

FEBRUARY 2026

ISSUE 38

OUR NEWS

District Council of
ELLISTON

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Welcome back to what is shaping up to be a busy and exciting year across the district. I hope everyone had a safe and enjoyable Christmas and New Year break, and a smooth start to the school year for local families.

One of the highlights to kick off the year was our Australia Day celebrations in Lock. While the weather certainly turned up the heat, it was a fantastic day filled with community spirit and pride. A huge thank you to everyone who braved the scorching conditions to come along and celebrate what makes our district such a great place to live. Congratulations to all of this year's award recipients:

- Gabby Zerk – Citizen of the Year
- Chloe Northcott – Young Citizen of the Year
- The Honner Brothers – Award for Active Citizenship
- Port Kenny Time Capsule and Sports Centre Opening – Community Event of the Year

The depth and quality of nominations this year was outstanding and truly highlighted the many unsung people and groups who quietly make a difference in our communities every day.

Council sincerely thanks the Lock Football and Netball Club for hosting the event (and for the very welcome air-conditioning!), and a special thank you to Cr Hancock for his efforts in organising a memorable Australia Day celebration.

Behind the scenes, Council staff are now well and truly back into the swing of things, with planning already underway for the 2026–27 financial year. This includes preparation for our Annual Budget and the Local Government elections to be held in November, which will be an important milestone for our district.

As always, Council remains focused on delivering services, maintaining infrastructure and planning for the future needs of our community. I look forward to another productive year working alongside Elected Members, staff and residents across the district.

WELCOMING NEW STAFF TO COUNCIL





Council is pleased to welcome two new staff members who have recently joined the team.

Rania Eason has commenced as Customer Service Officer and will be supporting the community through Council's customer service operations.

Christie McKinnon has joined Council as Executive Support Officer, providing administrative support across the organisation.

We are pleased to welcome Rania and Christie to Council and look forward to their contributions to the team and the community.

FUNDING BOOST TO SUPPORT OUR VOLUNTEERS

Council is pleased to share that it has secured a $30,000 grant through the Department of Human Services 2025–26 Supporting Regional and Remote Volunteers program.

The funding will support improvements at the Elliston Community and Visitor Information Centre, including the Op Shop, which only opens daily through the dedication of local volunteers.

The project will focus on improving shelving, storage and internal layouts to make the centre a more comfortable and practical place to volunteer. Council will also develop a Volunteer Framework to help ensure volunteers feel welcomed, supported and valued from the moment they get involved. This Framework will be available for other community based organisations to utilise.

These improvements are about making it easier for people to lend a hand, whether they are long term volunteers or someone thinking about getting involved for the first time. By creating a more accessible and well supported volunteering environment, Council hopes to encourage more locals to be part of these much loved community spaces.

Council thanks the Department of Human Services for its support and looks forward to seeing the benefits flow through to volunteers and the broader community.



COMMUNITY EVENTS BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER

Council continues to support a wide range of community events across the district that bring people together and strengthen local connections.

The Elliston Markets held on 29 November attracted a strong community turnout, with more than 30 stallholders, food vendors and live music. The next Elliston Markets will be held on Easter Saturday in April, providing another opportunity to support local stallholders and enjoy a relaxed community event.

Council has also supported a number of community led events across the district, including the Lock Christmas Tree, Elliston Christmas Event and Tooligie Christmas Tree celebrations, and the Port Kenny Sports Centre End of Harvest Community Celebration.

The annual fishing competition will return over the Easter weekend, continuing its long standing role in attracting visitors to the district and supporting the local economy.

Council has received funding to support Youth Week from 16 to 26 April and will partner with West Coast Youth and Community Support to deliver outdoor youth focused events. Further details will be shared closer to the date.









SHOWCASING OUR REGION

The Hello SA team recently visited the district to film features for Adelady. HelloSA TV (Episode 3 for those streaming) on 22 February will feature the Elliston Art and Sculpture Trail, Venus Bay Beachfront Tourist Park and Port Kenny Hotel.





COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS

COASTAL HAZARD ASSESSMENT

Council is undertaking a Coastal Hazard Assessment for Elliston, Venus Bay and Port Kenny to help inform future planning and long term decision making.

