

MITCHAM

ACCESSIBLE, HEALTHY & CONNECTED COMMUNITY ■ SUSTAINABLE CITY ■ DYNAMIC & PROSPEROUS PLACES ■ EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP

COMMUNITY NEWS



JANUARY 2024

Fruit Share heads to Mitcham

Fruit that would otherwise go to waste will find its way into local kitchens under a plan to bring Fruit Share Adelaide to Mitcham.

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Scouts, Rotary to share new home

Eden Hills Scout Group and Rotary Club of Blackwood are set to welcome a new shared use community facility at Eden Hills.

The facility will replace the 60-year-old Scout Hall and 30-year-old Rotary shed and is set to include a community hall, toilet facilities, a meeting room, kitchen and storage.

Launched in December, the project is co-funded by \$580,000 from the federal Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts, \$956,000 from City of Mitcham and \$100,000 from Eden Hills Scout Group.

Scouts SA District Commissioner Amy Battams said the project was long overdue and would be welcomed by the 85 young people who were members of the Eden Hills Scout Group.

Families had worked for a decade to raise funds through a range of activities including barbecues and tree plantings.

"The hall had unfortunately outlived its use by date," she said. "This new facility will not only be of immense benefit to Scouts and Rotary, but to the community."

Rotary Club of Blackwood President Martin Rowe said his group was looking forward to access to more space and better infrastructure.

"It's a chance for us to refresh with more modern equipment and we hope it will make it easier to attract younger members."

The facility will be available for hire by the public for private events and parties.

The facility will be designed by ON Architecture and constructed by Partek. Work is expected to commence in the first week of January and be completed by the end of July 2024.



Scouts SA District Commissioner Amy Battams, Rotary Club of Blackwood Vice President Kevin Marsh, Rotary Club of Blackwood President Martin Rowe, City of Mitcham Mayor Dr Heather Holmes-Ross and Member for Boothby Louise Miller-Frost MP turn the sod at the site of a new community facility at Karinya Reserve.

CITY OF MITCHAM

Thursday
25 January 2024
5pm to 8pm

Food stalls
Live Music
Kids Activities
Citizen of the Year Awards



Australia Day Celebrations

FREE EVENT - EVERYONE WELCOME

www.mitchamcouncil.sa.gov.au/australia-day

Soldiers Memorial Gardens
154 Belair Road, Hawthorn

Story time
Face Painter
Citizenship Ceremony
Community Grants Presentation

Join us to celebrate Australia Day

Head along to the Soldiers Memorial Gardens at Mitcham Memorial Library to celebrate Australia Day on Thursday 25 January.

Join us from 5pm to 8pm for a free evening of activities and entertainment including children's Storytime, face painting, kids activities with items from the Toy Library, and musical performances by Mitcham City Brass and acoustic performer Adam Moffatt.

Enjoy a free Aussie barbecue and desserts from around the world.

Witness a citizenship ceremony and the Citizen of the Year awards presentation where City of Mitcham residents who make a difference in the community will be recognised.

For more information visit www.mitchamcouncil.sa.gov.au/australia-day

Register now for ShineHub bulk buy

City of Mitcham residents keen to reduce their power bills and take action on climate change are invited to be part of the next instalment of the Mitcham Community Renewables Program.

Mitcham, in partnership with energy provider ShineHub, is set to offer a third residential bulk buy in February 2024.

Mayor Dr Heather Holmes-Ross said since the program's inception, 789 systems had been installed, collectively saving approximately \$1.8 million on electricity bills.

Those systems have offset the equivalent energy produced by three gas peaking plants in South Australia.

Residents who signed up to the ShineHub Virtual Power Plant (VPP) have also been able to apply for a cash rebate of up to \$1,000 by

15 December last year through the Retailer Energy Productivity Scheme.

A total of 3819 registrations were received across two residential bulk buys, including 10 households opting for solar installations and 543 homes choosing both solar and batteries, while 236 households chose battery systems alone.

"We're proud to be harnessing the potential of renewable energy and working with our community towards a sustainable future," Mayor Holmes-Ross said.

Register your interest in the third bulk buy at <https://shinehub.com.au/mitcham/>

Petals bring festive cheer to Carrick Hill

Carrick Hill volunteers The Petals took on an extra job last month – preparing the historic house for the Open Day Christmas Celebration.

