



**BOURKE
SHIRE
COUNCIL**

“From the General Manager’s Desk” 25 March 2021”

Tourists, Tourists, Tourists.

As we head towards Easter and beyond, anticipation as to an expected influx of tourists to Bourke and the Far West of the State increases. With international travel continuing to be off the agenda for still some time, domestic tourism opportunities have increased substantially.

For Bourke, our tourism opportunities gain considerable exposure. Simple exposure like the weather at Bourke being reported to metropolitan viewers during the prime-time evening news. This exposure brings with it considerable name recognition that significantly converts to visitations. Likewise, exposure in major metropolitan newspapers shows that good things are happening in Bourke from a tourist promotion perspective.

In this regard, the Sunday Telegraph lift out Travel Section of 7 March 2021, presented the 52 “Best Short Breaks” in Australia. Yes Australia. With a lead in which read “Holidays that are quick, safe and within easy reach take top priority in this COVID Climate. If you have itchy feet, we’ve done the digging and discovered 52 of the best short breaks..... all within no more than 10 hours’ travel time. Our list reveals short trips that will appeal to all types of travellers – families, soloists, adventurers, and food and wine lovers, with options ranging from budget to luxe. Are you ready to roam not too far from home”, Bourke in the Far West, came in at Short Break No 19. Fantastic.

With the waiting period for the delivery of a caravan reported to be some eight (8) months, interest by people wanting to explore Australia is at an all-time high. As a tourist destination, Bourke has so much to offer and this has been recognised by Council with the development some years ago of the Back O’ Bourke Exhibition Centre. The well attended Open Day last Sunday provided a great opportunity for residents to witness first-hand what the Centre offers. An important component of our travel market are “visiting friends and relatives” and it is important that residents are able to inform their “friends and relatives” what is available in Bourke and surrounds.

PV Jandra

As of Monday this week, the Paddleboat, PV Jandra, recommenced tours along the Darling River under the most capable command of Captain Allan Bartsch. With one (1) hour tours departing Kidman Camp, North Bourke at 9.00am and 2.30pm each day, Monday to Saturday inclusive, with a two (2) hour tour departing at 2.00pm on Sundays, the Jandra provides an excellent opportunity to relive the history of the days of the mighty paddleboat era.

Bookings are available at the Exhibition Centre or go to www.visitbourke.com.au

Experience Back O' Bourke

Visitor experiences are not just limited to the Exhibition Centre or the Jandra. These high-profile attractions are important but there is so much more. I was at Morralls Bakery during the week and found an excellent "Check list" of things to do in Bourke and surrounds that Councils Tourism Staff have developed and distribute to local businesses as part of a tourism pamphlet distribution program.

Bourke offers so much. Experience sunset at Mt Oxley, discover Aboriginal rock art at Gundabooka National Park, and explore the diverse landscapes of Tooralé National Park, view the extraordinary wildlife and expansive species of birds in the region, visit the resting place of Fred Hollows, enjoy the hospitality of Station Stays and Outback Beds, take a scenic flight over the region or visit the Back O' Bourke Gallery in North Bourke, to name but some of what Bourke offers.

Story Telling

I noted the article and advertisement in last week's Western Herald promoting Outback Outloud. This project involves free workshops and a community story booth, designed to collect stories from and about people in the remote NSW, Outback Arts region. Outback Outloud encourages full community participation and through the support of local organisations, people can come to familiar and comfortable locations to take part. Everyone has a story in terms of their life history.

Outback Outloud will be happening in Bourke this Saturday 27 March, 11 am - 1 pm at Diggers on the Darling and then on Monday 29 March, 11 am - 1 pm at the Maranguka Community Hub. Further information is available by contacting Outback Arts on 02 6822 2484 or by emailing them at admin@outbackarts.com.au if you have any questions.

One of my roles when at Dubbo Council as General Manager was also as the Executive Officer of the Macquarie Regional Library. The Library undertook a similar story project.

I was able to facilitate some people that I was aware of who had extraordinary pasts to tell their stories. These stories are now "enshrined" on tape. These people have unfortunately now passed on, however their story hasn't been lost and I am happy about that.

Non Potable Water

With the expected influx of tourists come Easter and during the tourist season, it is timely to remind village residents that water at the villages of Barrington, Byrock, Enngonia, Fords Bridge, Louth, and Wanaaring, in the Shire Area is all Non – Potable and is therefore not approved for human consumption. It is suggested that if you have visitors you bring this to their attention on arrival. If they are not aware and drink the water, they may have a very ordinary visit.

Should the water be needed for human consumption it should always be brought to a rolling boil. Water should then be allowed to cool and stored in a clean container with a lid and refrigerated.

Operational Plan

At Councils Monthly Meeting held last Monday, Council considered and adopted its draft 2021/2022 Operational Plan (also known as the budget) for the purposes of public exhibition and comment by the community. The document will go on exhibition on 1

April 2021 until Monday 3 May 2021. During that time, I encourage the community to make comment about the Plan which includes the proposed Fees and Charges to be implemented by Council during the upcoming financial year. Under the requirements of the Local Government Act, Council must give consideration to any submissions it receives before ultimately determining the Plan which will be included on the Agenda for its 24 May Meeting.

Council Meetings

When the world as we knew it changed so dramatically almost a year to this day with a raft of lockdowns due to the pandemic, the operation of Council meetings was also affected. An amendment was made to the Local Government Act which saw the requirement for councillors and members of the public to attend meetings being satisfied if the meeting was held in whole or in part remotely using audio visual links. This amendment expires today, 25 March 2021.

Councils have successfully implemented remote attendance by councillors at meetings by audio-visual link during the COVID-19 pandemic with some councils having called on the option of remote attendance to be made available to them on an ongoing basis. In this regard, the Office of Local Government (OLG) has issued a consultation paper.

Whilst OLG is consulting on the proposed amendments to the Model Meeting Code, temporary amendments will be made to allow councils to permit individual (but not all) Councillors to attend meetings by audio-visual link but only in exceptional circumstances. For example, because the Councillor is prevented from attending the meeting due to illness, disability, carer responsibilities, a natural disaster or because the Councillor is away from the local area on Council related business.

The good news is that from 26 March 2021, and in the case of Bourke, effective at its next meeting to be held on 26 April 2021, members of the public will be able to attend meetings in person, subject to social distancing requirements.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK!

"You pray for rain, you gotta deal with the mud too. That's a part of it."

Denzel Washington.

*Mark Riley
General Manager*