

JULY - AUGUST 2026

Somerset Spotlight

RECORD-SMASHING RAIL TRAIL CLASSIC



RECORD breaking numbers of runners, walkers and cyclists hit the Brisbane Valley Rail Trail on Sunday, 12 July for the 23rd annual Somerset Rail Trail Classic.

Participants from across

Queensland and interstate ventured to Somerset for a perfect Sunday morning, taking their place at starting points in Esk, Coominya, Lowood and Vernor.

The event showcased the best of

the trail with all courses crossing the finish line at Fernvale Sports Park.

The 2026 event smashed the previous record, set last year, with 1,242 registrations - a 21% increase.

More on page 6



Say no to DRFA cuts

HELP us fight Federal cuts to disaster recovery funding.

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New Visitor Guide

SLOW down and enjoy Somerset's relaxed lifestyle.

Page 14



Park upgrades

PLAYGROUNDS and new dog parks in Fernvale and Lowood.

Page 9

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the Country. Further, we embrace and promote the Somerset region's heritage to incorporate all cultures, their beliefs and aspirations. As you travel throughout the region, we ask that you respect the land, its history and ancestors.

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DID YOU KNOW?

Traffic control is an important consideration for work sites, big and small. Council must consider what equipment is used, how long it's in place and safety risks for pedestrians, cyclists and other road users.

Watch Why We...
Control Traffic



Mayor's message

IT'S BEEN a busy couple months in Somerset.

We've adopted our 2026-2027 Budget, held a record-breaking Somerset Rail Trail Classic, launched a new visitor guide and we have some major project updates.

Census night is coming up and I encourage all residents to make the most of this opportunity.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics will conduct the 2026 Census on Tuesday, 11 August.

Completing the census may not be the most fun way to spend your Tuesday night, but it provides the most comprehensive snapshot of Australia and helps show how

our community is evolving.

The information collected is vital data for Council which can help us plan delivery of community services, road upgrades, sport and recreation facilities and growth management.

The data also helps Council advocate for Somerset's needs, whether it be more schools, health care infrastructure, transport or funding opportunities.

Financial Assistance Grants from the Federal Government are directly related to census data, so if we want our fair share of funding support we need to make sure we are accurately represented.

On a related note, Council's Community Assistance Grants are now open (see page 11).

Thanks for reading Somerset Spotlight!



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Disaster cuts will cost us

IF THE Commonwealth Government has its way with disaster recovery funding, Somerset Regional Council would face cost shifts in the millions, increasing the burden on ratepayers.

Under the proposed new model, the Disaster Recovery Funding Framework (DRFF), the Commonwealth would reduce its contribution to disaster recovery to 50 per cent.

Had this model applied since 2018, funding received by Somerset would have fallen from \$61.3 million to \$47.9 million.

*This would mean a cost-shift of **\$13.4 million** to the State and Council, with ratepayers forced to pick up the slack.*

Mayor Jason Wendt said the shortfall was not acceptable.

"This will have huge ramifications for smaller, regional councils like ours which have a limited rate base, while also being more susceptible to natural disasters like floods and bushfires," Cr Wendt said.

"Our community will be far worse off under the proposed framework; they'll feel it in their communities and in their hip pockets."

The Commonwealth has also proposed changes to disaster funding thresholds and reductions to betterment funding programs.

Since 2013, through the DRFA and previous funding arrangements, Council has delivered 44 betterment projects across the region. Betterment works include road and bridge upgrades, improving connectivity and resilience during natural disasters and ensuring vital community assets can stand the test of time.

Analysis of the proposed changes indicated only one of the 44 betterment projects would have been fully funded by the DRFA.



The Scrub Creek Bridge was upgraded in 2024 to a more flood resilient standard, supported by \$5.1 million in DRFA funding and \$186,000 contributed by Somerset Regional Council.



Somerset Regional Council has delivered 44 betterment projects with support from the DRFA since 2013, including the Patrick Estate Road Bridge which was upgraded following the 2022 floods.

*The remaining 43 projects would have only been eligible for a total of \$1,056,700 – a shortfall of **\$11.8 million**.*

Cr Wendt said additional funding packages used to support the community may no longer be available.

"Since 2018 we have received \$6.6 million through the DRFA for assistance and resilience grants, economic recovery support, and funding for flood studies, risk assessments, management studies and intelligence systems," Cr Wendt said.

"These packages may no longer be available under the proposed plans, placing even greater financial pressure on councils, primary producers, small businesses and not-for-profit groups."

Cr Wendt said the Commonwealth needed to seriously reconsider its new proposed funding model.

"This is a huge cost shift and would leave councils with difficult decisions after natural disaster events," Cr Wendt said.

"Either we build back our infrastructure to the same or worse conditions, or we pass the cost of betterment onto ratepayers.

"These changes could not be coming at a worse time with our communities already dealing with high inflation, high fuel prices and a surging frequency of natural disasters.

"We have joined Queensland councils, the Local Government Association of Queensland and the State Government in calling on the Commonwealth to scrap its plans to cut disaster recovery funding."

Residents are encouraged to show their support by signing the State Government's petition:

listen2qld.com/disaster-funding



**Have
your
say**

COUNCIL IN BRIEF

CONCRETE MANUFACTURER PAVES THE WAY FOR LOWOOD INDUSTRIAL AREA

More than 15 jobs will be created after Somerset Regional Council approved a development application for a concrete manufacturing site on Noland Street, Lowood.

