



## “From the General Manager’s Desk” 5 August 2021”

### **COVID LOCKDOWN**

Spare a thought for our city cousins in Greater Sydney including the Blue Mountains, Central Coast, Wollongong and Shellharbour who as of today are up to day 40 of lockdown with the prospect of further weeks of lockdown appearing most probable. To think that this calamity in Sydney essentially started as a result of one person initially coming into contact with another, to where Sydney now finds itself with triple figure cases being announced every day, it certainly shows just how contagious the virus is.

Whilst not diminishing the impact of the lockdown on individuals, the people I often think about are our elected leaders. The resilience shown by both the Prime Minister, the Hon Scott Morrison and our Premier, the Hon Gladys Berejiklian, is really quite amazing as they deal with an absolute multitude of issues and pressures. Seriously, some mornings they must just think, “do I have to get out of bed?” The pressure would just be enormous. I had a very small taste of such pressure when in December 2010 the Macquarie River at Dubbo rose extremely fast, basically overnight, breaking its banks and resulting in the city’s Central Business District being essentially cut off and the Emile Serisier Bridge under water. There was a view that businesses should have received greater warning from authorities and with an estimated \$13 million being lost by businesses, and traffic chaos on both sides of the Macquarie River with only the LH Ford Bridge available, community concerns were at an all-time high. Along with the Mayor of Dubbo of the day, Emeritus Mayor Allan Smith, SES District Controller, David Monk, my various Senior Staff and myself, we fronted a public meeting with concerned business operators to discuss their issues. On top of that, with the massive growth of housing estates in West Dubbo and the availability of only one bridge, these issues combined to result in traffic grid lock with travel times from east to west Dubbo on the first afternoon of the flood being some 2 to 3 hours. Whilst we were able to make alternative traffic arrangements after that first night, it wasn’t the most comfortable of times. I certainly don’t envy the PM and the Premier, but I am glad that it is them who do what they do.

### **COUNCIL MEETING**

Council met for its July 2021 Ordinary Meeting on Monday last week. Various reports were considered that related to matters in respect of the local government elections. Given the change in the election date to Saturday 4 December 2021, new motions were brought forward to reflect this changed election date and adopted.

There was a report which provided an update on the status of actions in respect of previous Council resolutions. An update was provided regarding Councils previous decision to transfer Council land in Darling St, Bourke to the Whiddon Group to formalise the ownership of the River Gum Lodge Aged Care

Facility. As part of the process, Council was required to reclassify the status of the land to comply with the Local Government Act. To achieve this, Council prepared an amendment to the Bourke Local Environmental Plan (LEP). Sounds simple, but certainly not so. The good news is that after a significant amount of work by staff in Councils Environmental Services Branch, the revised LEP has been “made” following the matter being notified by the NSW Government. The transfer of land will now proceed.

Council also resolved to conditionally approve a Development Application for a 452 megalitre water storage on property fronting Tancred Drive, north of Bourke; refer its Financial Reports for the year ended 30 June 2021 for audit; contribute a donation of up to \$5,000 towards the costs associated with the hosting of the Tour De Roc riders and support crew in October 2021.

It is further advised that as a result of the tendering process, Council resolved to proceed to acquire three (3) specific items of plant at a combined cost of some \$663,000. The plant items purchased were a new street sweeper and two (2) new Isuzu trucks for Councils Road Construction crews. In addition, Council accepted submissions from tenderers for the supply of plant and equipment on a hire basis, for a 12 month period, with this plant and equipment hired as required to supplement Councils own equipment when undertaking its road construction activities. Some 22 separate tender submissions were received which provided prices for in excess of 3,800 individual items of plant and equipment for potential hire by Council. These individual items range from a lawn mower all the way through to a Caterpillar D10 dozer!

#### **WILD DOGS BAITING PROGRAM**

It was good to read that the Western Local Land Services, in conjunction with landholders, has carried out one of the largest ever wild dog baiting programs in the Western Division.

The targeted campaign commenced at the start of May, with a fixed-wing aircraft travelling along 6,348 kilometres of predetermined bait lines, dropping nearly 63,500 baits over largely inaccessible country across 155 properties for the control of wild dogs. Following this aerial baiting, which took just over a week, landholders in pest management and Western Landcare groups worked with their local biosecurity officers to collect meat baits to strategically distribute them on their property, which concluded at the end of May.

In total, 126,827 baits were placed by landholders on 335 properties, covering an area of 10,709,334 hectares and in doing so targeted wild dogs and other pest animals like foxes and feral cats.

The numbers of baits distributed, and total area covered, are most impressive however undoubtedly necessary to help reduce the impacts of wild dogs on individual landholders and the wider agricultural industry. When the NSW Cabinet came to Bourke in November 2019, the wild dog issue was a major issue of concern and it is pleasing to hear that matters are progressing with Government and landholders working together.

Western Local Land Services have advised that they continue to offer its Professional Wild Dog Controller Program to landholders looking to engage the services of a wild dog trapper. At present, landholders can arrange for a trapper to visit their property for no charge for a day to investigate wild dog activity and look for signs of wild dogs. To organise a trapper to visit your place or get further information on pest animal management, contact Western Local Land Services on 1300 795 299, [www.lls.nsw.gov.au](http://www.lls.nsw.gov.au), or via social media.

## The 2021 Census

The 2021 Census Count is continuing, despite COVID, with Census night being Tuesday 10 August 2021. The Census count is undertaken every five (5) years of every person and household in Australia. The information collected in the Census helps inform important services and support for people and communities right around Australia. The data from the 2021 Census will be more important than ever. It will provide valuable insights into how the pandemic has changed life in Australia. Every person in Australia needs to be included in the Census, so that Census data is as accurate as possible. This includes visitors to Australia, international students and babies. The Australian Bureau of Statistics oversees the mammoth task of conducting the Census, which will undoubtedly be more difficult given COVID.

Census night is not that far away, however discussions with the ABS last week revealed that they are still looking for workers in the Bourke region to assist in the delivery and return of the Census documentation. If you're interested in applying for work to assist with this important project, go to [www.census.abs.gov.au](http://www.census.abs.gov.au)

### **Electronic lodgement of applications via the NSW Planning Portal**

The NSW Government is transitioning the lodgement and assessment of development related applications to an electronic format via the NSW Planning Portal. Lodgement of applications via the NSW Planning Portal is now mandatory throughout the state with commencement of the new process having commenced at Bourke Shire Council on 1 July 2021.

From 1 July 2021, as per the Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation (2000), the NSW Planning Portal will be the only acceptable method for councils to receive and determine Development Applications, Complying Development Certificates and post-consent certificate applications. To reiterate, the above mentioned applications are not to be received over the counter or processed outside of the NSW Planning Portal. As such, Council will be unable to accept applications received electronically via email, over the counter or by post. Council Staff will be available to assist members of the public who do not have access to the internet and need support with the application process on the Portal via a self-service desk located at the Council Office, but it will remain the applicant's responsibility to submit the application via the NSW Planning Portal. Please don't hesitate to call Council's Planning Staff on 68 308 000, should you have any enquiries in respect of the new requirements.

**Quote of the Week:** **"You can only be an underdog once. I had that luxury today."** A previously unknown on winning a gold medal in the 200m breaststroke event at the Tokyo Olympics.