



**BOURKE
SHIRE
COUNCIL**

“From the Acting General Manager’s Desk”
5 November 2020

REMEMBRANCE DAY:

Next Wednesday at the “11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month” it will be the 102nd anniversary since, on 11 November 1918, the guns on the Western Front in Europe fell silent after more than four years of continuous warfare in the First World War.

The moment when hostilities ceased on the Western Front became universally associated with the remembrance of those who had died in the war. This first modern world conflict had brought about the mobilisation of over 70 million people and left between 9 and 13 million dead, perhaps as many as one-third of them with no known grave. The allied nations chose this day and time for the commemoration of their war dead.

As is the long-standing tradition, residents from all parts of the Bourke Shire will gather to observe a minute of silence at 11am on 11th November to commemorate this most important day in modern history.

Veterans from various theatres of conflict, Police, Council, schools, community organisations, businesses, residents and visitors will undoubtedly turn out to take part in the ceremony at the Cenotaph in Central Park, Bourke to recognise not only those who made the ultimate sacrifice, but also recognise the 267 volunteers who left their homes in the Bourke Shire to fight on the Western Front and across Europe. We certainly owe them a debt of gratitude.

HEALTH MATTERS:

At Council’s meeting held on 26 October 2020, the issue of the provision of health services to the Bourke community was high on the agenda. Readers would be aware that the Western NSW Local Health District (WNSWLHD) has invited tenders for the provision of Visiting Medical Officer (VMO) Services at the Bourke Multipurpose Service.

As part of this tender documentation, new minimum requirements for VMO coverage at the Bourke Multipurpose Service were proposed, with the minimum face-to-face coverage being over five (5) days from 8.00am- 6.00pm. Outside of these days and times, the documentation provides that proposals will be considered for virtual care service options.

Mayor Barry Hollman presented a Mayoral Minute on the numerous activities and actions undertaken by Council in raising its considerable concerns as to these proposed service levels. Later in the day, Councillors and senior staff took the opportunity to raise their health concerns with Ryan Park, MP, Shadow Minister for Health and the Hon Mick Veitch, MLC, Shadow Minister for Western NSW, who were in Bourke for the afternoon.

Last Wednesday, 28th October 2020, the Far North West Joint Organisation held its quarterly meeting and the JO members were fully in support of the initiatives of Bourke Shire in pursuing this issue. The JO resolved to pursue meetings with the Minister for Health and the Minister for Western NSW along with corresponding with the Local Health District.

As raised with me recently, "Would the good people of the North Shore of Sydney accept turning up to hospital with an emergency condition during the evening only to be treated by a virtual Doctor potentially located in a faraway place such as Switzerland?" Of course, they wouldn't accept such service level and imagine the outrage. As Mayor Barry has stated, "People in the Far West of the State should not be treated like second class citizens."

Bourke War Memorial Olympic Pool Upgrade:

The upgrading of the Bourke 50m Olympic Pool continues with the site a hive of activity. Last week saw a major project target achieved with concreting works in respect of the concourse area, which surrounds the pool, completed. This is a most pleasing achievement in the life of the project. Tiling and the liner installation inside the pool shell are both underway and progressing well. In addition, the new filtration system is starting to take shape, with the new centre chase installed along with the pumps and pipework that form an integral part of the pool water reticulation. The new ballast and backwash retention tanks are also under construction.

Splash Park:

Whilst the Bourke 50m Olympic Pool will not be open to the public until the completion of the project, which is expected in December 2020, the Splash Park and Canteen within the pool facility are now open for use. I understand that Pizzas are in high demand as are slushies! The Splash Park opening hours can be found on the Bourke Pool Facebook page or by contacting Council's Pool Contractor, Mark Hollman, by phone on 6872 2444. Users of this important community facility are reminded that a COVID Safety Plan is in place for the public who are using this facility and given these restrictions, the Pool is unfortunately unable to host any birthday parties until the public gathering restrictions are changes.

Free Bulky Waste Weekend:

I noticed on the weekend that Dubbo's Bulky Waste Collection Service was either imminent or underway. I knew this because of the unfortunate amount of rubbish that was sitting on residential kerbsides as I drove through the town. Rather than have this high level of rubbish remaining on the kerbside, when waste is often put out well in advance of a collection date, Bourke Shire Council will have a free rubbish tip weekend on the 21 and 22 November 2020.

This weekend will allow residents of Bourke Shire to discard their bulky waste items at the Bourke Waste and Recycling Depot located on Cobar Road, free of any charge. Bulky waste items include items such as furniture, whitegoods and household refuse. It should be noted that the free weekend is for residential properties only. Commercial, building or construction waste, tyres, asbestos and chemicals will not be accepted free of charge, with normal fees applicable for these items.

