

Making Dreams a Reality

In my last mayoral column I mentioned Council's "Go-for-Gold" program.

"Go-for-Gold" has five key actions to close the gap between our goals of future prosperity and sustainability for our community and the current situation that presents challenges in terms of social and economic disadvantage, health problems and educational under-achievement.

Importantly, we recognised in "Go-for-Gold" that we need to have bold goals and aspirations and work together on concrete action plans to achieve these - recognising small successes then grow to bigger successes as we build confidence, commitment and capability.

We also realise the need to celebrate the steps the community is taking to shape future goals and the hard work of making progress towards achieving them. In this column I wanted to share some real achievements.

Our fabulous Best Start program has been busy working in partnership with the Maryborough Education Centre (MEC) on a range of great initiatives including the school breakfast program and "It's not OK to be Away". Both are designed to tackle the problem of student absenteeism.

These programs are partnership programs between many organisations and individuals who all commit time, resources and energy. For example "It's not OK to be Away" involved an active commitment by the local traders.

The exciting news is that by working together in a focused way, absenteeism in the primary sector of MEC has been reduced by 50% over a period of one term. A huge credit to all involved.

It was a pleasure to attend the MEC Debutante Balls accompanied by Mrs Esther Waters. Esther and I really enjoyed hearing of the wide range of exciting career ambitions from the debutantes and their partners. In my address I encouraged them as individuals to "Go-for-Gold" in their own lives and to ensure they achieve their goals and make dreams a reality.

Other community groups have been working together on setting their goals and aspirations. In Talbot, the new Urban Design Framework sets a bold vision for the future and a range of strategies to achieve them.

I recently launched Bealiba's Community Action Plan which was the conclusion of much hard work between all sectors of this vibrant community with facilitation through the RITCH program. This will provide a focus for the great community spirit and drive there.

What is the link between all these exciting developments? Firstly, as individuals and as a community, we have "Go-for-Gold" goals for the future. Secondly, we have the drive and resolve to work together to achieve these goals. Thirdly, we are achieving success and making a real difference.

So let's all commit to getting on-board and taking the next step.

Chris Meddows-Taylor