The Open Day, supported by City of Mitcham, allowed members of the public to enjoy free tours of the House and Garden.

The Petals spent two days decorating a giant Christmas tree and adding sparkle to each room of the house.

They meet on a three-week rotation on Tuesday mornings to gather fresh flowers and arrange them in vases throughout the house.

Former florist Ruth Rodda has been a member of The Petals for six years and enjoys the companionship as well as being in the garden.

"It's been great, I've loved it," she says. "We pick fresh from the garden as Ursula Hayward would have done. Flowers speak for themselves, they bring joy to everyone."



The Petals volunteers Barbara Mitchell, Chris Michels, Anthea Poole, Ruth Rodda, Liz Tucker, Margaret Kay and Nicolas Bambacas decorate a Christmas tree at Carrick Hill.

Fruit Share Adelaide heads to Mitcham

Fruit that would otherwise go to waste will find its way into local kitchens under a plan to bring Fruit Share Adelaide to Mitcham.

With support from a My Mitcham Community Grant, Blackwood resident Brett Dunstone is working to establish a scheme to harvest fruit from backyard trees or public areas.

Under the scheme, fruit will be shared between volunteer fruit pickers, the fruit tree owner, and local food charities.

Charities will distribute the fruit free to people within the community or use it in meal programs.

Brett came across a similar scheme under way in Ballarat, Victoria, and thought it was a great idea.

"Some residents, especially those who are older or living with a disability, find it hard to pick fruit," he said. "It can also be hard for some people to find the time to harvest."

He said as well as reducing food waste, the program would strengthen connections between tree owners, volunteers and food relief groups.

"The nature of fruit harvesting will encourage physical activity, in a welcoming, relaxed environment," he said. "If there are sufficient skilled volunteers, there is also the opportunity to offer to maintain and prune fruit trees as well."



Blackwood resident Brett Dunstone is working to establish a Fruit Share scheme in Mitcham.

The \$2440 City of Mitcham grant will cover the cost of purchasing ladders and harvesting equipment, printing of flyers and the development of a website.

Last month the first donation of 3.5kg of plums was donated by a Mitcham orchardist to the Vinnies Fred's Van meal service at Hawthorn.

To join as a volunteer, register your tree or your charity to be part of the program, visit www.facebook.com/fruitshareadelaide or email fruitshareadelaide@gmail.com



Event director Jason Hughes and Escapegoat Goat Shed Café owner Ian Fehler and other volunteers lead the inaugural event; National Parks and Wildlife Manager Tony Magor, Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing Katrine Hildyard MP, Member for Waite Catherine Hutchesson MP and the Honourable Premier Peter Malinauskas MP.

Belair National Park parkrun launched

A forecast of rain didn't stop more than 300 locals and visitors, including the Honourable Premier Peter Malinauskas MP, from turning up to the launch of Belair National Park parkrun on Saturday 9 December.

The 5km circuit has been mapped out at the site of the former golf course, starting at Escape Goat Adventures at the Belair Caravan Park.

Event director and Member for Waite Catherine Hutchesson MP paid tribute to the volunteers and supporters who had helped bring the event to life.

"A huge amount of work has gone into this," she said. "From what started as a simple

Facebook call-out ... now we are here today ready to count you all down."

Craigburn resident Angela Gardiner said she travelled to parkruns across Adelaide and had been looking forward to the launch of a local option.

"It's long overdue – it's very exciting," she said. "It's fantastic that we are making use of this beautiful park."

Event director Jason Hughes said there was enormous support from locals who had signed up to be volunteers and test the track. The Belair National Park parkrun will be held weekly at 8am, leaving from Escapegoat Goat Shed Café.

To find out more, register to join or apply to volunteer, visit www.parkrun.com.au/belairnationalpark

CITY OF MITCHAM 2022/2023 ANNUAL REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

During 2022/23 we delivered a range of exciting projects and initiatives across our open spaces, reserves, libraries and community centres. Council published its full 2022/23 Annual Report in December 2023. Some of the highlights for the year are set out below.

Read Council's full 2022/23 Annual Report at www.mitchamcouncil.sa.gov.au

Also available for viewing or purchase at the City of Mitcham Civic Centre, 131 Belair Road, Torrens Park.



GOAL 1: ACCESSIBLE, HEALTHY & CONNECTED COMMUNITY

WE CONNECT OUR COMMUNITY WITH EACH OTHER AND WITH THEIR PLACES, AND EMPOWER THEM TO LIVE HEALTHY LIVES.

