



**BOURKE  
SHIRE  
COUNCIL**

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## **OFFICE OF THE MAYOR**

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26 June 2021

An Open Letter to all Bourke Shire Residents:

As I write this letter, strict stay-at-home orders relating to all people in the Greater Sydney area, including the Blue Mountains, Central Coast and Wollongong from 6pm Saturday 26 June 2021, have been announced. The lockdown will remain in place until Friday, 9 July. There are also restrictions in place for the balance of NSW including the wearing of masks at non-residential settings, including workplaces and at organised outdoor events, for the next two weeks.

Compared to many metropolitan locations, COVID has had a relatively limited impact on us in Bourke. However, it is my view, that it is now time for the Bourke Community to start taking the virus very seriously. If we don't, unfortunately people in our community may die. Some may find that a harsh statement, but that is the stark reality.

The announcement late Thursday night that through an ongoing sewage surveillance program, fragments of the virus that cause COVID-19 had been detected at the Bourke Sewage Treatment Plant. Following this announcement, I felt a sense of anxiety in the community. That has probably now evaporated to a point where people are thinking the sample came from a tourist passing through town. That's a big assumption because we simply don't know the source, and that is the concern.

Bourke residents had a great opportunity last week to get vaccinated against the virus. Only 233 of our residents took the opportunity. We now have the opportunity to get tested for the virus and since the testing at Davidson Oval commenced yesterday, Friday 25 June, less than 135 people have passed through the "pop up" clinic. We need more tests to be conclusive.

It's not a matter of only getting tested if you're feeling unwell. Rather, the Western NSW Local Health District has advised that they will not be turning anyone away from the testing clinics. If you have concerns, and for your own peace of mind, take the opportunity and get tested.

Results are generally known within 24 hours, so I would urge residents to take the threat of the virus seriously and use the resources supplied and get a free test before the "pop up" clinic ceases. The NSW Government has consistently indicated that they will not hesitate to go further with restrictions to protect the people of NSW. Let's get involved in this testing process and protect everyone in our great community.

I thank the community in anticipation of their higher level of participation in this important matter.

Yours faithfully

Clr Barry Hollman  
Mayor.