



“From the GM’s Desk”

23rd April 2020



ANZAC DAY SERVICES

The dangers posed by the potential spread of COVID-19 are being mitigated by the NSW Government with the enforcement of public health orders which in part, prohibits public gatherings of over two (2) people. Unfortunately, this will mean that this year, ANZAC DAY services as we have known them will not be proceeding.

However, both 2WEB and the Bourke RSL are keen to ensure that the spirit of ANZAC in Bourke is not diminished in any way. To facilitate this, both organisations have joined forces to broadcast both the 6.00am dawn service and 11.00am morning service over 2WEB with the pre-recorded participation of members of our local community.

Residents are invited to show their respect to those who served our country by standing in their driveways for the duration of either or both services and by following the broadcast on 585 on your AM dial – Outback Radio 2WEB.

LOCAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The Bourke Shire Local Emergency Management Committee (LEMC) continues to meet on a regular basis.

The meetings provide the opportunity for representatives to be updated in relation to the strategies being implemented to control the spread of COVID-19 through the community. There is, of course, a strong focus on how these strategies are being applied and enforced locally.

The Committee are looking to finalise a Community Action Plan which, when finalised, include actions that are currently being taken to minimise the spread of the virus and actions that will need to be taken should we be unfortunate to have a case in town.

Members of the LEMC have shared the workload with all agencies participating as required. In addition to the regular members other agencies have been invited to attend, depending on the nature of the discussions and the decisions and actions required.

EXCELLENT WORK BEING UNDERTAKEN BY POLICE

The work undertaken to date by those members of the NSW Police Force attached to the Central Northern Command, led by Superintendent Andrew Hurst, in relation to the COVID-19 Pandemic has been first class with the Police acting as a conduit between the various emergency bodies and the community at all levels.

In Emergency situations, such as those currently being experienced, a Local Emergency Operations Controller (LEOCON) is appointed to coordinate the response locally.

During the pandemic, the Role of LEOCON was initially undertaken by Superintendent Hurst and then by Inspector Jeff Little and Acting Inspector Lindsay McDonald, each of whom have undertaken a very sound job and have received support from all Police. On behalf of the community, I take this opportunity to thank them for their efforts which has seen all aspects of the Public Health Order being enforced as required.

INFORMATION FOR BOURKE RESIDENTS IN RELATION TO COVID-19

One of the initiatives of the Bourke Local Emergency Management Committee (LEMC) has been the establishment of a COVID-19 Facebook information page for the Shire.

The purpose of the Facebook page is to provide a single source of up to date information in relation to COVID-19 and its impact on the Bourke Shire community.

The information is also provided to the community via a link on Councils Website:-

<https://bourke.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/>

The Facebook page is being managed by staff at the Shire and those who have access to Facebook should go to Bourke Community Covid-19 Information.

It is important that the messaging that is given to the public is both accurate at the time of release and consistent with the messaging provided by Health Authorities.

If you have any queries in relation to COVID-19, websites have been established by both the Federal and NSW governments and should be accessed in the first instance. The links to these sites appear on Council's website

COUNCIL IS MAINTAINING ALL ESSENTIAL SERVICES

During the uncertain times associated with COVID-19, it is advised that Councils essential services are currently being maintained including, water and wastewater, garbage collection, street and gutter cleaning, road maintenance and construction, public toilet maintenance and cleaning and waste management facility.

BOURKE SHIRE COUNCIL'S CONTINUITY MANAGEMENT TEAM

Council's Continuity Management Team (CMT) is chaired by the General Manager and involves Council's Managers plus other relevant Council staff. The Committees focus at the moment is the COVID-19 Pandemic and has been reviewing those matters impacting on Council's operations and further undertaking planning should the level of restrictions on movement be significantly increased.

For the past four (4) weeks, the CMT, which was established as part of the Bourke Shire Council Business Continuity Plan, have been meeting three (3) times per week to ensure that the action being taken by Council are meeting legislative requirements as well as the practical requirements of Councils operations.

A lot of work has gone into the planning on how Council would address various scenarios should they arise, and I would like to thank the members of the CMT and other staff who have made a contribution to the various plans which have been developed.

AVAILABILITY OF LIBRARY SERVICES

Whilst the Bourke Public Library is currently closed to members of the public due to COVID-19 public gathering requirements, the Library is focusing on providing as many services online as possible.

The Library has expanded its range of eBooks and eAudio available through BorrowBox, including Premier's Reading Challenge titles. More titles will continue to be added over coming weeks.

A range of online databases available through the Library's website, www.bourkeliibrary.com.au, are also available. Databases include Hobbies and Craft, Consumer Health Complete, Science Reference Centre,

and also The Computer School, which gives online training in a wide range of areas including photography. For children, the Library has the Britannica Library and World Book online.

In addition to the above, access is also available to Ancestry through the Library's website whilst the physical library is closed.

Access to storytime sessions is available online, through Story Box Library, and through the sharing of online content produced by other libraries. Story Box Library is also available through the Bourke Library website, and storytime sessions are posted to the Library's Facebook page regularly. The Library is also sharing craft activities on our Facebook page.