Interactive Community Bus timetables

Acknowledging an emerging cohort of tech savvy seniors and younger family members seeking community shopping bus services for older residents, an interactive online timetable was developed to complement hard copy bus timetables.

Meals on Wheels Partnership

City of Mitcham partnered with Meals on Wheels to deliver a five-week program, 'Savvy Cooking for One', at the Cumberland Park Community Centre. The program saw older residents learn how to cook for themselves, stretch their food dollar and socialise in a supportive and interactive environment.

Mitcham Railway Station Tours

The Mitcham Railway Station buildings were cleared to allow the Mitcham Local History Service to host public tours of the facility as well as guided history walks, providing opportunities for the community to learn about our city's rich history.

Mobile access

The purchase of a mobile access ramp for use at the Mitcham Cultural Village East Wing has enabled improved accessibility to this space for the community.



100%

DOGS RETURNED
TO OWNERS



724,913

BOOKS, DVDS AND MAGAZINES
BORROWED FROM LIBRARIES



GOAL 2: SUSTAINABLE CITY

WE SUSTAIN AND IMPROVE OUR NATURAL AND BUILT ENVIRONMENTS FOR TODAY'S AND FUTURE GENERATIONS.

Smart Design Stormwater

Urban stormwater systems are under increasing stress due to urban in-fill and rainfall extremes. City of Mitcham is collaborating with the University of Adelaide to tackle this challenge through a project that identifies locations and storage sizes to reduce flood peaks. Potential benefits are reduced stormwater infrastructure costs and space requirements and more water available for urban greening.

GIS for Storm Response

Council's storm response team instigated innovations that helped to deliver normality back to the community, without significant disruption to services. A new interactive app linked to a central mapping system helped to link delivery on the ground with the command centre. Data was collected across all points of operations – from hours worked on clean-up activities, to tonnage of green waste removed and kilometres of streets cleared.

Telematics Trial with Electric Vehicles

Council has been trialling the use of Telematics across four pool electric vehicles. Telematics has allowed us to monitor vehicles using GPS to assist with safety, vehicle management, and battery charge and collect ongoing statistics on vehicle use, emissions reductions and charge management.



60.8%

OF WASTE DIVERTED
FROM LANDFILL



29,164

TREES AUDITED



GOAL 3: DYNAMIC & PROSPEROUS PLACES

WE HAVE A STRONG AND COMPETITIVE ECONOMY THAT SUPPORTS OUR UNIQUE AND VIBRANT PLACES AND CULTURE.

Tensor Grid at Naomi Terrace study

Council partnered with University of South Australia to investigate the benefits of the Tensor Geogrid at Naomi Terrace, Pasadena. Made up of plastic polymers, the geogrid is used to reinforce soil, providing stability and extending the lifespan of structures in construction projects such as roads, retaining walls and embankments.

Ocean Waste Used in New Play Space

Maritime waste including fishing nets and ropes, along with recycled plastic and textiles, has been used to create play equipment at the Waverley Street Reserve, Mitcham.

Along with post-consumer recycled material and ocean waste, the park features aluminium components created using low-carbon processes, and steel, rubber and concrete that include recycled content, and that are recyclable. The manufacturer considers this to be Australia's first sustainable playground.

Acoustic Panels at Mitcham Cultural Village

Panels installed at the Mitcham Cultural Village have improved the acoustic qualities for hall users. Complementing the panels are images of local history from the Mitcham History Centre photographic collection, providing a striking feature.



369

DEVELOPMENT
APPLICATIONS LODGED



20,292

PEOPLE ATTENDED LIBRARY
PROGRAMS AND EVENTS



44,730

CALL CENTRE ENQUIRIES



19

YOURSAY
ENGAGEMENTS

GOAL 4: EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP

WE ARE A PROFESSIONAL AND INNOVATIVE COUNCIL WITH RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP THAT IS VALUED BY ITS PEOPLE, COMMUNITY AND PARTNERS.

Meet the Candidates

Council held the Meet the Candidates sessions across the city in the lead up to the 2022 Local Government elections. Sessions provided residents the chance to meet and hear from their local Mayor and Councillor candidates.

Covid-19 Vaccination

Council facilitated and hosted three COVID-19 immunisation clinics. A total of 27 people were vaccinated through this partnership with SA Health.