I encourage residents to take advantage of this free weekend and remove bulky rubbish from their properties.

2021 Local Government Elections:

As residents are aware, in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the NSW Minister for Local Government postponed the September 2020 ordinary Local Government Elections for 12 months until September 2021. The NSW Electoral Commission has advised Council that it is planning to deliver the 2021 NSW Local Government election so that voters, political participants and election staff remain as safe as possible.

Learning from the experiences of other electoral commissions in recent elections around Australia and in New Zealand, the NSW Electoral Commission is undertaking a review of every election task from a COVID-safe perspective. Public health orders and circumstances are changing as the pandemic evolves, so it is essential that they plan ahead for a range of possible scenarios. The NSW Electoral Commission will continue to closely monitor public health orders and advice and make changes to plans as necessary.

How this will affect Councils, parties, candidates and electors will be determined over the coming months. Council will keep the community up to date with information through this Column as circumstances change.

Countback By-elections:

Amendments have been made to the NSW Local Government Act 1993, which will allow Councils to fill Councillor vacancies after the 2021 elections using 'Countback'. Up until the recent changes, if there was a Councillor vacancy on Council, such as a result of a Councillor passing away, it was necessary to hold an undoubtedly expensive and time-consuming by-election to fill the vacancy. With "Countback" a Council may resolve to have vacancies that occur on the Council in the 18-month period after the elections to be filled by a 'countback' of the ballot papers, instead of a by-election.

To use the 'Countback' process.....

1. Councils must pass the relevant resolution in the first Council meeting of the newly constituted Council after the 2021 ordinary elections, stating that casual vacancies will be filled using the countback method.
2. Countback elections can only be used to fill casual vacancies of Councillors in the first 18 months after the ordinary election.

I consider this to be an important initiative by the NSW Government that will undoubtedly save the local government considerable sums of money.

AUSTRALIA DAY NOMINATIONS:

I again take the opportunity to remind the Community that nominations are open for award recipients for the Bourke Australia Day Awards.

Nominations need to be completed and be with Council by 7 December 2020. Voting by Councillors on the nominations will take place at a workshop after the December Council meeting.

Details on how to nominate are available on Councils website or by calling into the Council Office at 29 Mitchell Street Bourke.

I invite residents to take the time and nominate that worthy award prospect.

FREE FERALS CAN TRAINING FOR LANDOWNERS:

I wrote last week about the scale of the Baiting Program for Wild Dogs being undertaken by the Western LLS. Further to this the LLS has advised that the recording of sightings, evidence, impacts, control activities or photos of pest animals such as wild dogs and feral pigs via the Feral Scan Tool is very important as the information helps local pest management groups and organisations like Western LLS to implement well-planned local Management Plans.

While some landholders and groups are proactive in using FeralScan, there is still a lot of vital information that is not being recorded.

Any landholders or groups that are looking to get assistance in using FeralScan should request a small group training session which are currently being offered face-to-face and online. If you or your group is interested in learning more, contact FeralScan Coordinators by emailing feralscan@feralscan.org.au, or by contacting Peter West on 0407 622 191 or Emma Sawyers on 0455 633 112.

MURRAY DARLING BASIN AUTHORITY (MDBA) COMMUNITY COMMITTEE:

The MDBA is seeking expressions of interest from members of the community for appointment of a Chair and members of the Basin Community Committee for a three (3) year term commencing September 2021.

Members are selected based on their expertise or interest in water use, water management, Indigenous, environment and Local Government matters.

The 17-member Basin Community Committee provides advice to Basin governments and the MDBA and provides a community perspective on a wide range of water resource, environmental, cultural and socioeconomic matters. Members are key local contacts for the Authority and report on community concerns and issues around the Basin.

Applications close Thursday, 3 December 2020. To view position descriptions and to apply visit www.mdba.gov.au/careers

For further information about the positions and application process, please contact Ms Alex Anthony, Director, Engagement on BCC.secretariat@mdba.gov.au or on (02) 6279 0790.

LANEWAY GATES:

Council has installed two (2) new laneway gates in Wortumertie/Cullie and Anson/Denman Streets laneways. This added security for residents is part of Council laneway policy to erect laneway gates. These two (2) gate will close out the funding available for gates this financial year.

Visitors to Bourke

The Back O' Bourke Information & Exhibition Centre has played host to a few air charters over the past couple of weeks, with one in particular having both Glenn McGrath and the Sydney Weekender crew on board. The chartered airlift was provided with lunch and a guided tour through the Exhibition Centre whilst the Seven Network's Sydney Weekender filmed some of Bourke Shire's must see sights. The program goes to air next month on Channel 7.

Quote of the Week

"They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old;
Age shall not weary them, nor the years' condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them."

The OdeLaurence Binyon.

Leonie Brown
Acting General Manager