

## Mayor's Message 2024-2025

It is my pleasure to reflect on the achievements of the Northern Midlands Council over the past year. In 2024/2025, Council progressed numerous projects of varying sizes across our municipality, demonstrating our commitment to enhancing infrastructure, community engagement, and sustainable growth.

A major highlight was the official reopening of the Longford Memorial Hall in September 2024. Already a popular venue, it successfully hosted the second annual Illuminate program, uniting students from across the Northern Midlands in a powerful youth-driven creative collaboration initiated by the Northern Midlands Business Association (NMBA). The NMBA have been invaluable in promoting economic development through programs and projects that have contributed to over 2.5 million to the Northern Midlands businesses and the local economy.

Planning for Stage I of the TRANSlink Intermodal Facility is underway. Immediate investment in enabling infrastructure—gas reticulation, electricity upgrades, and road/rail connections—is essential to support construction and attract future private investment. These foundational investments are essential to support facility construction and build confidence in the precinct's growth potential.

Upgrades to Victoria Square (Village Green) in Longford have provided an enhanced space for outdoor gatherings and events. The upgraded BBQ area has been well-utilized, with successful events such as the Community Pacific Festival, which celebrated our Pacific Island and Timor-Leste seasonal workers, and Scots Day Oot, featuring highland dancing and pipe band performances in February 2025.

A particularly proud moment was hosting Her Excellency, the Governor of Tasmania, Barbara Baker AC, for a civic reception at the Village Green following her tour of the Northern Midlands in February. This tour showcased our region's rich heritage and innovative community initiatives, including the Evandale Community and Information Centre, X Hemp, Missiondale, and Eskleigh. Key stops also included Ross Village Green, the Midlands Arboretum and Species Hotel Sculpture Walk, and TasWater's floating wetlands project, reinforcing our commitment to sustainability and cultural preservation. Education and housing remained key focus areas, with the Governor visit to Campbell Town District High School, where students demonstrated hands-on learning programs, and discussions on an affordable housing expansion initiative to support growing community needs.

Council successfully delivered its annual Footpath Program (2024/2025), improving pedestrian safety across the municipality. Specific projects included the crossing upgrade at Campbell Town District High School, Littleton Street and Packenham Street in Longford and Latour Street and Wilson Street in Cressy.

Stormwater and drainage improvements were a priority, enhancing flood mitigation efforts. Additionally, major road upgrades included Ashby Road, which has been graded and sealed and the approach to Woolmers Bridge, improved to ensure reliability during flood events.

Our focus on community resilience led to the establishment of the Poatina Evacuation Centre and additional equipment for Northern Midlands Evacuation Centres. Solar and backup battery installations at Longford Town Hall are underway, with further funding secured for evacuation centre equipment.

Other key infrastructure developments included a new dumpsite in Cressy which will help promote tourism for the town. The expansion of the Ross Men's Shed is key to supporting social connection, supporting better mental health and skill-sharing among residents.

Local sporting clubs are integral to our community, promoting physical activity, inclusivity, and social cohesion. Council has actively supported these clubs through key infrastructure improvements:

- Completion of the Perth Junior Soccer Field, including goalposts, nets, and irrigation.
- Construction of four new basketball/netball courts in Ross, Longford, Perth, and Cressy.
- Installation of new play equipment, toilets, and BBQ amenities at Laycock Street Park, Longford, creating a safe and inclusive space for families.

Council remains committed to long-term strategic planning in alignment with the Northern Midlands Council Strategic Plan 2021–2027. Over the past year, community feedback was incorporated into draft strategies for Council’s consideration, including the Napoleon Street Playground consultation, Youl Road closure and reserve planning, the ongoing Significant Tree Register review and the Pioneer Park Masterplan development.

Additionally, several new strategic initiatives have been developed to guide future growth and community well-being:

- Economic Development Strategy
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Youth Strategy
- Weed Management Strategy

2024/2025 has been a year of successful community events and celebrations. Council was proud to host and support:

- Citizenship Ceremonies, welcoming new Australians and fostering a sense of belonging.
- The Pacific Australia Labour Mobility Community Event, recognizing our diverse workforce.
- Australia Day Celebrations, honouring outstanding citizens and volunteers.
- Iconic cultural events such as Scots Day Oot, the Verandah Music Festival, the Penny Farthing Championships, Longford Blooms, Cressy Trout Festival, Racing and Cycling events as well as truck and agricultural shows across the municipality.

Volunteers play an important role in supporting the Council through their participation in community events and community groups. The Council also acknowledges those dedicated to emergency services. On behalf of the council, I would like to express our gratitude to all volunteers for their dedication, time and commitment.

Northern Midlands Council is devoted to retaining young people in our region by fostering local career pathways and strengthening connections between education and industry. Through education bursaries and the Illuminate program, we support students and schools in their learning and employment endeavors. Our Youth Officer continues to assist young people, supporting mental health and wellbeing through a variety of activities and events.

I would like to sincerely thank our Council management and staff for their unwavering dedication in achieving these milestones. Their hard work ensures that our community continues to thrive.

I also extend my gratitude to my fellow Councillors for their commitment and support, which enables the Northern Midlands to remain a leader in regional growth and development.

Together, we continue to build a stronger, more connected, and prosperous future for all.



Mary Knowles OAM

Mayor, Northern Midlands Council