Public Toilets Signage

New signage for our public toilets was installed across all 21 public toilets, improving wayfinding, and enhancing the city's image. The signs have QR codes to enable the efficient reporting of faults.

Disability Access Trike

Department of Social Services funded disability access trike partnership with Yankalilla District Council commenced with one trike launched at Belair National Park as a free hire trial.

Mayor

Dr Heather Holmes-Ross

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To vote or not to vote? This is one of the questions posed in the Minister for Local Government's Participation and Elections Review. The discussion paper is seeking feedback from residents of South Australia on a number of questions concerning local government elections including whether or not voting should be compulsory and the timing of elections.

Compulsory Voting

South Australia is one of only two states in Australia where voting in local government elections is voluntary and there is increasing pressure to introduce compulsory voting.

A common argument in support of compulsory voting is that low voter turnout is a consequence of low levels of engagement with local government. Voter turnout, which typically averages around 33% across the state, is often used as a measure of engagement. This is corroborated by voter numbers being generally much higher in rural areas, in some areas over 80%, where candidates are known to the residents, and conversely participation drops below 18% in some metropolitan areas, where interaction with candidates and Elected Members can be minimal. In the past two elections, the turnout in Mitcham has approached 40%.

Unfortunately we don't have a benchmark for voter turnout. What would the voter turnout would be if voting in State and Federal Government elections were voluntary. Maybe 33% represents a high voter turnout? And will people necessarily become more engaged if they are made to vote?

Another issue is that low voter turnout can result in candidates standing on a single issue or with values which don't reflect those of the community being elected with comparatively few votes. Is this a reason to introduce compulsory voting?

If voting becomes compulsory, will people want to vote along party lines? South Australia prides itself on local government being independent and not party aligned. In fact councils are governed by legislation which requires Elected Members to enter each debate with an open mind and forbids Elected Members meeting to discuss how they might vote on a particular issue. Will a change in voting see party politics play out at the local government level, and is this problematic?

Timing of elections

Currently the South Australian State Government and local government elections are held in the same year every fourth year, in March and November respectively. Would the engagement in local government be greater if the timing of the local government elections changed? Some argue that holding both elections in the same year reduces local government voter turnout as residents suffer from voter fatigue. If this is the case, should State and local election be held further apart? Or at the same time?

These questions, and others such as the retention of ward boundaries and councillor allowances, that are raised in the discussion paper are worth considering as changes to local government elections could have a profound effect on your council. I encourage residents to consider the issues and have your say at <https://yoursay.sa.gov.au/council-participation-elections> until 1 March 2024. Happy new year!

Gault Ward

Cr Rod Moss

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Gault Ward encompasses the suburbs of Hawthorn, Westbourne Park, Lower Mitcham and parts of Colonel Light Gardens, Clapham and Kingswood.

As I write this article, it's mid-December with much attention on the upcoming festive season, family holiday fun and trying to keep the tummy line in check. That said, it's also an opportune time to reflect on what has been a huge year for the City of Mitcham across the board. The completion and recent opening of Tiwu Kumangka remains a highlight and whilst finishing touches and landscaping works continue, the new Library and Community Centre has been warmly welcomed by the Blackwood community.

The 'weather gods' unfortunately caused the cancellation of the Christmas Carols at Kingswood Oval recently but other events including the pageant at Blackwood were hugely successful.

On the local front in Gault, consultations regarding several significant projects continue to be in focus with strong engagement by the community regarding the Mortlock Park, George Street Bridge and Mitcham Court Precinct proposed developments. Council staff conducted several detailed local consultation sessions in October regarding Mortlock Park in the Gil Langley Building, Colonel Light Gardens Scout Hall and Colonel Light Gardens RSL and gathered a huge amount of information from all users of the precinct. An advisory group with representatives from the local community, sporting clubs, schools and Colonel Light Gardens Residents Association also provided detailed feedback regarding the key development elements in late November. The summary of all information will be presented to Council in late January for decision.

The outcome of the George Street Bridge replacement was decided at the last Council Meeting after much debate and significant input from local residents regarding traffic options. The final outcome was a hybrid solution to have the bridge remain open to east /west traffic but to emphasise increased walker and cyclist use with highlight road surface features, a pedestrian crossing and widened footpaths for improved views of Brownhill Creek.