The industrial site will produce concrete products such as troughs, cladding and pavers using a small mortar mixing machine, and will primarily operate between 7am and 6pm, Monday to Friday.

BUDGET INCREASED FOR TREE OFFSET PLANTING PROGRAM

Council will continue delivering on a successful tree planting program, supported by an increased budget, following a policy review. The Council Capital Works Offset Policy, first introduced in 2019, demonstrates Council's environmental responsibility and stewardship.

Deputy Mayor Helen Brieschke said the program had been successfully delivered since its inception.

"We've done really well as a small council to keep our region's country amenity intact while delivering vital capital works since we started planting trees," Cr Brieschke said.

"Plants have gone from costing \$10 each to \$15 each, so when you're planting several hundred trees in a site, it can become an expensive service.

"To address this and other cost increases, the policy update reflects the increased baseline budget of \$30,000 for planting and offset delivery in the 2026-2027 Budget."

Sign vandals are putting lives at risk on Somerset roads

SOMERSET Regional Council has slammed the deliberate destruction of road signs across the region, warning the reckless antisocial behaviour is putting motorists, pedestrians, road workers and the wider community at serious risk.

More than 35 signs have been damaged in the past few months, including important safety signage along the Brisbane Valley Highway, with most incidents occurring around Harlin.

Vandals have been cutting sign poles from the ground, leaving sharp metal pipes exposed at ground level on major thoroughfares and creating an unacceptable hazard for anyone using or maintaining the road corridor.

Somerset Mayor Jason Wendt said the behaviour was selfish, dangerous and a direct attack on community safety.

"This is not petty vandalism – it is dangerous, antisocial behaviour that could have devastating consequences that is endangering road users," Cr Wendt said.

"Realistically someone could die because of this pathetic behaviour.

"Road signs are there for a reason. They warn drivers, guide traffic, protect road users and help



keep people alive. When someone cuts them down, they are putting their own selfish gain ahead of the safety of every person who travels through Somerset."

Each damaged sign costs Council and ultimately Somerset ratepayers at least \$800 to replace before installation costs are added, diverting money and crews away from other important community works. Cr Wendt said the financial cost was frustrating, but the safety risk was the real concern.

Anyone with information is encouraged to contact **Police Link on 131 444**.

Learn more:

bit.ly/WhyWeHaveSigns

Arts experts join advisory committee

TWO INDUSTRY professionals and a community representative have been appointed to Council's Arts, Culture and Heritage Advisory Committee.

Council appointed [Erin Davis](#), [Sarah Vanden Berg](#) and [Denis Hawes](#) to the committee following an Expression of Interest process.

The new members brought a rich pool of experience to the committee, which is responsible for guiding Somerset's arts and culture scene.

Erin Davis is passionate about celebrating and strengthening smaller regional communities through arts, culture and community events, and has

extensive experience in event planning and delivery, grant writing, and managing stakeholder relationships.

Sarah Vanden Berg is completing a Master of Cultural Heritage and Museum Studies at Deakin University, and possesses strong expertise in cultural heritage management, community engagement and awareness of emerging industry trends.

Community representative Denis Hawes is an active member of the Esk Community Choir and has a strong commitment to supporting and promoting community performing arts initiatives in the Somerset region."

Mature trees planting now in Lowood and Kilcoy

COUNCIL and contractors have started planting mature trees, allowing for cooler and greener spaces throughout Kilcoy and Lowood town centres.



Council is planting about 500 mature trees in each town over the next three years alongside landscaped areas to provide green, cool and shaded places to enhance the towns' rural identities.

So far, trees have been planted in Lowood at the Station Street carpark and Eagle Rise area, and in Kilcoy at Aston Park, Silky Oak Park and the Kilcoy Dog Off Leash Area.

This project received assistance provided through the Commonwealth's Disaster Ready Fund (DRF).

Safer parking for Prenzlau school

A NEW carpark and turnaround will support Prenzlau families with a safe pick-up and drop-off location for school students.

The project includes 18 parking spaces, a two metre wide footpath, a zebra crossing and other line marking to improve safe movement of children outside of the school. The \$247,000 project is 100% funded by the Queensland Government through the School Transport Infrastructure Program.



Villeneuve bridge works continuing

COUNCIL'S contractor has been given the green light to restart work at the Lester Kropp Bridge site at Villeneuve following a three-month review of the upgrade works.

The review included further technical assessments of the design and construction methodology. Due to ground conditions, targeted changes have been made to the bridge abutment to ensure long-term structural performance and safety; however, no other changes have been made to the bridge design. Work resumed late July with a completion date set for December 2026, weather permitting.

PROJECT UPDATES ACROSS SOMERSET



The Toogoolawah Library and Cultural Centre is taking shape.



Fernvale South Productivity Link: Muckerts Lane footpath works in progress, delivering pedestrian infrastructure for the area.



Muckerts Lane Fenny Gully culvert cell installation complete, rock armouring in progress.



A peek inside the Kilcoy Indoor Sports Centre Redevelopment.



Carpark and access upgrades underway at the Kilcoy Indoor Sports Centre.

Read about our major projects

Scan the QR code for the latest on our streetscape projects and other major works.





