

24th – 25th Feb 2024
Theme: 'Happiness is'

Loxton's
67th Mardi Gras



CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT AGM 19th MAY 2024

I would once again like to acknowledge the Loxton and wider Riverland Community for their enthusiastic support of our 67th Annual Loxton Mardi Gras Family Festival. This was made possible by the efforts of Chris Sheahan as Event Co-ordinator supported by the rest of the Loxton Mardi Gras Team and although, as usual, not everything went entirely to plan, I feel it was overall successfully accomplished. If you have suggestions that would improve the Mardi Gras, please join our committee and help them be realised or take your idea as your project and make it happen.

Saturday Loxton No 2 oval again came alive with many food and market stalls, River Rock Dance Club, Loxton Community Dance Club and several bands. There were also displays by the SES, CFS, SAPol, Riverland Vintage & Classic Car Club and Loxton Hockey Club JBall. An innovation this year was an art display by several of our local artists in the Hockey Club rooms, which were also utilised as a rest area for our senior and disabled attendees. We hope to continue this innovation in years to come.

I was impressed by the many ways the 2023 theme "Happiness is.." was celebrated by parade participants. The creativity and interpretation the floats displayed was brilliant. Combined with the cavalcade of older vehicles and Emergency Services, it was great to witness. I am very thankful for the sponsorship of float prizes by local businesses as follows:

Most outstanding float donated by Tankard Dental Riverland: Loxton Ladies Probus Club

Best Ambassador Float donated by The Bill Ebert Family: Ellamae Minerds, Junior Ambassador sponsored by Riverland Skips

Best "Happiness is" Themed Float donated by Loxton Health Centre: Riverview Resthome

Best School Float donated by Riverland & Mallee Conveyancers P/L: Loxton Lutheran School

Most Humorous Float donated by Altschwager Family Funerals: Loxton Mens Probus Club

Best Outlying Community Float donated by Ronco Motors: Loxton Dirt Kart Club

Special thanks to Parade Co-ordinators Peter Magarey, Chris Sheahan, Megan Schultz and helpers, also Tom Fielke and his Parade Marshals.

There are so many people who take on roles just over the Mardi Gras weekend to ensure that every task is taken care of and I am extremely grateful for their assistance, as every little bit helps and lightens the load for the committee. The support provided by local SA Police, Emergency Services, Loxton Waikerie District Council and their employees, among others and in many ways, is very much appreciated. Thank you to our MC's Steph Nitschke & Ben Greiger, our Parade Announcers and the Ambassador, Parade and Window Competition judges.

Nippy's again sponsored the Orange Bowling Event which was a fun promotional event for the citrus industry, with prizes being Loxton vouchers which support local businesses.

The Murray Pioneer Shop Window display entries also showed great creativity and gave competition judges a hard task when deciding the winner, which was East Terrace Trading. I thank The Murray Pioneer and the eight participating businesses for their support.

Congratulations to all 2024 Ambassadors and their sponsors, I thank them for their enthusiastic participation and efforts in fundraising. I am sure Chloe Oldman, Community and Charity Ambassador (sponsored by Loxton Rotary Club), Jim West, Senior Ambassador (sponsored by Loxton Historical Village) and Indi Thomas, Junior Ambassador (sponsored by Mojo Mentoring) will do a great job promoting and representing Mardi Gras in various ways over the coming year, such as Indi laying wreaths at both the Appreciation and Anzac Day Services on our behalf. Special mention must go to our other Junior Ambassadors Charlotte Andriske (PPHS Loxton), Olive Arnold (Leach Constructions), Ivy Dreschler (Drex Connect), Zeva Dreschler (Drex Connect), Jaslyn Kernich (Riverland Canvas), Emma Kruschel (Auto Pro Loxton), Lily Loxton (Fox's Crash Repairs), Ellamae Minerds (Riverland Skips), Danielle Morrison (Loxton Hotel) and Noah Scholz (Loxton Motorcycle Centre). Thank you to our Junior Ambassador co-ordinator Polly Johnston for taking such good care of our young entrants allowing them to gain confidence and have fun whilst nurturing their community spirit. I also wish to acknowledge and thank Dale Stirling (Loxton Club) and Julie Graetz (Loxcare) for taking it up to Chloe in both the Community and Charity categories, making for a close competition all round. Our committee were deeply saddened by the sudden passing of Julie two weeks after Mardi Gras, but consoled by the knowledge she enjoyed the experience so much she was planning to enter again. Vale Julie, your smiling face will be forever missed by our community.

Due to the efforts of the Ambassador entrants, their sponsors and the generosity of several local businesses the amount of funds available to distribute, on top of the \$11,270.77 already returned to the Ambassador sponsors is another \$14,980. I wish to acknowledge the generosity of Loxcare in donating the \$5,000, normally returned to them, for distribution to the community via these grants. These funds will be used by the successful Small Grant applicants to benefit our community in many different ways.

The Sunday morning Appreciation service recognising World War II Nurse, Sister Florence Casson, our servicemen and women, Flag Bearers John and Jan Cass, and the many volunteers in our community, was a fitting tribute to their contribution to our society. Thank you to the very capable organisers for such a moving ceremony.

I am grateful for the support of our dedicated little committee, who have worked so hard to make this year's event something for our community to be proud of and enjoy.

I look forward to the 68th Loxton Mardi Gras on February 22nd & 23rd 2025 with the theme "Our River" to be held on the #2 Oval.



Liz Dymmott OAM