



Council news

Ilfracombe | Isisford | Longreach | Yaraka

MARCH 2026 - EDITION 37



Community Engagement Stall Brings Residents and Council Together

On Saturday, 7 March, Councillors and Council staff hosted a successful community engagement stall, providing residents with an opportunity to share their ideas, raise concerns, and learn more about upcoming projects and initiatives.

The stall attracted a steady flow of community members throughout the morning, creating a welcoming space for conversation and collaboration.

Councillors were on hand to speak directly with residents about local priorities, answer questions, and hear firsthand about the issues that matter most to the community.

Staff from across Council assisted by providing information on key programs,

current consultations, and service updates, ensuring residents had access to accurate and helpful guidance.

Topics of discussion included the new Longreach Weirs, Longreach water mains replacement, new digital water meter portal, Longreach Community and Skatepark, proposed seating upgrade in Eagle Street and Easter in Edkins Park to name a few.

The feedback collected will help inform future Council decisions and continue building strong, transparent relationships between Council and the community.

Council extends its thanks to everyone who took the time to stop by and visit the stall.



Community Forums

LONGREACH
Monday
13 APRIL

BROLGA ROOM
VIA MAGPIE LANE
5:30 PM - 7:00 PM

Light Refreshments
provided

YARAKA
Tuesday
14 APRIL

TOWN HALL
1:00PM - 2:30PM

Lunch Provided
at 12:30pm

ISISFORD
Tuesday
14 APRIL

TOWN HALL
5:30PM - 7:00PM

BBQ Dinner
provided

ILFRACOMBE
Wednesday
15 APRIL

REC CENTRE
5:30PM - 7:00PM

BBQ Dinner
provided



Rayner's Rundown - with Mayor Tony Rayner

I want to start by offering my sincere thanks to the countless agencies and individuals that assisted us with our disaster response during the recent flooding event in Longreach. Our Local Disaster Management Group, which I chair, has had invaluable access to state agencies and authorities such as the Police, Fire and Rescue, the Ambulance and Hospital and Aged Care services, SES, Transport and Main Roads, and many other state and federal agencies.

We had good access to the Bureau of Meteorology, and I really do thank them for their support during the event, despite the obvious challenges in forecasting impacts with limited data.

You may have heard me speaking about the need for more reliable flood gauges upstream of Longreach, and this event

has highlighted better than any other the importance of that data. Because the floodwaters were made up entirely of overland flow from the upper catchment, it highlights the lack of reliable data and measuring points upstream of Longreach. Some automatic gauges were failing, other gauges rely on the kindness and availability of volunteers taking manual readings, and some key tributaries are virtually unmetred at critical points where they feed into the main system. The BoM has a \$236 million program to upgrade and maintain its flood warning network, and Council will advocate very strongly for investment in new and improved gauges and modelling in our region.

I want to pay special tribute to the Council team who, on top of their normal duties, operate our Local Disaster Coordination Centre - led by our Chief Financial Officer, David Wilson. David and his team do an

exceptional job and are very experienced, having supported response during the flood event in 2025. Everyone I speak to, whether it's the Premier or people right through the disaster management community, are impressed by the calmness and professionalism of Council's disaster coordination ability. It's something we can be very proud of as a community and I thank the entire team, supported by local agencies, that keep us prepared for whatever may happen.

The CEO and I were in Canberra earlier this month for one of our regular visits with ministers and members of parliament. We've had some good conversations about water security, regional priorities, and various funding programs. We're fortunate to always get good time from parliamentarians when we visit. We usually visit a couple of times a year to represent our region and its interests at the federal level.

Thank you to everyone who came and had a chat with Councillors and senior staff at our stall in Eagle Street. It was good to connect with community and showcase a number of upcoming projects. These occasional main street engagements don't replace the valuable bi-annual community forums we hold in each community, they're simply another great way to interact with community who otherwise wouldn't connect with us.

We've announced dates for our bi-annual community forums, which are coming up in April. Check the front page of this newsletter for dates.

My thanks again to everyone across the region who continues to work together, support one another, and keep us moving forward with purpose. As always, I'm here to answer your questions or share more about what Council is doing. My contact details are available at longreach.qld.gov.au/elected-members. Alternatively, reach out to Council on (07) 4658 4111 or via email to council@longreach.qld.gov.au.



Minutes in a Minute March 2026 Council Meeting

Council met for its Ordinary Meeting at the Council Chambers in Longreach on 19 March. Among other matters, the meeting:

- Received reports from the Mayor and CEO
- Approved a minor amendment to Council's Annual Operational Plan
- Adopted a formal Governance Framework and Policy Framework
- Adopted two new policies, complementing the new framework
- Endorsed the region's Local Resilience Action Plan
- Approved an extension to the rates discount period for the current rating cycle
- Received a report on the success of Council's Mains Replacement Program since 2012
- Received various Director reports, including a Project Management update
- Considered the following community funding applications:

Community Donation - Individual

Organisation/Name	Event/Activity	Event Date	Grant Approved
Lily Worland, Lara Jackson, Jaylie Miller	16 - 19 years North West Trials - Netball	06/03 - 07/03	\$350 each
Mia Scott	13-15 years North West Trials - Netball	06/03 - 07/03	\$350 each
Mackenzie Simpson	13-19 years Swimming State Championships	22/03 - 24/03	\$350 each
Archie Neuendorf, Millie Solomon	10 - 12 years Swimming State Championships	25/03 - 27/03	\$350 each
Rebekah Strong, Sarah Strong, Charlotte McDonald, Isabella McDonald, Prisca Ballin	SHEP Ensembles Program	28/03 - 30/03	\$350 each
Total			\$4,200.00

Sponsorship

Organisation/Name	Event/Activity	Event Date	Grant Approved
Longreach Show Society	Longreach Show	22/05 - 23/05	Financial \$7,500.00 In-Kind \$2,500.00
Total			\$10,000.00

Our monthly Council meetings are always open to the public, and you can find the full agenda and minutes online at: longreach.qld.gov.au/meetings-agendas-minutes.