All online services are freely available to members of the Bourke Public Library. Members will need their member number, as provided on the back of their library card, to log in. Please contact the Library if the member number is not known. For those who are not already a member of the Library, online membership is now available through our website. Simply click the 'Join the Library' link on the homepage.

The Library has commenced a Virtual Book Club as a Facebook group, using eBooks available through BorrowBox. So far, the book group has 22 members. Anyone is welcome to join, through the Bourke Public Library Facebook page, or by searching for BPL Virtual Book Club.

eMagazines are currently in the process of being added to the Library's range of services and it is anticipated that access to these will be available in the not too distant future.

Library staff can be contacted by email, at bpl@bourkelibrary.com.au, or through the Facebook page.

SHOPPING LOCALLY

Purchasing from locally owned Bourke businesses allows more money to be kept in our community as locally owned businesses often purchase from other local businesses, trades and service providers.

On average, for every \$100 spent at a locally owned business, 65% of your money stays in the community.

Local businesses hire people with more specific product expertise which leads to better customer service.

Local businesses are owned by people who live in our community and so are less likely to leave and are more committed to our community's welfare and future. They have a direct commitment to you as they rely on your support.

Therefore, spending your money at local businesses supports other local business which in turn stimulates our local economy. This is more important than ever as local business is impacted by COVID-19.

POOL CONSTRUCTION

Construction works are scheduled to commence this week on the upgrade of the 50m pool at the Bourke War Memorial Olympic Pool Complex. The contractor for the upgrade is Hydrocare Pools. This contractor is familiar with the Complex, with this company having previously successfully completed the construction of the "splash park" at the Pool Complex.

The first stage of construction will see the removal of the top of the pool and installation of form work for the new grated wet deck filtering system. A new accessible entry ramp will also form part of Stage-one of construction. Works will also commence on removing the old filter system that has served the water filtration of both pools at the facility since the pool opened.

WASTE FACILITIES

Public Health Orders have been issued to protect the community and reduce the spread of COVID-19 infection.

Whilst Public Health Orders list activities and places that are closed, it has been acknowledged by Government that waste and recycling facilities provide an important service to the community and businesses. Accordingly, it has been deemed that going to a waste facility to dispose of waste constitutes a 'reasonable excuse' that permits someone to lawfully leave their home under the Public Health Order.

Bourke Shire Councils waste facilities remain open. Anyone visiting a waste facility should maintain social distancing of at least 1.5 metres from others and practise good hygiene practices before and after returning.

DISPOSAL OF HOUSEHOLD WASTE FROM PEOPLE IN ISOLATION WITH SUSPECTED OR CONFIRMED COVID-19

Waste items from people in isolation with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 in non-healthcare facilities, such as homes and other lodgings, should be placed in the sulo rubbish bin.

Advice for people in isolation is as follows:-

- Dispose of all used personal care items such as tissues, disposable masks and gloves in a rubbish bin that is lined with a plastic bag.
- When the bin is three-quarters full, tie-off the plastic bag to prevent spillage of the contents. Avoid touching the inside of the bag and dispose of the bag into the general household sulo bin.
- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. You can use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser if your hands are not visibly dirty.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.

COUNCIL STAFF AND COVID-19

Bourke Shire Council, along with the majority of Councils in NSW, signed up last week to a new workplace agreement that addresses how Council manages it's staff if they have to be stood down or redeployed during the current coronavirus pandemic. Titled the Local Government (COVID-19) Splinter Award, the new workplace agreement was approved by the NSW Industrial Relations Commission on Tuesday, 15 April 2020.

Under the agreement, where a Council staff member is stood down because Council is unable to find suitable work for the employee, Council will provide affected workers with four (4) weeks Special Leave and at the end of that period, a weekly job retention allowance of \$858.20 for up to 13 weeks.

The Retention Allowance amount can be boosted with accrued annual and long service leave to make up ordinary pay rates. The making of the agreement follows advice that Local Government employees are not entitled to the Federal Government's Jobkeeper wage subsidy package.

At this point, Council continues to provide its services to the community wherever possible. In doing so, staff must practice social distancing and safe hygiene techniques.

SEMINAR FOR BUSINESSES IMPACTED BY COVID-19

Bourke Shire Council in conjunction with Regional Development Australia Orana (RDA Orana) will be hosting a seminar to bring businesses within Bourke and Brewarrina up to date with assistance that may be available to help business who have suffered a serious financial downturn as a result of the COVID-19 situation and have identified difficulties in retaining staff.

There is a range of assistance packages available and the Executive Officer of RDA Orana, Megan Dixon, will be joined by a local Dubbo Accountant to explain what is available and how you go about accessing the help.

It is critical for the economy of Bourke that all businesses have the ability to ride out what will no doubt be a rough time economically across Australia and that as many people as possible are able to retain employment. Both the Federal and NSW and State Governments have announced initiatives that may assist in achieving that goal.

The Seminar will start at 5.30pm on Thursday, 23rd April 2020. To join the seminar, which will be conducted via ZOOM, participants need to register in advance as below. After registering, participants will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_bmlbCr_STvGac2dux3-HTQ

Quote of the week!

"Do not judge me by my success, judge me by how many times I fell down and got back up again."

Nelson Mandela

Ross Earl
General Manager

