



**BOURKE
SHIRE
COUNCIL**

**“From the Acting General Manager’s Desk”
19th November 2020**

REMEMBRANCE DAY:

Many thanks to all those who participated in a COVID numbers reduced Remembrance Day last Wednesday. To members of the Bourke Sub branch RSL for organising the solemn ceremony, to all who spoke on the day, to our sound technicians, to all who laid wreaths, to the flag bearers, to Councils gardening staff.....a big thank you. Thanks also go to Radio Station 2WEB who broadcast the ceremony live. I know the live broadcast format was well received after the Station undertook the same for this year’s ANZAC Day ceremony.

COVID-19:

The NSW Government has announced that it will reopen the border to Victoria at 12:01am on Monday, 23 November. This announcement comes after a particularly difficult time for residents of both Melbourne and regional Victoria because of COVID-19 restrictions.

The reopening date comes two (2) weeks from the Victorian Government removing the ‘ring of steel’ border around Melbourne, allowing Victorian residents to travel freely around the State. I trust that the reopening provides confidence to those wanting to make plans, book holidays and reunite with family members during the Christmas/New Year period.

Coupled with announcements regarding the opening of the NSW/Queensland border to regional NSW residents, it is hoped that it is not too long before all borders are again open and that it is a very long time before we ever experience anything like the lock downs that were thrust upon many by COVID-19.

Don’t forget that if you are proposing to travel into Queensland you must complete a Queensland Border Declaration Pass. These passes are available at: <https://www.qld.gov.au/border-pass/general>

As the number of COVID-19 cases in the nation reduces significantly, the biggest threat to further lock downs is complacency. 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. Community vigilance is most important.

WATER RESTRICTIONS:

Water ceased to flow over the Bourke Weir on 8 November 2020. In accordance with Councils Drought Management Plan, Level 1 Water Restrictions became applicable as at midnight on Monday, 9 November 2020. With the Bureau of Meteorology having previously declared a La Nina

weather pattern, which usually means above-average rainfall for Australia, hopefully we will see further flows over the weir in the not too distant future. Should this not be the case and the water level in the weir pool drops to 400mm below the height of the weir, Level 2 Restrictions will be bought forward, and so on from there. I would urge residents to be “water wise” in their water usage patterns and also respect the restriction requirements.

As part of Councils Drought Management Plan, and whilst ever Bourke is on Levels 1,2,3 and 4, there will be no change to the watering regime at Davidson Oval, Central Park and Coolican Oval. In addition to these important community facilities, the Drought Management Plan identifies various other facilities in Bourke where restrictions are relaxed with a view to maintaining a high level of community amenity.

BOURKE WAR MEMORIAL SWIMMING POOL:

I was extremely disappointed to read of the stealing and burning of a “tradies ute” in Bourke last week. Any action such as this is most disappointing. This incident however has more relevance to the younger members of our community as the tradie who owned the vehicle was the tradie who is doing the tiling work at the redevelopment of the Olympic Pool at the Bourke War Memorial Swimming Pool Complex.

This tradie not only has to now replace his ute, but he also has to replace all his tiling tools that have been accumulated over his time as a tiler. These actions will take time and undoubtedly, will push, what was already a very tight project timeframe, back further. Vandalism affects us all, one way or another. In this case it will be a matter of the redeveloped Pool not opening as early as we had anticipated.

WEIRS STRATEGY:

I met last week with officers from the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment who are part of the project teams working on the Western Weirs Strategy and the Regional Water Strategy. Both these Strategies are of most importance to the far west region of NSW. With completion of the Strategies expected well into next year, I took the opportunity to request the officers to provide to Council and others a roadmap of the process to allow interested parties to know where matters are up to and what is due.

Following our meeting, Councils Team Leader Water and Wastewater, Shane Hopley took the officers for an inspection of the weirs at Bourke, Louth and Nineteen Mile. They also inspected bores at Walkden’s, Belvedere and Stoney Rise, recently installed as part of the NSW Governments drought proofing strategy for Bourke. The community is most appreciative for the funding provided by the NSW Government to enable these works to be undertaken.