A master plan for the development of the Mitcham Court Precinct behind Mitcham Library has also been scrutinised at several community sessions with a general consensus of preference to opening up the precinct for public use, landscaping, plantings and park features to complement the adjacent Soldiers Memorial Gardens. This will be a long-term staged project with much consideration needing to be given to suitable recognition of the Air Force Association history in the area.

On behalf of the Mayor, I recently attended the opening of the Veterans Trail Launch at the newly developed Repatriation Hospital which was a fascinating history regarding significant people involved in the Repat's story and the care of War Veterans in general. I highly recommend a tour of the precinct to see and read the stories behind the naming of the buildings, rooms and features of the new facilities. I also attended the 90th Anniversary Celebration of Denman Tennis Club in November with the Mayor and fellow Councillor Pia George which was an equally entertaining history lesson about the feature hardcourt tennis club in Lower Mitcham.

I wish all residents of Mitcham a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and above all, please be safe.

Craigburn Ward

Cr Darren Kruse

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Craigburn Ward encompasses the suburbs of Craigburn Farm, Bellevue Heights and parts of Blackwood, Coromandel Valley and Eden Hills.

Hello again. As I write a few days before Christmas, I hope that you all have a wonderful, joyous and relaxing Christmas break. It's a special time to be with family, to reflect on the year that has been and plan for the year to come.

The clear highlight for 2023 must have been the opening of **Tiwu Kumangka**. Over 30 years in the making, this special place is fast becoming the beating heart of our community. If you haven't already visited, then please do, there are so many programs on offer. It's much more than just the Blackwood Library. It's **placemaking**. A place to meet, to socialise and to engage with each other.

Equally important was the vote to fund the development of the Pasadena Community Centre. This multi-million development will see the old Scout Hall transformed and more importantly staffed. For the first time ever, Council voted to fund the staffing of a community centre. This decision paves the way for staffing our other community centres, subject to demand and budget. Let's see what the demand looks like at Tiwu in a few more months. More **placemaking**.

We have broken ground at the Eden Hills Scouts, the build to commence soon. With Federal and Council funding, we'll create a brand-new multi-use facility for Scouts, Rotary and the community. More **placemaking**. Similarly, 2024 will also bring the long-awaited redevelopment of Waite Street Reserve and Young Street. Cruelly cut from the original budget for Tiwu, this \$3.2m upgrade will see this area transformed. Views on the playground concrete blocks are mixed! Finally, the "Foodland drain" will be replaced by a 7m wide boulevard, delivering the long-term strategic vision for the revitalisation of our district heart.

The sale of the old library and nursery site has progressed. In November we chose our preferred tenderer and their concept. Staff will now work with them in the further development of the design prior to the finalisation of the sale. Our development outcome criteria are:

- Multi-storey, mixed-use development, including multiple street-level commercial tenancies on Main Road.
- A range of residential apartment sizes and choices, including affordable housing.
- A high quality, sustainable design outcome recognising the unique urban attributes of Blackwood.
- On-ground development outcome within 3 years.
- An excellent financial return.

The development will create spaces for our residents to downsize into high-quality apartments (with views to die for), while staying connected with their friends and community rather than having to leave the district. It will enliven Blackwood after dark and hopefully lead to more of the same. A richer, more vibrant community.

More **placemaking**. Done well, it will serve as the aspirational exemplar for future developers at other sites in our district centre.

Finally, I'm told Santa **did** bring a cash surprise for our 800+ ShineHub VPP residents! With 1,500+ resident EOIs for **2024 bulk-buy events**, it's clear the good news has spread.

So much will happen in 2024. I'm excited. Happy New Year! As always, reach out and I'll see you at Tiwu.

The Park Ward

Cr Corin McCarthy

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The Park Ward encompasses the suburbs of Glenalta, Hawthorndene and parts of Blackwood, Belair and Upper Sturt.

Can I firstly say that the **Blackwood Christmas Tree Festival** and the **Blackwood Pageant** were fabulous events and I congratulate those who put so much time and effort into their organisation. These events represent **my community at its engaged** best and I was very excited to participate and support them.

Investing in Blackwood area upgrades

The past 12 to 24 months have been a stellar period for Council investment in our hills community. The opening of Tiwu Kumangka has provided a much needed community service uplift and there have been other investments such as the Eden Hills Scout Hall upgrade.

