



## “From the Acting General Manager’s Desk” 12 November 2020

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### **COVID-19:**

As readers would be well aware, the Queensland Government has opened its border to visitors from Regional NSW, with residents from the “Greater Sydney Hotspot” still not able to access the northern State.

Whilst Bourke residents are generally able to access Queensland, they can only do so if they have not been in a “Hotspot” within 14 days of when they are proposing to cross the border. In this regard you must complete a Queensland Border Declaration Pass before going to Queensland. These passes are available at: <https://www.qld.gov.au/border-pass/general>

In submitting the pass, you have to agree to get tested for COVID-19 if you develop any symptoms within 14 days of arriving in Queensland.

As borders in Australia reopen, it is easy to become complacent with COVID-19 best practice techniques. Remember to practice the 1.5m social distancing rule, practice good hygiene, stay at home if you have a fever, runny nose, cough or loss of smell and taste and get tested. There are numerous examples overseas of late where Countries have had to go back into lockdown to address the spread of the virus.

We don’t want that in NSW, nor in our own Bourke region, so I encourage ongoing vigilance.

### **NEXT MEETING OF COUNCIL:**

The next monthly meeting of Bourke Shire Council will be held on Monday, 23 November 2020.

The meeting will again be conducted on a face-to-face basis with the public only being able to participate by following the meeting via a webcast. Councillors have the option not to attend in person but to participate remotely via an Audio-Visual link.

The restrictions on space and the need for social distancing have meant that some staff are also unable to attend in person. By utilising the Audio-Visual Platform, such staff are able to both follow the meeting and comment on any reports they may have submitted, as required.

### **AUSTRALIA DAY NOMINATIONS:**

Time is running out for residents to submit a nomination for the Bourke Australia Day Awards.

This year’s categories include: -

- Citizen of the Year
- Young Citizen of the Year (18 and under)
- Emergency Service Volunteer of the Year
- Shire Village Community Service

- Sportsperson of the Year
- Young Sportsperson (18 and under)

Nominations will need to be completed and sent to Council by 7 December 2020 and 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.

There are a lot of worthy potential recipients in the Bourke Shire for the various categories in these awards. We all need to ensure that unsung heroes within our community are recognised.

### **RIVER FLOWS:**

I had a quick look this week at the GM's Column from this time last year. Whilst a little over a year now, former General Manager, Ross, reported that as of 3 November 2019, it had been 442 days since the Darling River had stopped flowing over the Bourke Weir. 442 days!

On Sunday, 3 November 2019, the region received significant downfalls of rain which resulted in water flowing over the weir early on Monday morning, 4 November 2019.

As I write this column, water has ceased flowing over the weir with water restrictions now in place for Bourke and North Bourke residents.

### **BUSHFIRE ACTIVITY:**

Another matter which caught my eye from this time last year was the attendance by NSW Rural Fire Service Crews from Silverton, Cobar, Bourke and Brewarrina Brigades attending fires in the States North and East.

Unfortunately, last year's fire season deteriorated and we all no doubt remember the human tragedy experienced by many because of the major fires along the eastern seaboard.

My thanks go out to all those who were involved in fighting these terrible fires, not only in the past, but also those who step up for the upcoming fire season.

### **FREE BULKY WASTE WEEKEND:**

Don't forget the free rubbish tip weekend on 21 and 22 November 2020. It's a great opportunity for residents to discard their bulky waste items at the Bourke Waste and Recycling Depot located on Cobar Road, free of charge. The weekend is for residential properties only. Normal fees will apply for commercial, building or construction waste, tyres, asbestos, and chemicals.

This is a great opportunity to clean up and remove bulky waste from your residence.

### **WANAARING LEVEE:**

In March this year Council reconstructed a portion of the Wanaaring Levee due to the impending threat of a heightened Paroo River breaching the levee and inundating the village.

These works were undertaken in response to the potential emergency and at considerable cost to Council.

Subsequent to this construction, and at the request of some residents, Council officers gave consideration to the removal of the levee from Vicary St, Wanaaring. With the Bureau of Meteorology

having declared a La Nina weather event for South Eastern Australia which, based on previous like events, may bring heavier than average rainfall across the region, it was considered that any such removal may be premature at this stage. With this La Nina in mind, there is the potential for increased flows in the Paroo River, and the potential for the levee to again be needed.

Notwithstanding the above, it is my intention to bring forward a report to Council at its February 2021 meeting to allow Council to formally consider the retention/removal of the levee. It would be expected by then that the Bureau will have a more considered opinion of the potential impacts of the La Nina to allow further consideration of the matter.