Community members are invited to complete an online survey and share photos or stories of past sea storms, erosion and coastal changes they have observed over time. This local knowledge will assist Council to better understand current and future coastal risks and guide planning for the district's coastline.

Complete the survey or find out more:
https://form.jotform.com/253437025283051



2026-27 BUDGET SURVEY

Council has commenced consultation to assist with the preparation of Council's Annual Business Plan and Annual Budget for the upcoming 2026-27 financial year. A survey has been released which provides an opportunity for you, as part of the community, to share with us your priorities for our district which will help inform the development of these plans. Submissions close on 20 February.



IMPORTANT UPDATE - CHANGES TO ROAD CLOSURE APPROVALS FOR EVENTS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

Council continues to support community events and activities that bring people together. To ensure safety, consistency and legal compliance, updated requirements for road closures and traffic management came into effect for Council from August 2025.

These changes affect how Council assesses and approves road closures for events and other activities on Council managed roads.

From August 2025, any event or activity that requires a partial or full road closure must be submitted to Council at least **four weeks before the event date**.

This minimum notice period is required to allow Council to meet its legislative responsibilities, assess safety and traffic impacts, coordinate signage and notifications, and ensure residents, businesses, emergency services and road users are appropriately informed.

Applications received with less than four weeks notice may not be approved, even where similar events or closures have previously occurred. This change applies to all community groups, event organisers and commercial operators and ensures a fair and consistent approach for everyone.

Road closure approval may be required for:

- Community events and festivals
- Sporting events and fun runs
- Parades, marches or commemorative activities
- Filming or commercial activities
- Temporary access restrictions associated with events or works

For events held on Council managed roads, volunteer groups may be able to still undertake simple road closures where an approved Event Management Plan is in place and Council authorisation has been granted. Events impacting state managed roads require additional approvals and longer lead times.

If you are planning an event or activity, or are unsure whether approval is required, please contact Council early. Early conversations help avoid delays and allow Council to work with organisers to support safe and successful events.

Planning ahead helps protect participants, residents and road users and ensures our community events can continue to be enjoyed safely.



SUPPORTING LOCAL ARTS AND COMMUNITY SPACES

The Elliston Community Information Centre Op Shop has recently received a refresh, creating a more welcoming and functional space for volunteers, shoppers and visitors. The Information Centre is also hosting ***Share Our Shores***, an exhibition by talented young local artist Zephyr Jones, running from 19 December to 20 February. The exhibition combines artwork with information about migratory and resident shorebirds and encourages greater awareness of our coastal environment.



OUR PLACE

AROUND OUR COMMUNITY

There's been plenty happening across the district, with a range of works underway to keep our facilities safe, accessible and well maintained.

At the Council Main Office, capital works have commenced, including internal painting and improvements to building access. Over at Venus Bay, repairs to the Beach Access Boardwalk have now been completed, addressing erosion damage and improving safety for everyone enjoying the beach.

Council is also pleased to share some good news, having successfully secured $17,250 in grant funding to upgrade the publicly accessible standpipe in Elliston. The upgrade will include automated operation and PayPass access, making it easier and more convenient for community and tourism use.

Targeted road maintenance and pothole repairs have continued across the district to improve driving conditions, while fire prevention inspections and vegetation management works have also been carried out in line with seasonal bushfire preparedness.

Behind the scenes, Council is already planning ahead, with work underway to identify and prioritise projects for the next financial year to ensure we continue investing in infrastructure and services that matter most to our community.

Council thanks residents for their patience and cooperation while works are carried out and remains committed to maintaining and improving services across the district.









AUSTRALIA DAY CELEBRATIONS - LOCK

AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS 2026

This year's Australia Day celebrations were a great opportunity to come together as a community and recognise the people and events that make our district such a strong place to live.
It was wonderful to see the community come together, with over 130 people attending the celebrations, reflecting the strong sense of connection across the district.