Looking ahead to 2024

I will also be looking for these key outcomes as success-measures in the coming 12-24 months:

- **Waite Street Reserve precinct upgrade works commence**
 - This will ensure Blackwood has a true centrepiece.
- **The old Library site is developed into a mixed-use precinct of retail and apartments**
 - Bringing more private investment to Blackwood is a key goal for a vibrant business community that employs our children and provides improved retail.
- **Hawthorndene sees investment at Suffolk Reserve and a master plan for Apex Park**
 - Working with Cr Morrison I am keen to see these precincts have the facilities that are expected for high use, high profile public spaces in Mitcham Council.
 - A master plan for Apex Park will also entice State and Federal Government pledges of support providing a community use precinct encompassing Hawthorndene Oval, Joan's Pantry and Joan's Patch.
- **Council progresses full designs for a sealed Grevillea Way**
 - For my entire time on Council, Grevillea Way has been a prominent issue in both Belair and Blackwood. A full design is needed to see if State Government will assist and support a sealed upgrade. I will be engaging with local residents over summer on this issue and seeking a resolution of Council in early 2024.
 - I will keep the community informed on outcomes as they are subject to Council agreement to fund the design work.

Five or ten years from now – what does success look like

I have a vision that most of Main Road Blackwood's shopping precinct receives major investment and re-investment, including for mixed use retail and apartments. The old Library site development becoming a beacon project for other private investment.

More The Park Ward suburbs will have enhanced high quality, high use public realm assets, which meet community expectations. One of the visions is for a reinvigorated Apex Park precinct.

Council will also make progress on climate change transition, with a current SA Power Networks pilot for electric car charging using Council Stobie poles being rolled out across the entire city. Council will become a key part of the backbone for the transition to net zero.

There's much to do, and much to look forward to!

Babbage Ward

Cr Yvonne Todd

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Babbage Ward encompasses the suburbs of Bedford Park, Pasadena, Panorama, Lynton and parts of Clapham, Eden Hills and St Marys.

2023 was a very big year, which included the funding of the Pasadena Community Centre, for a rebuild and for staff. This is the first true community centre in City of Mitcham, where there is an advisory group of residents that guides how it is used and what services are provided. Many of the services are oversubscribed and often full. As an example, there were more than 70 people with children coming weekly for messy play for little ones. This is an outstanding result that I hope continues in 2024. We hope the building of the new centre will start in mid-2024.

CC Hood Reserve Masterplan was another big outcome in 2023. There was a final consultation in 2023, and I hope the planned renewal for the reserve will start in 2024.

St Marys Park playground was consulted on in December 2023 so I hope this will be another project to be done in 2024.

I am very proud to be part of the Council that prepared a Reconciliation Action Plan in 2023. Reconciliation is about strengthening relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous people, for the benefit of all Australians. City of Mitcham has explained the importance of the plan and what we are doing at;

<https://www.mitchamcouncil.sa.gov.au/Our-city-and-council/reconciliation>

Thank you to the many people who contacted me during the year. I can't always fix problems, but I try to help point you in the right direction or contact the person who can fix the problem. Sometimes talking through a Council issue with me, helps you to decide on your action plan. Working together and helping each other is what makes our community strong and improves where we live. Your input helps guide Council.

I hope you have dreams that come true in 2024.

Please call or email me if you have issues to discuss.

Overton Ward

Cr Jane Bange

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Overton Ward encompasses Clarence Gardens, Cumberland Park, Daw Park, Melrose Park and parts of Colonel Light Gardens and St Marys.

The break from Council formalities over Christmas and New Year has provided me with some thinking space, and the opportunity to reflect on local government and my role within it.

To me, it's an interesting, if somewhat strange, field of work. Thirteen people are brought together by the results of an election where a minority of the population voted, probably knowing very little about candidates. It is certainly unlike Federal or State elections where voting is compulsory and there is a high voter turnout. Another difference is that political decisions in these spheres of government are largely made, not by individual politicians, but predominantly along party political lines.

Local government is also unlike a privately run workplace where a company or an employer are likely to state their focus, values and goals, and prospective employees are interviewed and selected on their ability to achieve these desired outcomes through working collaboratively with their colleagues.

