



**BOURKE  
SHIRE  
COUNCIL**

**“From the  
General Manager’s Desk”  
13 May 2021”**

#### **Stronger Country Communities Fund – Round 4**

The Hon John Barilaro last week announced the provision of a further \$100m for community projects in regional NSW as part of the 4<sup>th</sup> Round of the Stronger Country Communities Fund (SCCF). This brings the total funding for the SCCF to \$500 million.

The funding available for projects in the Bourke Local Government Area under Round 4 is \$769,409.

Funding will be allocated to projects that meet the program assessment criteria which includes Community Support, Viability and Alignment to the Program Objectives. The NSW Government is also strongly encouraging Councils to submit applications that total up to fifty percent of the funding allocation that are for projects that increase female participation in sport and enhance female sporting facilities. Given this focus by Government, a report on potential projects will be submitted to Council this month.

At the recent Western Division Conference held in Broken Hill, Bourke Shire Council formally submitted the following motion that was unanimously adopted by the Conference:

“That the State Government be congratulated on the provision of funding to rural Councils through the Stronger Country Communities Fund and the tangible benefits that the funding has brought to so many communities in terms of facilities and services that were previously beyond the economic capacity of many councils and community groups, noting that an additional \$100 million will be available in Round 4 of the Fund, which opens on 1 May 2021”.

In submitting the motion, Council noted that the Stronger Country Communities Fund is arguably one of the best funding programs that has been introduced for rural councils. The funding has enabled many projects to be progressed, which had been on the councils' wish list for many years but were unable to be undertaken due to budgetary constraints. The funded projects have in many instances led to dramatic improvements in the social amenity of country communities, many of which have large portions of their communities in lower socio-economic circumstance.

As always the funding is most welcome and Council thanks the NSW Government accordingly.

## **A Great Honour**

I was afforded a great honour last Friday when I was invited to deliver a eulogy at a very large funeral for a friend and former work colleague at Dubbo Council. Mick Wilson was an "old school" Public Works building projects foreman and following his "retirement" from PWD he proceeded to deliver Dubbo Council's building projects for the next 18 years.

Mick came on board to assist when the Civic Administration Building at Dubbo was gutted by fire way back in 2003. Following that he proceeded to roll out project after project for Council. Mick was a no nonsense straight down the line man and his list of his projects over his career was very significant and the value of projects managed would exceed \$1 billion.

Mick was also quite a footballer in his day having played with Cronulla when it initially joined the Sydney Rugby League Competition, played against Great Britain in 1966 for Western Division and won premierships with Dubbo CYMS. He founded the St John's Junior Rugby League Club and maintained an active involvement till his passing. I suspect that there would be some now elderly former footballers in the far west area who knew of Mick Wilson. His greatest achievement though was his wife, their seven (7) children and 34 grandchildren.

At the wake I spoke to Father Carl Mackander, who is currently the Parish Priest at St Patrick's at Wellington and then to former Bourke resident, Ray Collins who forged a stellar career in the Catholic Education system which culminated in 2018 when he came out of retirement to lead the National Catholic Education Commission on an interim basis.

Interestingly both Fr Carl and Ray told me of coming to Bourke in coming weeks. Fr Carl as part of a school excursion and Ray as part of an upcoming "teachers who taught in Bourke" reunion.

In talking with Ray, he reminisced on his days in Bourke telling me of some of his students who now work for the Shire and of the try scoring ability of Leonie Brown's husband, Charlie.

## **Relocation Assistance to Take Up a Job**

Regional Development Australia (RDA) Orana has made contact to advise of the federal government's "Relocation Assistance to Take Up a Job" program.

Under the program, up to \$9000 is provided to eligible job seekers who take up ongoing work in a new location.

"Once a jobseeker has accepted an ongoing job, this support is available to help reimburse some of the relocation costs," RDA Orana Executive Officer, Megan Dixon has advised.

"Beginning this month, job seekers may be able to receive up to \$2000 of that support in upfront payments.

The changes will not only benefit job seekers but importantly help regional employers who are finding it difficult to secure the labour they need. In Bourke for instance, it would be fair to say that there are "more jobs than people".

Further to this, NSW Farmers have advised that under the new banner of AgMove, Australians could be eligible for up to \$2,000 in relocation assistance when they complete just 40 hours of agricultural work over a two-week period, reduced from six (6) weeks.

"If workers continue in agricultural work and complete 120 hours across a period of at least four (4) weeks, they will be eligible for reimbursement of up to \$6,000 for Australian workers and up to \$2,000 for temporary visa holders."

It may be well worthwhile for Bourke landowners who are struggling to source both short and long term farm labour to investigate the program.

For details on the Relocation to Take Up a Job program, visit [www.dese.gov.au/rattuaj](http://www.dese.gov.au/rattuaj).

### **COVID Complacency**

It is quite amazing how, almost out of nowhere and 17 days since the previous case, COVID re-emerges. We saw that last week with a man in Sydney testing positive to the virus after symptoms emerged, despite him not having been overseas, having been in a COVID hotspot or worked in the Sydney hotel quarantine system. Subsequent genomic sequencing revealed the man's infection was linked to a returned overseas traveller from the US. The man in question whilst out and about, before it was known that he was infectious, visited 19 venues over a period of five (5) days, which I understand was identified through his good use of QR readers at business locations.

It just goes to show that complacency when it comes to COVID is simply not an option. Remember to use QR readers, socially distance and maintain hand hygiene.

The amusing aspect of last week's case is that the man in question has been shown to have undertaken quite a trek across Sydney to acquire a BBQ for his house and in doing so, visited numerous retail stores. Various media outlets were suggesting that they were keen to know what product he ultimately purchased as they felt he had completed all the necessary research to purchase the perfect BBQ!

One only has to look at the tragic conditions currently being experienced in India as a result of the virus to work out that this virus is very dangerous indeed.

### **Election: Non-residential rolls**

As previously advised, the Ordinary Election of Councillors for Bourke Shire is scheduled to be held on 4 September 2021. Whilst people over the age of 18 who live in the Bourke Shire area are eligible to vote in the elections, assuming they are on the electoral roll, I again remind people who are non-resident owners, occupiers and rate-paying lessees of rateable land within the Bourke council area that you also have an opportunity to have a say in who is elected to council. To this end it is my responsibility as General Manager to maintain a roll of non-resident owners of rateable land and the roll of occupiers and rate-paying lessees, these being the non-residential roll.

It is not compulsory to be on a non-residential roll if are eligible nor is it compulsory to vote if you are on a non-residential roll.

You can check your residential enrolment at [check.aec.gov.au](http://check.aec.gov.au) or by calling the AEC on 132326. Contact Council to check whether you are enrolled on a non-residential roll.

### **Mother's Day**

A belated Happy Mother's Day to all the Mum's in the Bourke Shire area for last Sunday. We often don't know what we've got till it's gone, so don't miss an opportunity to say thank you to Mum's.

### **QUOTE OF THE WEEK!**

"All that I am, or ever hope to be, I owe to my Mother"

*Abraham Lincoln*

*Mark Riley*  
*General Manager*