Lyndon Kendrick was the first cyclist to cross the finish line with a time of 1:26:49 for the 44km event.



Ory Taftam (28:22) and Gabrielle Schmidt (27:45) were the 8km open category gold medalists.



Christian Rusomeka at the finish line in Fernvale.



Tribal Experiences Australia gave the Welcome to Country at Fernvale Sports Park.

Record numbers on the trail

CONTINUED from page 1.

Councillor Brett Freese was proud to report a 21% increase on registrants from 2025.

"This year we had 1,242 registrants, up 21% from last year," Cr Freese said.

"This is a significant increase and we're excited to see so many new entrants and past participants returning to this signature event on the Brisbane Valley Rail Trail.

"It's an achievement to complete any of these challenges and every single participant should be proud of themselves."

For every paid registration, Council is donating \$2 to be split between the Brisbane Valley Rattlers AFC, Somerset Storm Netball Club and Thunder Cricket Club.

"That's more than \$2,400 which is going right back into the community, supporting active and healthy lifestyles in our community and the pursuits of our aspiring athletes," Cr

Freese said.

Council thanked the event's Platinum Sponsor, A&M Civil Contracting, for supporting the Classic once again.

"Their ongoing support for the Somerset Rail Trail Classic has allowed us to deliver a bigger and better event every year," Cr Freese said.

Gold Sponsors: Bellwether Contractors, Boldstone, CleanCo Queensland, CPM Advisory & Project Management and River 94.9.

Silver Sponsors: The Austrans Group Qld, Daniel Banditt Constructions, Georgia Greet – Acutt & Greet, Holding Redlich, Irrigear Lowood, Kilcoy Butchery, ONF Surveyors, Pacific Fuel Solutions, Silverstrand Developments and Urban Utilities.

Council also thanks the many volunteers who helped deliver another successful event.

For event results and professional photos visit: **somersetrailtrailclassic.com.au**



A record-breaking 660 participants took off at the 8km starting line in Lowood for the 23rd annual Somerset Rail Trail Classic.

SENIORS CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS IN JULY AT KILCOY BOWLS CLUB

More than 50 Somerset seniors enjoyed a festive feast at the Kilcoy Bowls Club on Thursday, 16 July. The Christmas in July event was hosted by Council's senior connections program, In Good Company: **somerse.qld.gov.au/IGC**



Roger and Jan Putwain, Elaine Jackson, Alma Wrigley and Lloyd and Maria Harvey.



Valmae Richards, Julie Henley and Valda Conrad at the Kilcoy Bowls Club.



Teresa and Matt Hanley enjoyed some mid-year festivities.



Spark your kids' curiosity

THE SEPTEMBER school holiday program will have a new event on the block with Kids Quest set to shake up the Somerset region.

The family friendly event will be on Thursday, 24 September from 9am-12pm at the Somerset Civic Centre in Esk.

The FREE event will be filled with activities about science, nature and the human body.

Kids Quest will feature stage shows including 'Water Ranger verses Walter' by Urban Utilities, a breakdancing performance with Elements Collective, 'Protectors of the Planet' with Go Seek! and 'Seriously Fun Science' by Street Science.

Mayor Jason Wendt said Kids Quest would spark curiosity in young people across many interesting topics.

"This event gives children aged

three to 11 the chance to have fun while learning about the world around them," he said.

"This is the perfect place for kids to ask questions, find new interests and get hands-on with a range of activities."

In between stage shows, families can participate in a range of activities including wildlife encounters with Geckoes Wildlife, a recycling creation station with The Condensery – Somerset Regional Art Gallery, block building challenges with Somerset Libraries and environmental activities with Active Backyards.

Children can also enter the Kids Quest colouring and drawing competition, with two prize packs to be awarded on the day for best colouring in and best free hand animal drawing.

To enter, download a colouring or drawing sheet online or pick up in-person at the Somerset Civic Centre, 35 Esk Hampton Road, Esk.

Entries must be returned by Friday, 18 September 2026 and can be dropped off at the Somerset Civic Centre, one of Council's customer service centres or mailed to Somerset Regional Council, PO Box 117, Esk QLD 4312.

By simply attending the event, one lucky family will win a Family Pass to Australia Zoo.



Download colouring-in and drawing sheets and see more: somerset.qld.gov.au/KidsQuest

Future Events

SMALL BUSINESS WORKSHOP

Council has partnered with Small Business Financial Counselling Service Southern Queensland to deliver a free, practical workshop for improving profitability, led by a financial counsellor.

When 9am-11am
Wednesday, 19 August 2026

Where Esk Library
19 Heap Street, Esk

R U OK? DAY MORNING TEA

Come along to the Kilcoy Library where the Medicare Mental Health Centre is hosting an interactive and educational experience for the local community, (free morning tea).

When 10am-12pm
Wednesday, 9 September 2026

Where Kilcoy Library
15 Kennedy Street, Kilcoy



**More
Council
Events**

SIXTY-ONE CITIZENS MAKE THE PLEDGE



Jorge Reyes (right) now calls Somerset home, pictured with Hanalein and Margaux.

SOMERSET is now the proud home to 61 new Australian citizens.

Somerset Regional Council celebrated the milestone at a Citizenship Ceremony on Thursday, 16 July at the Somerset Civic Centre in Esk.

The 61 conferees hail from Bangladesh, Chile, Colombia, Ireland, Malaysia, New Zealand, Russia, the Philippines, Samoa, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.

