

- Orchid Club Show
- Australian International Pedal Prix 2004
- Christmas Parade 2004
- Carols By Candlelight
- Australia Day 2005
- Australian Junior Sedan Championships – Riverview Speedway Jan 2005
- Australian Sprintcar Championships – Riverview Speedway Feb 2005
- Youth Week 2005
- Regional Art Society shows

Council's intention is to continue to support Community Events that return true benefits either financially or socially to the local community and to seek out new events to draw further tourism, trade and community involvement. It is foreseen that this will form part of the new Project Manager – Marketing and Special Events' role.

Highlights

The Australian International Pedal Prix attracted its greatest crowd ever to Murray Bridge in 2004 with an estimated 20,000 visitors converging on the town over a three-day period and an approximate \$3m generation of expenditure within the region.