To develop healthy working relationships, trust and respect should be at their core, with a readiness to assume good intent in others' words and actions. It helps to have curiosity about why someone has a very different take on an issue rather than dismissing these views too readily. Few issues are black and white and it's precisely the shades of grey in-between that demand respectful listening, consideration, and discussion, before making an informed decision.

I have served 12 years as a Councillor, in two states and under three Mayors, and, since the last election and a new Chamber, 2023 has been my most enjoyable and satisfying year yet. This is largely because the Chamber chooses to focus on what unites us and the common ground we share. We have collectively decided that the lens, through which we make our decisions, is on how best to prepare our communities for the impacts of climate change and to do our utmost to mitigate these effects wherever we can. To this end, Council selected five goals to achieve by 2030 – buy 100% energy from sustainable sources; change all streetlights to energy efficient technology; make our vehicle fleet fully renewables-powered; reduce commercial and domestic waste to landfill by 75% and adopt sustainable procurement practices and zero emission design into all new Council buildings.

The goodwill of the Chamber crucially needs to be capped by inclusive leadership which seeks to promote co-operation rather than individualism, which enables the quieter, more reticent voices to be heard, and which seeks to keep the focus largely on higher-level decision-making to facilitate shared agreement on important goals and outcomes. What is not needed is micromanagement of the actions needed to achieve these outcomes. Having made the big decisions, Councillors should largely get out of the way and let our professional staff get on with delivering these agreed outcomes.

I'm not convinced I have explained this as clearly as I would like but my attempt is to provide some insight into the complexity of governance at this local level.





Urrbrae Agricultural High School students Ella and Jade install mesh to protect new trees at X Terrain Park, Craigburn Farm.

Students welcome work placement

Urrbrae High School students Ella and Jade gained valuable experience and some pocket money as part of a City of Mitcham work placement program in the October school holidays.

The Year 11 students joined City of Mitcham Arborist Austin to carry out light vegetation tasks across City of Mitcham's parks and reserves.

Their work included mulching, branch collecting, planting, wire mesh and tree guard installation.

City of Mitcham City Operations Group Manager Wayne Hutchinson said the pilot program aimed to redress workforce shortages and to provide work experience opportunities for students seeking a career in horticulture or outdoor work.

"We decided to build on a concept developed the previous year, when internal staff were deployed to do light vegetation work in the wake of a significant storm," he said.

"We thought it was a good way to give back to the community.

"The pilot also builds on the success of City of Mitcham's Flinders University graduate program."

Ella said she welcomed the opportunity to be part of the trial.

"I think it's been a really good experience and has helped me to gain new skills," she said. "It will be something that I can add to my resume."

During the placement, the crew worked at Kingswood Oval and Balham Avenue Reserve, Kingswood, McElligott's Quarry at Springfield, the Mitcham Cemetery, X Terrain Park at Craigburn Farm, CC Hood Reserve at Panorama and Sutton Gardens, Mitcham.



Mike Lucas at the Mitcham Memorial Library Story Walk.

Local author shortlisted in national awards

Blackwood author Mike Lucas has been recognised as a finalist in the Prime Minister's Literary Awards for Young Adult Literature.

Mike's Young Adult novel 'What We All Saw' was one of five novels from across Australia to be shortlisted in the category.

The novel was also shortlisted in the Children's Book Council of Australia Book of the Year Awards last year.

An engineer by trade, Mike started writing 14 years ago and has published several books for children and young adults.

"It's so much fun," Mike says of writing for younger readers. "I enjoy using humour and rhyme. It's great to see the kids' reactions when they hear the story."

Mike hosted a Christmas-themed Night-time Storytime session at Tiwu Kumangka last month.

He invited kids to help him count down until Christmas and read his new novel 'The Christmas Train', published in October by Hardie Grant Books.

Mike and his wife Becky are co-owners of Shakespeare's Books in Blackwood.



Cloth nappy subsidy on its way

City of Mitcham residents will have access to a rebate to subsidise the cost of modern cloth nappies, menstrual and incontinence products next month.

The Sustainable Living Subsidy Program aims to encourage the community to live more sustainably and reduce waste by subsidising the upfront costs of reusable sanitary products.

From 1 February, residents can apply for a rebate of 50 per cent of the purchase price up to the value of \$50 (including GST) on a variety of reusable products.

The program will remain open until Sunday 30 June or while funds are available.

For an application form, product listing and terms and conditions visit www.mitchamcouncil.sa.gov.au/sustainable-living-subsidy-program