The ceremony is the final step in the journey to becoming an Australian Citizen. The conferees each received certificates, Australian flags, a welcome gift pack and a small bottlebrush tree.



Somerset Regional Council welcomed 28 new citizens hailing from the Philippines, including Kevin and Jaickobe Catan.



Cholette, Arianne and Nicole Bucal with Mayor Wendt and Federal Member for Blair Shayne Neumann.



Author Donita Bundy, Toogoolawah State School student Lara Sclosa and artist Marita Reynolds with 'You're Not a Nonny Nu (Nanna, We Love You)', a children's book produced by Somerset Regional Council.

Somerset turns back time

SOMERSET is well on its way to becoming a dementia friendly region, following the launch of its dementia friendly initiative and the release of a children's book on Thursday, 11 June.

Two hundred seniors attended the Dementia Friendly Launch at the Somerset Civic Centre in Esk, dressed in their best 70s outfits for the occasion.

Attendees enjoyed a free meal, presentations from guest speakers and the launch of 'You're Not a Nonny Nu (Nanna, We Love You)'.

The children's book tells the tale of Disco Nanna, who lives with dementia, as she and her family explore the Somerset region. Throughout the story, the reader learns how the Somerset community has implemented dementia-friendly practices to support the ageing population.

Author Donita Bundy said it was an incredible honour to be part of the project.

"There's a strong intergenerational connection with people in our region," Mrs Bundy said.

"For kids to see that dementia is a reality for some older people means they can give empathy and understanding rather than fear or ostracism."

Disco Nanna's character design was inspired by artwork by grade 5 Toogoolawah State School student, Lara Sclosa, who was excited to see her artwork, based on her nonna, appearing in a book.

"She's pretty cool, she's always listening to 70s bangers," Lara said.

"I hope this book helps people understand what dementia is."

Council's dementia-friendly initiative is supported by the Queensland Government Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety following a successful application for \$42,200 in funding through the Age-friendly Community Development Grant program.

Grab your copy of 'You're Not a Nonny Nu' at one of Council's Customer Service Centres in Esk, Kilcoy or Lowood.



Yvonne Boon and Sandy Devine looking at drawings created by Somerset students depicting their favourite older persons.



Robert and Linda Child with Faye and Kevin Williams at the Dementia Friendly Launch.

The Bloomin' Best competition

Celebrating 10 years!

DO YOU love gardening? Now's your chance to share your green thumb passion with the community, and go in the running for a share in a \$3,500 prize pool.

Entries are now open for the 10th annual Somerset Garden Competition, and to mark the occasion, Council has introduced a special 'Bloomin' Best' category to celebrate longstanding entrants and multiple award winners.

Councillors Sally Jess and Michael Bishop will judge the September competition, alongside former Esk entrant and gardening expert Michele Rowse.

Cr Bishop said the 'Bloomin' Best' award would celebrate the Somerset residents who have championed the garden competition for the past decade.

"We're so grateful for the community's support for this competition and we would like to give special recognition to the residents who have made it such a success," Cr Bishop said.

"New and returning entrants should begin preparing their gardens with entries now open and judging set for mid-September."

Cr Jess encouraged all residents,

businesses and community groups in the region to participate.

"This competition is an excellent way for residents to show off their gardening talents and we're excited to see what Somerset can grow" Cr Jess said.

Major categories include Best Rural Garden, Best Urban Garden, Best Tiny Garden and Best First Time Entrant.

There are bonus category prizes for the Best Habitat Garden, Floral Garden, Sustainable Garden, and Repurposed/Upcycled Garden.

"We'll be judging on the design and maintenance of the gardens, looking at originality, the selection of plants, landscaping and cleanliness," Cr Jess said.



Somerset Garden Competition 2026 guest judge Michele Rowse of Esk won the Best Repurposed/Upcycled award in 2025.

**ENTER
NOW**



"There are encouragement awards for the major categories, and all entrants are eligible for the bonus categories."

Competing gardens will be open for public viewing over the weekend of 26 and 27 September.

Thanks to event major sponsor Searles, the leading market innovator in the home garden industry, all entrants will receive a signature Searles gift pack.

Entry forms will be available from 20 July at Council's Customer Service Centres, Libraries and Visitor Information Centres, and on Council's website.

Entries close **4pm Thursday, 10 September.**

somerset.qld.gov.au/SGC

New dog parks and playground upgrades for southern Somerset



Honeywood Park, Fernvale

HONEYWOOD Park and Stumer Park in Fernvale have been revitalised with modern, accessible playground equipment.

Additionally, two new off-leash dog parks have also been completed at Memorial Park in Fernvale and Clock Park in



Lowood Dog Park

Lowood. The parks feature agility equipment to keep dogs active and entertained, as well as shaded seating areas for their owners.

The infrastructure was delivered as part of a \$1 million Crisafulli Government election commitment.



Stumer Park, Fernvale

Mayor Wendt said the new parks were a welcome addition to the region, providing spaces for the community to come together and enjoy the outdoors.

"These new facilities are a great outcome for our community, offering safe and enjoyable space for activities," Cr Wendt said.