Did you know...



In the last three years, there have been over 30 new dwellings built in Longreach. This includes private, social and government employee housing with a further 23 dwellings to be completed by 2027!

Welcoming Our Newest Citizens

Our region recently celebrated a special milestone by welcoming two new Australian citizens at a local citizenship ceremony held on 18 February 2026.

The occasion marked the beginning of an exciting new chapter for both individuals, as they officially became part of our community and our nation.

Australian citizenship represents a shared commitment to our values, culture, and way of life. It also provides opportunities to participate fully in community life while contributing skills, experiences, and perspectives that enrich our region.

Council warmly congratulates our newest citizens, Mrs Harshini Amaratunge and Mr Hector Lawson.

We are proud to have them call our region home and look forward to seeing their continued involvement in community, cultural, and civic activities.

We wish them every success as they embark on this next chapter as Australians.



L to R: Harshini Amaratunge, Mayor Tony Rayner and Hector Lawson

Flood Response Hailed by Authorities as Upper Catchment Flows Reach Longreach

Longreach experienced what the Bureau of Meteorology termed a 'significant major flood' in mid-March following heavy rainfall across the upper catchment.

Council activated its Local Disaster Coordination Centre as river levels continued to rise upstream, with some forecasts and modelling suggested the Thomson would exceed the flood level reached in the year 2000 at Longreach. The flood was driven largely by overland flow from the upper catchment rather than local rainfall, resulting in a slow moving event.

At its peak, the Thomson River at Longreach reached 6.16 metres, almost half a metre lower than forecast, remaining above the major flood level for several days. Floodwater entered a small number of low lying properties. No houses were recorded as having floodwater above floor level.

Several local roads were closed due to flooding, with alternative access routes established for some residents. The Landsborough Highway remained mostly open throughout the event, although it was closed overnight one night due to predictions the river would surpass the level of the new bridge. Motorists were advised to beware of wildlife hazards as displaced Kangaroos and Emus entered the roadway.

As a precaution, Council opened an evacuation centre at the former Longreach Pastoral College.

In the days leading up to the peak, Council and partner agencies undertook extensive preparedness activities. These included issuing regular flood warnings, doorknocking residents in low lying areas, establishing sandbag stations, and planning for potential evacuations of vulnerable residents and facilities. Public information was shared through Council's disaster dashboard, local radio, and, in some limited cases, direct notifications.

Council worked closely with the State Emergency Service, Queensland Police, Fire and Rescue, Queensland Health, Transport and Main Roads, and other agencies throughout the response. Additional SES personnel were deployed to the region as road access allowed, and resupply arrangements were planned to ensure continuity of essential goods.

Floods test more than infrastructure. They test trust, systems, and the strength of local

Staff at Longreach Local Disaster Coordination Centre.



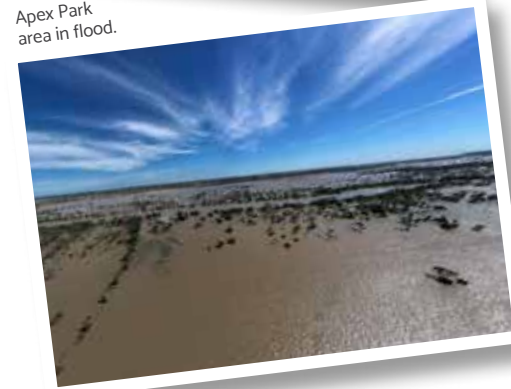
L to R: Mayor Tony Rayner, Hon Ann Leahy MP, Cr Andrew Watts, Cr Nikki Gay, CEO Brett Walsh, Hon Fiona Simpson MP and Cr Tony Emslie.



SES sandbagging station at Miner Road, Longreach.



Apex Park area in flood.



networks. In March 2026, Longreach met that test with care, cooperation and a clear understanding of the land it thrives on. The river rose, as it always has, and the community responded, as it always does, together.

25/26

Projects in Focus

◆ Murray McMillan Dam update

Thanks to the recent earthworks undertaken and the rainfall, Ilfracombe township has water security with a current capacity of 460ML (previously 431ML) which will provide approximately 3 years water storage (excluding evaporation).



International Women's Day

Council staff came together recently with a morning tea to celebrate International Women's Day, recognising the achievements, contributions, and leadership of women across our organisation and community. The event encouraged reflection, connection, and continued commitment to creating an inclusive and supportive workplace where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.



Community Grants

Exciting news - our grant process just got easier!

We've launched new online grant application forms to make applying quicker and simpler than ever.

Are you an **individual** proudly representing our region through sporting, arts or cultural activities or are you part of a **community group** looking for funding to run an event, upgrade equipment, or support a local initiative? Explore our new online grant application forms on our website and discover how we can support your next project.

Please note that Council will no longer accept previous versions of the applications forms. **All submissions must now be completed and lodged through our online forms.** If you require assistance completing an application or have any questions around your application we are here to help. Contact our Events & Marketing Coordinator on 4658 4111.

All information regarding our funding including the online application is available at www.longreach.qld.gov.au/Community/Community-Grants



Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we operate. We pay our respects to Elders past and present.