FREE BULKY WASTE WEEKEND:

Council’s free rubbish tip weekend is on this weekend being the 21 and 22 November 2020.

Residents can 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.

Take this opportunity to clean up and remove bulky waste from your residence and pay no tip fees in the process.

MEN'S SHED GRANTS:

With thanks to Roy Butler, MP for bringing this to my attention, Round 21 of the Australian Government's National Shed Development Program is now open.

The program provides direct financial assistance to:

- Assist to address the health and wellbeing of Shed members.
- Support health improvements through a focus on the social determinants of health through national activities in relation to key population groups.
- Deliver appropriate activities and programs.
- Improve facilities and the sustainability of Men's Sheds across Australia.

Round 21 will specifically prioritise applications requesting events, Shed improvements and equipment with a strong health, well-being or safety emphasis, in acknowledgement of the impact of COVID-19 and the needs of Sheds in the recovery period (and beyond).

Individual Men's Sheds in Australia can apply for a range of financial support across three funding categories:

- Category 1: Health and Well-being Events (max \$8,000)
- Category 2: Shed Improvements (max \$8,000)
- Category 3: Equipment (max \$5,000)

The program is open to both developing and established Men's Sheds and also to Members and Non-Members of the Australian Men's Shed Association. Applications close 27 November 2020. For more information and how to apply I encourage the local shed members to please visit:

<https://mensshed.org/development-grants/>

DRUG REHABILITATION FACILITY:

The Western Area's Service Centre, Dubbo, will be the home to a Regional Drug Detoxification and Residential Rehabilitation Facility with an announcement this week that the upcoming NSW Budget will include an amount of \$7.5m for the project. This follows a previous commitment of \$3m by the Federal Government.

Unfortunately, Regional NSW is over represented in methamphetamine use. Addiction to any form of drugs creates a downward spiral, not only for the individual but for society in general.

Residential rehabilitation has shown to be an effective option for people who are ready to change their behaviours and the facility will be a major step forward for the wider western region.

I was happy to read some comments attributed to Deputy Premier, the Hon John Barilaro, in announcing the funding, that "People in the bush deserve access to the best quality healthcare..." No one in Bourke will argue with the Deputy Premier's statement.

Councils has pushed this sentiment when raising concerns, on behalf of the community, regarding the recent tender by the Western NSW Local Health District for the provision of Visiting Medical

Officer Services at the Bourke Multipurpose Service. The tender provided minimal hours of face-to-face interaction between Doctors and patients. Imagine the outcry if patients from say, the North Shore of Sydney, presented to their local hospital with a life threatening condition on a weekend, only to be treated by a virtual doctor, potentially located many thousands of kilometres away from the hospital.

I digress. The NSW Government is to be congratulated on the provision of funding for this drug rehabilitation facility and Council looks forward to advice from the Local Health District in coming weeks as to the outcome regarding our levels of service provision.

AUSTRALIA DAY NOMINATIONS:

Residents are reminded that nominations for the 2021 Bourke Australia Day Awards close with Council on Monday 7 December 2020.

Details on how to nominate are available on Council's 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.

WINNING WALLABIES:

It is amazing what a difference a win makes. There were the Wallabies, absolutely smashed by the All Blacks the week before, winning in Brisbane, against all odds, to at least get a win and a draw during 2020 over the famed NZ rugby side. At the end of the game, the Wallabies had a somewhat noticeable spring in their step, which was great to see. Then on the following Monday, it was announced that the code had signed a \$100m, three (3) year broadcasting deal with the Nine Network.

Talk of a new era, new commentators, new ways of presenting the game to the faithful. All of a sudden, things are looking up for the Wallabies. Let's hope the momentum continues. Everybody loves a winner!

Quote of the Week.

"A meeting consists of a group of people who have little to say - until after the meeting."

P.K. Shaw

Leonie Brown
Acting General Manager