DOWNLOAD THE BOM WEATHER APP

Council will discontinue its subscription to the Early Warning Network (EWN) on 31 August 2026, and encourages Somerset residents to download and subscribe to the Bureau of Meteorology's (BOM) new national warning service. The BOM Weather App offers:

- real-time, location-based push notifications
- option to receive alerts for up to three locations
- warnings for floods, fires, tropical cyclones, severe thunderstorms and other weather events

The BOM Weather App is a free service, whereas EWN comes at a significant cost to Council and the ratepayer.

bom.gov.au

LOWOOD QGAP OFFERS NEW SERVICE FOR TRAILER OWNERS

Did you know the Queensland Government Agency Provider (QGAP) at the Lowood Customer Service Centre now offers new registration and trailer plates for trailers up to 4.5 tonnes?

Vehicles over 4.5 tonnes will still need to be attend Department of Transport and Main Roads (DTMR) for registration.

The QGAP also offers information, assistance and advice on State Government services such as:

- DTMR
- Office of Fair Trading
- Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages
- Seniors cards
- State Penalties Enforcement Registry
- Department of Housing

Contact the Lowood QGAP on 5425 9103.

Budget focused on sustainability

COUNCIL adopted its 2026-2027 Budget in June, delivering a responsible financial plan that maintains essential services while responding to significant cost pressures across fuel, materials and labour.

Mayor Jason Wendt said this year's Budget had been one of the most difficult to prepare, with Council costs increasing by more than 25% over recent years.

"This Budget makes necessary decisions and is focused on long-term financial stewardship so Council can continue maintaining the essential services our community relies on every day," Cr Wendt said.

The 2026-2027 Budget includes a 6% increase to general rates, a \$42.90 per year increase to waste charges, an \$11.20 per year increase in separate charges, and a change to the early payment discount to 5%.

Nearly 80% of Somerset ratepayers are residential, with the majority of those properties expected to pay between \$2.73 and \$3.09 extra per week.

Mayor Wendt said Council



had worked hard to minimise the impact on ratepayers as much as possible while continuing to deliver core local government functions.

"Somerset remains one of the most competitively rated councils in South East Queensland," Mayor Wendt said.

"We continue to maintain no overdraft facility, despite using some savings this year to support the Budget. Our long-term strong financial management will allow us to weather the uncertain and volatile global economic climate without being exposed to significant interest rate changes."

Read the budget breakdown on Council's website:

somerset.qld.gov.au/Budget

Renew your dog registration

COUNCIL has started issuing Dog Registration Renewal Notices, after approving a 25-month dog registration period from 1 July 2026 to 31 July 2028.

Council had kept dog rego fees as low as possible for the period. If you have a desexed dog and you pay within the discount period, ending 30 September 2026, your fee is only \$90.

Impounding fees have also been reduced by 90% for the first impoundment in the financial year,



making it less expensive to bring your dog home.

The new rego tags also have no end date, meaning they are lifetime tags unless lost or damaged, in which case Council will replace the tag at no cost.

Registering and microchipping your dog means Council can return them to you quickly if they get lost.

Make sure to keep your registration and microchip details up to date and contact Council if you move out of the region or your pet has passed away.

somerset.qld.gov.au/catsanddogs



Council joined the community in celebrating Toogoolawah's win as the 2026 Top Tiny Tourism Town in the Queensland Tourism Industry Council's awards.

Tiny tourism town triumphs

TOOGOOLAWAH residents, businesses and community groups came together on Wednesday, 22 July to celebrate the tiny town's win in a state-wide tourism competition.

Council held a Community Council Meeting at the iconic Alexandra Hall on Cressbrook Street, where the Toogoolawah community was officially presented with the Queensland Tourism Industry Council's 2026 Top Tiny Tourism Town Award.

Mayor Jason Wendt thanked the community for attending.

"We're so proud of our town, our community and the

businesses who helped put Toogoolawah on the map," Cr Wendt said.

Council welcomed representatives from community groups like the Toogoolawah Progress Association, Men's Shed, Show Society, Returned Services League, Toogoolawah State High School and the St Andrews Anglican Church alongside businesses including Toogoolawah Alkira, Cumquats Australia, Toogoolawah Motel, Ottaba Llamas and Bliss Out by CC.

Watch our video:



Mayor Jason Wendt with the Top Tiny Tourism Town Award.



Toogoolawah Progress Association President Don Wade speaking with Councillors.

SIXTEEN EXCELLENCE BURSARIES AWARDED

Caitlin Guy will join Queensland Senior Ladies team at the Christian Football Federation Association National Titles in Victoria.

Calami Peters and Mikaela Melville will compete at the Rugby League State Championships at the Gold Coast.

Georgia and Kate Elsie Cross competed at the Pony Club Queensland State Championships at Samford-Golden Valley Pony Club.

Emmett and Averie Harrison played at the Queensland Christian Soccer Association Representative Soccer Program at Mudjimba.

Aria Kirby attended the Queensland Representative School Sport Cross Country State Championships in Highfields.

Lucy Bennet joined the Queensland Under 18s Women's softball team, at the School Sport Australia 13-18 years Softball National Championships in New South Wales.

Ayden Wait competed with the Queensland Athletics Team at the Australian Athletics Junior Championships in Brisbane.

Aaron Martin will compete in shot put, long jump, turbo javelin and 50 metre run for the Queensland Athletics Team and Jessica Martin will compete for the Queensland Ten Pin Bowling Team at the Special Olympics National Games in Melbourne in October 2026,

Baseballers Lachlan Walk and Rylan Wagner competed with Brisbane West Wolves Division 1 at the Queensland State Titles at Redcliffe.

