



**BOURKE
SHIRE
COUNCIL**

“From the General Manager’s Desk” 29 July 2021”

Elections Postponed

On Saturday, the Local Government Minister, the Hon Shelley Hancock, announced that the Local Government Elections planned for Saturday 4 September 2021 have been again postponed as a result of the COVID outbreak across various parts of NSW. The Elections, which include Bourke Shire, will now be held on Saturday 4 December 2021. The delay means nominations, which were due to open last Monday, will instead open on 25 October 2021. Despite the delays, the term for Councillors who are elected in this year’s elections will still end in 2024.

This further postponement will mean that Bourke Councillors, who were all previously elected in September 2016, will end up serving a term of five (5) years and three (3) months, pending no further changes. I can’t recall such a long term for Councillors. At Bourke Shire, the community is fortunate as to the positive way that Councillors interact with each other. The Councillors do not always agree but they have their say and move on. They are respectful to each other and to staff. That isn’t always the case, unfortunately, in local government circles in NSW. There have been numerous examples across the State during this term where Councillors have been unable to respect their fellow Councillors opinions, or continually badger staff, very much to the detriment of their respective communities, and often requiring drastic intervention by the Office of Local Government. Where disharmony does exist amongst Councillors, the extended terms would undoubtedly be difficult to navigate.

“Take One For The Team” - COVID Vaccinations

In the Western Herald on 4 July 2021, I included in the GM’s Column a quote from Sydney Morning Herald Journalist and TV and Radio Presenter, Peter Fitzsimons, who noted in respect of the current COVID outbreak that, “There is one way out of this sh**fight. All of us who can need to get vaccinated as soon as possible. If we don’t, lack of sport will be the least of our problems. Roll up your sleeves, and take one for the team.” I agree with Mr Fitzsimons comments, vaccination is the key.

The Bourke community has a further opportunity to “take one for the team” when the Western NSW Local Health District brings another 2-day clinic to Bourke on 24 and 25 August 2021. The LHD is also going to Enngonia on 26 August 2021. How good.

LHD staff will be visiting 15 communities across the District during July & August, offering first doses of the Pfizer vaccine.

You are eligible for vaccination at the August clinics if you are:

- Aged over 40 years old;
- An Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person aged over 16 years old;
- From a recognised vulnerable or priority group and aged over 16 years old.

Details of how to book an appointment at the Bourke and Enngonia clinics will be advised shortly with bookings for appointments opening around two weeks prior to each of the clinics. Whilst a booking is preferable, you can also just turn up for an appointment.

For more information about COVID-19 Vaccination, visit: bit.ly/3a5zyQD

Given what is unfortunately rolling out in Western Sydney at the moment, for those eligible for the August clinic, please grab the opportunity to get vaccinated and “take one for the team”.

COVID Precautions

As most readers would be aware, the decision was taken last week to close the Back O’ Bourke Exhibition Centre to allow staff to be tested for COVID and then isolate until they received their test results. This followed a visitor to the Centre on Tuesday 20 July 2021 subsequently contacting the Centre to advise that they had visited a ‘Close Contact’ site in Orange that had been associated with confirmed cases of COVID-19.

This visitor was contacted by the NSW Public Health “Contract Tracer” team as a result of her signing into premises in Orange using her QR Reader on her phone. The visitor got tested and returned a negative result as did the staff at the Exhibition Centre.

We also had a small team of road construction contractors from Orange who were in Bourke at the time of the Government lockdown of Orange, effective Tuesday evening, with such contractors having arrived in Bourke on Monday. The decision was made for the contractors to leave the job and return to Orange. Again, as a precaution, staff who may have been in contact with these contractors were tested and sent home to isolate pending the results of their COVID tests. These results also came back negative.

Councils actions in these matters were very precautionary. However, as I said on 2WEB last week, “Caution is King” at the moment. I wish to thank not only our visitor from Orange for her openness in advising of her predicament, but also very much my staff effected by this precautionary approach. I acknowledge that isolating at home brings with it a level of apprehension for not only those tested, but also for those associated with the respective staff in a home environment. Thanks to all concerned.

COVID Business Support Grants

I have previously written about the broad availability of Grant Funding for those businesses affected by the current COVID outbreak. In terms of detail, NSW businesses, sole traders and not-for-profit organisations are able to apply for up to \$15,000 from the first of the NSW Government’s economic support packages being the 2021 COVID-19 Business Support Grant.

This Grant is available to NSW businesses that have a turnover of more than \$75,000 and up to \$50 million and have a total annual wages bill of below \$10 million with eligible businesses able to receive \$15,000 for a decline in turnover of 70 per cent, or more; \$10,500 for a decline in turnover of 50 per cent, or more; and \$7,500 for a decline in turnover of 30 per cent, or more.

There is also a Micro Business Support Grant available for eligible businesses with a turnover of between \$30,000 and \$75,000 that experience a decline in turnover of 30 per cent or more. Eligible businesses will receive \$1,500, tax-free, per fortnight of restrictions. In addition, the joint NSW Government and Commonwealth JobSaver program will help small and medium businesses retain staff.

Eligible businesses with a turnover from \$75,000 and up to \$50 million who maintain their staff headcount will receive tax-free fortnightly payments of 40 per cent of their weekly payroll, with a minimum payment of \$1,500 per week, and a maximum payment of \$10,000 per week. Eligible non-employing businesses will receive \$1,000 per week. These payments will also be made fortnightly. For more information on the 2021 COVID-19 Business Support Grants visit: www.nsw.gov.au.

Applications for the Business Support Grants, the Micro Business Support Grants and the JobSaver program, opened on 26 July 2021 with over \$4 billion having been directed to such Grants by the NSW Government.

Interesting History

Bruce Grey was in touch last week to advise that he was sending a copy of his history of the Riverview Golf Club at Bourke to Jodi at the Bourke Library for public viewing. I have had a read and there are certainly some interesting accounts of the characters of the time, both at the Golf Club and in Bourke.

Bruce has also been busy writing another historical story on Bourke, that being in respect of the Old Bourke Aerodrome. For those who didn't know, and I didn't, the old aerodrome was located on the site of the present Bourke Children's Services and the Bourke Golf Course. It was operational between the years of 1919 and 1948 with Bruce noting that aircraft of those early years did not need long runways hence its runway length. The present North Bourke Aerodrome was constructed in 1942 and catered for the bigger aeroplanes after its construction. There was a period of overlap from 1942 to 1948 where the old aerodrome still catered for the small aeroplanes. Bruce advised that the old facility was favoured by the Aero Club and small aeroplane owners "because of its closeness to town." It was very close to town.

We folk born in the 1950's and onwards probably take the speed of aircraft and cars for granted. When the first aeroplane landed in 1919 there was obviously much excitement in town. With a large crowd gathered at the Railway area to get the first glimpse of the aeroplane, Bruce notes that the then Mayor of Bourke, Ald. H Bloxham stated that the arrival that day was "the first aircraft he had ever seen" and commenting that transportation had gone from 8 miles a day for bullock Teams to 120 miles per hour (200km/h) in an aeroplane! What progress.

Quote of the week: "All individuals aged 18 years and above in greater Sydney, including adults under 60 years of age, should strongly consider getting vaccinated with any available vaccine including ... AstraZeneca." Statement from the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) in response to the NSW COVID-19 outbreak. Finally, some urgency.