In the interim, Council will proceed to open Vicary St to "Light Traffic Only" with signage to also be erected such that heavy vehicles continue to utilize O'Grady St to travel through the village. Signage will also be erected near the Park warning drivers of the Playground.

### **VARIETY RESURRECTION RUN:**

The "Variety Bash" car rally has been operating since 1985 when renowned Australian entrepreneur, Dick Smith, had the idea of getting people he knew to drive weird and wonderful cars around the rougher roads of New South Wales and in doing so, raise money for charity. The event is not a race or a contest of speed of any kind. Rather it is about exploring our vast State

This year's event is a little different given the restrictions in place due to COVID-19 with organiser's limiting participation numbers. The six (6) day rally commences this Sunday, 15 November 2020 when "Bash" participants leave Newcastle for Dubbo. For day 2, it is out to Bourke for an overnight stay. Day 3 sees participants leave Bourke travelling to Cobar via Louth.

The Variety Bash supports kids who are sick, disadvantaged or have special needs to overcome challenges and reach their full potential. The "Bash" has been very generous to Bourke over the years and I look forward to assisting them when they visit our Shire next week.

### **ALGAL BLOOMS:**

In the event of river flows continuing to reduce, parts of the Barwon Darling system will see conditions favourable to algae growth. The warming weather of spring is also favourable for algae growth. These two factors indicate that the Barwon-Darling is entering a state that is likely to produce algae blooms. Water users should therefore prepare and be on the lookout for excessive algae growth. If then required, take the necessary actions to mitigate against the algae bloom conditions.

Due to the expanse of the Darling River, there are many areas where Blue Green Algae results are not available. Therefore, water users should treat the Barwon - Darling River with caution, especially when conditions for algal growth are favourable such as low river flows combined with persistent hot and sunny weather conditions.

### **ROADWORKS:**

Maintenance grading on MR 405, from Dargle Bore to Wanaaring, has now been completed.

Maintenance Grading has also been completed on the Ellavale and Mascot roads.

Construction works on the MR 405 project, Romani – Wangamana Section, are still progressing.

The sealing of streets in Louth is progressing well with gravel being carted to the site and construction underway. The streets being prepared for sealing are Charles, Becker, and Hughes and Peter streets.

### **COMMUNITY CENTRE USAGE FEE:**

Council has advertised a new hire charge of \$50.00 per day for usage of the Bourke Community Centre in Mitchell Street. In advertising this proposed fee, Council is seeking feedback for a period of 28 days, with submissions closing with Council on 27 November 2020. All submissions will be provided to Council for its consideration prior to determining the matter.

### **BOURKE WAR MEMORIAL SWIMMING POOL:**

Works are continuing on the upgrade to the 50M pool at the Bourke War Memorial Swimming Pool. One of the major design elements of the upgrade is the installation of an accessible ramp leading into the pool for entry and exit. Construction of this feature has now been completed with the final tiles in the process of being laid. The ramp will be a valuable asset to pool users who couldn't access the old pool. Installation of the filtration system is also at an advanced stage with the return and drain lines now all in place around the pool.

### **NSW WILD DOG FENCE EXTENSION PROJECT:**

The next series of mapping along the NSW and Queensland border for the proposed alignment of the NSW Wild Dog Fence Extension project has been carried out by the project team, local stakeholders and landholders.

Another 60km was mapped in mid-October, adding to the 160km that was mapped from Hungerford to around 90km east of Barrington in June this year. This leaves 200km to be mapped which will be to the end of the extension at Mungindi.

Other aspects of the project such as the assessments for Aboriginal cultural heritage are continuing to progress, with contractors and traditional owners currently undertaking on-ground assessments along parts of the NSW and Queensland border. This work comes on the back of on-ground assessments along the NSW and South Australian border for Aboriginal cultural heritage that were carried out in late August.

Following the initial on-ground assessments, further remote sensing and sub-surface investigations will be carried out in conjunction with the relevant local Aboriginal representatives, the findings of which will be input into the Environmental Impact Statement which forms part of the project's submission for approval.

The construction of the priority pilot site at Hungerford where the current dog fence finishes is continuing. This site will test and evaluate the systems the project team has in place prior to the main phase of construction commencing next year.

For further information on the mapping, assessments, or any other aspect of this project, contact the project team on (02) 5852 1215, email them [wilddogfence@scs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:wilddogfence@scs.nsw.gov.au) or visit the LLS website: <https://www.lls.nsw.gov.au/what-we-do/our-major-projects/nsw-wild-dog-fence-extension-project>

### **Quote of the Week!**

“No man is good enough to govern another man without that other's consent”.

Abraham Lincoln

Leonie Brown  
Acting General Manager