Golfer Ryder Cochran competed at the QRSS State Championships at Rockhampton and Yeppoon.

Somerset Storm Netball Club's Mixed 13/14 Rep Team attended the Darling Downs Interdistrict Netball Competition between Warwick and Roma.

Community Assistance Grants now open

THE NEXT funding round of Somerset Regional Council's Community Assistance Grants is now open.

Not for profit community organisations can apply for financial assistance for projects, activities or events that deliver a clear benefit to the wider community.

Community organisations may submit one grant application per funding round, with two funding rounds available each financial year. Applicants must have satisfied

the acquittal requirements for any previous Council grants before the new round opens.

In addition to ordinary grant applications, round one applicants can apply for rates remissions and Christmas projects and events.

The round closes **5pm Wednesday, 26 August.**

Projects must not have a start date before Friday, 25 September 2026.

Apply online:

somerset.qld.gov.au/Grants

New Library Strategy

SOMERSET Libraries will enhance its services with the adoption of a new strategic plan.

The Somerset Libraries Strategic Plan 2026-2032 is a roadmap which will build upon high quality services while meeting the needs of a growing and geographically dispersed community.

A key action of the plan is to investigate after-hours access and optimise opening hours across library facilities.

Somerset Deputy Mayor Helen Brieschke said Somerset Libraries had strong engagement with the community.

"For the 2024-2025 year there were almost 88,000 loans, and almost 84,000 visits to our libraries," Cr Brieschke said.

"That is a big effort, and Somerset Libraries is one of the shining stars of our Council, they do a great job."

In consultation for the plan, Council received close to 700 survey responses, highlighting strong support for libraries as community hubs, as centres for lifelong learning and providers of technology access and support.

Read the full strategy online.

somerset.qld.gov.au/libraryservices

200 'cod hotels' to restore fish habitat in SEQ

MORE THAN 200 purpose-built 'cod hotels' will create new homes for native fish across South East Queensland's waterways as part of a major effort to restore critical habitat and improve the health of waterways across the region.

'Cod hotels' are underwater structures made from recycled hollow logs and natural timber materials, designed to mimic the sheltered environments native fish rely on for breeding, feeding and protection.

Cod hotels are now being installed in the Mid and Upper Brisbane River in the Somerset region, supporting aquatic species including Mary River cod and freshwater turtles. Submerged beneath riverbanks and rock shelves, the structures will create refuge areas and improve habitat conditions within local waterways.

Additional habitat structures will also be installed alongside the cod hotels. These structures are areas of logs, root balls and woody debris along the riverbank designed to provide habitat in addition to helping stabilise the bank and improve connectivity along the waterway.



Through the project, a disused water tank was transformed into a vibrant mural. Brisbane artist Jordan Bruce from The Brightsiders delivered the mural at Twin Bridges Reserve in Fernvale, highlighting the importance of protecting threatened species.

Mayor Wendt said waterways were a huge part of Somerset's identity and lifestyle.

"Cod hotels will help bring life back into local waterways while improving habitat for some of our region's most vulnerable native species," Cr Wendt said.

The Somerset Fish Habitat Revitalisation project is part of the \$40 million Resilient Rivers SEQ commitment with \$10 million each from the Australian Government, Queensland Government, Council of Mayors (SEQ) and Seqwater.

Resilient Rivers SEQ is one of 29 commitments being delivered through the SEQ City Deal, a partnership between the Australian Government, Queensland Government and Council of Mayors (SEQ), aiming to improve the accessibility, prosperity and liveability of the region.



New life for Linville Railway Station

THE LINVILLE Railway Station Building will get a new lease on life, following Somerset Regional Council's approval for use of the site by the Linville Progress Association (LPA).

The LPA submitted an Expression of Interest for a Licence Agreement, with the intent to create a creative hub and visitor destination which supports artists, workshops, tourism and community participation.

Councillor Michael Bishop

said the Linville community was interested in the outcome of the expression of interest process.

"They're a very vibrant community, and it's a growing tourist destination," Cr Bishop said.

"This new project will enhance Linville's tourism standing and we thank the groups who expressed their interest."

Council manages the property on George Street, Linville under a sub-lease with the Department of Transport and Main Roads.

Council will enter into a Licence Agreement with the LPA for a period of three years.

Growers sign up for 15,000 megalitres

MORE THAN 100 growers have signed on as foundation customers of the groundbreaking Lockyer Valley and Somerset Water Security Scheme (LVSWSS).

In July the project released the outcome of its initial water sales and also welcomed a \$5 million funding injection by the Queensland Government as part of this year's State Budget.

The new funding will provide the Queensland and Commonwealth governments with a construction ready project by 2028.

Across April and June, local growers signed up to more than 15,000ML or almost 70 per cent of the scheme's capacity of 22,000ML.

The scheme aims to secure the highest quality recycled water from the underutilised Western Corridor Recycled Water Scheme (WCRWS) to increase the region's irrigation water supply by 50 per cent annually. It will be the largest recycled water irrigation scheme in Australia and significantly increase water supply reliability and security to growers in the region for decades to come.

Mayor Wendt said recent water sales confirmed strong grower support and a willingness to invest.