Council congratulates the recipients of the 2026 Australia Day Awards
Citizen of the Year – Gabby Zerk
Young Citizen of the Year – Chloe Northcott
Award for Active Citizenship – Larry, Vinny and Danny Honner
Community Event of the Year – Port Kenny Time Capsule Opening and Port Kenny and Districts Sports Centre Official Opening

The Australia Day Awards provide an important opportunity to recognise the often quiet and behind the scenes contributions that strengthen community life and support others across the district.
Council also thanks the Lock Football Netball Club and the many volunteers who hosted the celebrations and ensured the day was welcoming and enjoyable for all who attended.















CELEBRATING COMMUNITY SPIRIT – CITIZEN OF THE YEAR NOMINEES



Citizen of the Year 2026
Gabby Zerk, Lock

For nearly 30 years, Gabby Zerk has quietly and consistently shown up for her community. Her contributions span sport, education, health, emergency services, and community life across Lock and the wider district. Gabby has dedicated decades to Lock Netball Club as a player, coach, umpire, committee member, and volunteer bus driver, earning Life Membership in 2019. She is also a qualified Ambulance Officer, provides transport and support for elderly residents, promotes health and wellbeing programs, and volunteers across numerous community events. Alongside her community service, Gabby works on the family farm with her husband Michael and has raised three children. Her extraordinary dedication makes her a truly deserving 2026 Citizen of the Year.



Young Citizen of the Year 2026
Chloe Northcott, Port Kenny

At just 26, Chloe Northcott is a highly respected contributor to her community. She volunteers with the Port Kenny Ambulance Service, serves as a Justice of the Peace, and is active in both the Port Kenny Sports Club and Progress Committee. Chloe played a leading role in coordinating the Port Kenny Time Capsule Opening, dedicating many hours behind the scenes to ensure its success. Her commitment across emergency services, sport, governance, and community events demonstrates outstanding leadership and citizenship at a young age.



Award for Active Citizenship 2026
Larry, Vinny and Danny Honner, Colton

The Honor brothers are pillars of the Elliston District community. Alongside running their family farm, they support local sport, school events, and a wide range of community initiatives. They provide practical assistance—from helping with setup and working bees to supplying sheep or firewood—and mentor younger athletes while also offering financial support to young people pursuing sporting opportunities. Their leadership, generosity, and lifelong commitment have been recognised with Life Memberships at the Elliston District Football Club, and their impact is felt across the wider community.



Community Event of the Year 2026
Port Kenny Time Capsule Opening & Port Kenny and Districts Sports Centre Official Opening

Over 300 people came together to celebrate both the town's history and its future at this special event. The Time Capsule Opening honoured past generations through storytelling and intergenerational connection, while the official opening of the Sports Centre marked a significant boost for community recreation and wellbeing. By combining heritage and progress, the event strengthened local pride, belonging, and unity. Its success reflects the dedication of the organising committee and volunteers who created a lasting legacy for Port Kenny and surrounding districts.

A CHANGE TO HOW MAYORS ARE ELECTED

There's an important change coming to how Mayors are chosen across South Australia, including here in the District Council of Elliston.

Traditionally, the Mayor has been selected by the elected members of Council. From the November 2026 local government elections, this will change, with Mayors (also known as Principal Members) to be directly elected by the community.

This reform has been introduced through State Government legislation and will apply consistently across all councils.

What does this mean for Council decision-making?

Under the new arrangements, the Mayor will not vote on Council motions during normal business. However, if a vote is tied, the Mayor will exercise a casting vote to make the final decision.

The change strengthens the community's voice by giving residents a direct say in choosing their civic leader, while continuing to ensure strong local representation through elected councillors.

Council will continue to share more information as we move closer to the 2026 elections.

Government of South Australia



FIRE DANGER SEASON – STAY INFORMED

As the Fire Danger Season continues across South Australia, we would like to remind everyone on how to stay informed about incidents and warnings for fires.

- Check **Fire Danger Ratings daily** so you know how dangerous a bushfire would be if it started.
- **Take action if a warning is issued** after a fire has started.
- Regularly check for bushfire updates using **multiple sources of information**
  - Facebook: SA Country Fire Service, SA Country Fire Service Updates
  - Information Hotline: 1800 362 361
  - Subscribe to CFS emails via the CFS SA website
  - Download the Alert SA app

For more information visit www.cfs.sa.gov.au or call the Bushfire Information Hotline on 1800 362 361. In an emergency, always call 000.