"To already have 70 per cent of the scheme's supply earmarked is a tremendous outcome, and shows demand for reliable and affordable water is well and truly there," Mayor Wendt said.

"Our economic assessment of the scheme shows it will increase agricultural output in our region by \$270 million to almost \$1.7 billion annually, which is a great outcome for the region, the State and the nation.

"This will provide our region with real water security for the first time. It's a gamechanger for our growers, local business, industry and the community."

A full copy of the project's economic analysis is available at: lvandswatercollaborative.com.au

The project will finalise its Optimisation Assessment Report for capital consideration by the Australian and Queensland Governments in August 2026.

The LVSWSS forms part of the Water Initiatives in the Lockyer Valley commitment being delivered under the South East Queensland (SEQ) City Deal. The SEQ City Deal is a partnership by the Australian Government, Queensland Government and Council of Mayors (SEQ).



Bernard Salt AM will speak at a business breakfast event in August.

BREAKFAST WITH BERNARD SALT

Prominent Australian demographer Bernard Salt AM is set to highlight the benefits of the LVSWSS at a business breakfast at Porters Plainland on Wednesday, 26 August.

Mayor Wendt said the event would highlight the critical role the region's water project could play in driving future economic growth and development.

"This is a fantastic opportunity to hear from one of the country's leading voices on the potential of regional Australia and, in particular, the role our water project can play for our region," Mayor Wendt said.

Register now:

lockyerchamber.com.au/events/august-business-breakfast



Kilcoy Multicultural Carnival this September

Held annually on Jinibara Country in Kilcoy, the Kilcoy Multicultural Carnival is a growing regional celebration of culture, connection and community in the Somerset region.

Each year the carnival brings together residents, visitors, community groups and businesses to celebrate the cultures that shape Somerset through food, music, storytelling and performance.

Save the date: Friday, 18 September

New visitor guide showcases Somerset

TOURISM is booming in Somerset, with more people choosing to spend their holidays exploring the region.

The launch of a new visitor guide and destination video follows Toogoolawah being named Queensland's Top Tiny Tourism Town for 2026, adding to the region's growing reputation as a visitor destination.

The new guide builds on this momentum by showcasing Somerset's villages, the region's country lifestyle and small batch food scene.

Experience Somerset, the destination brand of Somerset Regional Council, launched the new guide on Thursday, 23 July.

Somerset tourism operators, visitor information centre volunteers, industry partners

and Councillors attended the launch event at Splityard Social in Fernvale.

Mayor Jason Wendt said that the new visitor guide would put Somerset front-of-mind for holidaymakers in a competitive tourism industry.

"We're inviting people to slow down in Somerset, to celebrate our relaxed lifestyles where

weekends are spent lingering over coffee, wandering through our villages, enjoying our lakes, and discovering the simple pleasures of country life."

Pick up a free copy of the new Experience Somerset Visitor Guide at visitor information centres across Queensland and in Esk, Fernvale and Kilcoy.

View the destination video at experiencesomerset.com.au



Fernvale Visitor Information Centre volunteers Sandy Wright, Leanne Mitchell, Barbara Fry, Sue Eaton and Helen Levitt at the Experience Somerset Visitor Guide launch.

DAYTIME ENTERTAINMENT FOR SENIORS



DAVID SCHEEL

DON'T SHOOT ME, I'M JUST THE PIANO PLAYER

10AM MON, 7 SEPTEMBER

FEELIN' GROOVY

THE SONGS OF SIMON AND GARFUNKEL

10.30AM THU, 8 OCTOBER



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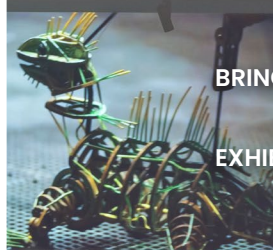
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Library a lifesaver for rail trail traveller

IMAGINE travelling overseas and finding yourself without your mobile phone and with it all your contacts, email, banking, vital administration tools and ability to connect with family back home.

This is what happened to Katie Sheely, an American woman who rode from Sydney on a trail bike, taking the Brisbane Valley Rail Trail through Somerset.

After accidentally damaging her mobile phone and unsure where to turn, Katie visited the Kilcoy Library seeking assistance.

Using the library's free Wi-Fi, public computers and digital resources, staff helped Katie regain access to essential accounts, reconnect with family, and organise the next steps needed to continue her journey.

What began as a stressful situation quickly became more manageable with practical support and guidance from Somerset Libraries staff.

"I have traveled to 13 different countries, and the Kilcoy Public Library has made it on my list of one



Katie Sheely was travelling from Sydney on a trail bike. After accidentally damaging her mobile phone, she turned to Somerset Libraries for assistance.

of the greatest places I have ever had the pleasure of visiting," Katie said.

"In a time of great distress as a young woman traveling solo across the world from her home country, unable to call her family or have access to the phone numbers of the Australian friends I have, I found refuge, kindness, help, and joy at the library.

"I will never forget the kindness shown to me in Kilcoy."

While every day in our libraries is different, this experience highlights an important truth: libraries are far more than places to borrow books. They are trusted community spaces that support wellbeing, providing access to information, technology, digital assistance, learning opportunities, and social connection.

Whether supporting local residents to access online services, helping job seekers and students, or assisting visitors when unexpected challenges arise, Somerset Libraries continue to play an essential role in building connected, informed and resilient communities.

**Coming
to Esk this
October...**

**Full Circle
with
Chris Hammer**

**Thursday
1 October**

Join bestselling author Chris Hammer as he discusses his latest novel. Known for his gripping, atmospheric crime fiction set against stark Australian landscapes, Chris Hammer has become one of the country's most celebrated storytellers.



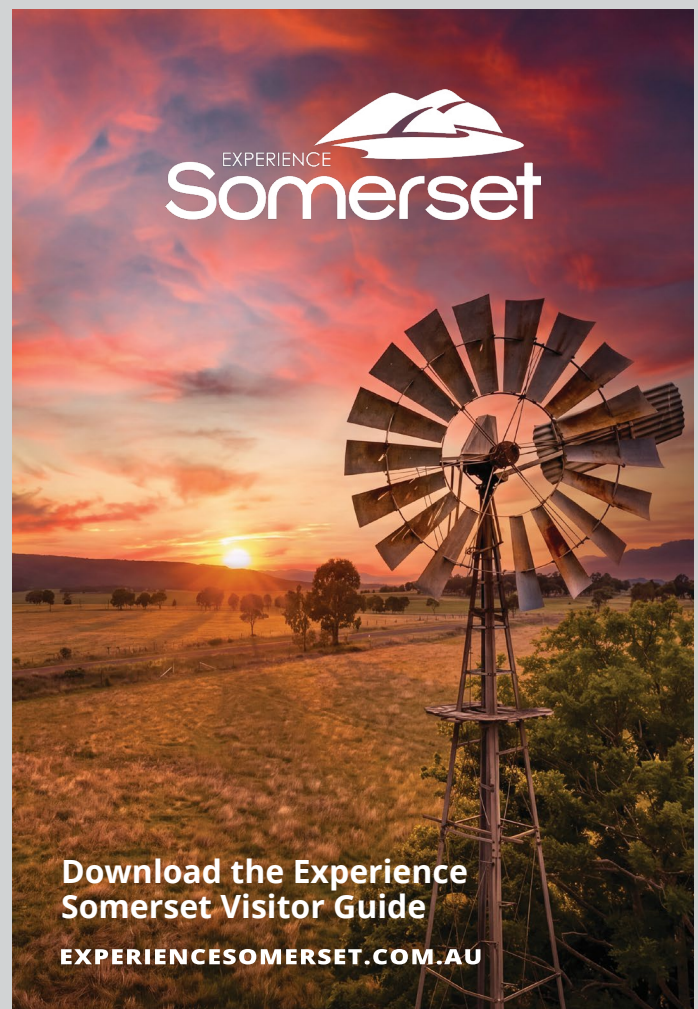
FREE EVENT

**11am-12.30pm
Somerset Civic Centre,
35 Esk Hampton Road, Esk**

Bookings essential via the
Somerset On The Go app or
phone 5424 4000.

For more information
(07) 5424 4000
mail@somerset.qld.gov.au
somerset.qld.gov.au/library

**Somerset
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Shane hangs up the boots

OVER THE past two decades, Shane Teske's fondest memories have been working with Somerset landholders.

After 24 years of service to his community, the Somerset Regional Council Pest Management Officer has decided to hang up the boots, sit back and enjoy life on his Mount Beppo property.

In his role, Shane worked closely with landholders to manage weeds and feral animals, and also ran Council's Wild Dog Control Program.

A friendly face at Council's

pest control stand at the local agricultural shows, Shane built trust with his colleagues and landholders across Somerset.

He said the key to serving the community was taking the time to understand and listen.

"I've built up good relationships with many landowners over the years, you just need to take time out to understand and listen to their issues, and they appreciate that," Shane said.

"They might send in a CSR (Customer Service Request), or ring me up and I know what the

issue is because of that working history with landowners.

"It's nice when you have wins with the landowners – when you get a good result and they're happy, it means I'm happy.

"I get along with everyone out in the field and up in the office, it's all about having that good working relationship."

Excited to have more time up his sleeve, Shane looks forward to tinkering around in his workshop, catching up on fishing and spending time with his cattle, vegetable garden and birds.

Shane will be sorely missed by Council colleagues.

"On April Fool's Day this year I said I was retiring next week," Shane said. You should have heard some of the comments – 'you can't do that, Shane!' – I was laughing the whole day."

A few months later Shane decided it was time to retire, for real, wrapping up at Council in early July. "They'll joke and ask 'can't you stay?' but they're very happy for me," Shane said.

Shane thanked his crew, the Planning and Development department and the Somerset Regional Council team for their support over the years.



Quick Links

Make a Customer Service Request

› somerset.qld.gov.au/CSR

Visit our Disaster Dashboard

› disaster.somerset.qld.gov.au

Employment opportunities

› somerset.qld.gov.au/Employment

Apply for grant assistance

› somerset.qld.gov.au/Grants

Read the latest Council news

› somerset.qld.gov.au/News

Events in Somerset

› somerset.qld.gov.au/WhatsOn



somerset.qld.gov.au

Somerset Regional Council
(07) 5424 4000
mail@somerset.qld.gov.au



Esk Administration Centre
2 Redbank Street, Esk

Kilcoy Customer Service Centre
15 Kennedy Street, Kilcoy

Lowood Customer Service Centre
1 Michel Street, Lowood