



**BOURKE
SHIRE
COUNCIL**

**“From the
General Manager’s Desk”
23 September 2021”**

COVID Surveillance Testing

At our meeting of the Bourke Local Emergency Management Committee, representatives from the Western NSW Local Health District (LHD) advised that the LHD was rolling out surveillance testing for COVID-19 across the Health District, including at Bourke. NSW Health initially delivered surveillance testing as part of its response to the high number of COVID-19 cases and exposure sites in south western Sydney. Residents in south west Sydney Local Government Areas (LGA’s) who worked in other LGAs in Sydney were required to be tested for COVID-19 every three days, even if they didn’t not have symptoms. The normal test and isolate regime were obviously not going to work. Accordingly, with the introduction of surveillance testing, workers did not need to self-isolate until they received that all important negative result.

Up until now in Bourke, if you got tested for COVID you were required to isolate until a negative result was received. With surveillance testing you do-not have to self-isolate if you: don’t have any symptoms; no-one in your household has any symptoms; you have not been identified as a close contact and you have not been to any areas of concern. Testing is available at Davidson Oval, Bourke from 9am to 3pm, 7 days a week. This is an excellent opportunity to keep in front of the virus by undertaking regular testing.

I take this opportunity to thank the various front-line staff from the LHD, Rural Fire Service and ADF who day in and day out continue to provide a fantastic COVID swabbing service for Bourke Shire residents. They all undertake their roles professionally and with a smile that you can see in their eyes.

National Police Remembrance Day

The States response to COVID-19 has certainly reminded me of just how important and the fine job that members of the NSW Police Service do for all of us. I cannot imagine where NSW would be without our Police taking a leading role, along with Health, in the COVID battle. I was very lucky in my initial days as a young General Manager in Dubbo, when there was a fair amount of unrest in housing estates in the City, to be able to work closely with some very smart and proactive officers. The two (2) I spent most time with at meetings and discussions were Michael Willing and Stuart Smith. These officers have progressed through their careers such they now hold the positions of Deputy Commissioner, Regional Field Operations and Assistant Commissioner, State Crime Commander, respectively.

I learnt a lot from these Gents during a pretty tough time for Dubbo way back when and the positive learning continues for me as I, and others, work with Bourke Police as part of the Bourke Local Emergency Management Committee. This brings me to this year’s National Police Remembrance Day which will be commemorated in all Australian police jurisdictions on 29 September 2021. On this day we get the opportunity to acknowledge the crucial role that police officers play in our community and to honour those police who have lost their lives in the line of duty. During this crazy time of COVID, I for one will take time to quietly reflect on the role of Police and pay my respects for fallen Police next Wednesday. I encourage others to do likewise.

Service NSW

With the Council office in Mitchell St, Bourke currently closed, this means that face-to-face interactions at the Bourke Service NSW office are also currently unavailable. This is as part of Councils response to COVID.

Importantly however, it should be noted that this closure does not stop customers from completing numerous transactions over the phone or via the internet. The following link provides assistance to residents, with information regarding transactions available online:

<https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/changes-transactions-due-covid-19>

Whilst the Council office is closed, Council staff are available to assist with both Council related enquires or Service NSW enquiries by calling 02 68308000.

Alternatively, Service NSW customers can also ring 13 77 88 for over-the-phone transactions and advice or they can visit www.service.nsw.gov.au

Charles Street Water Reservoir

As part of its May 2021 meeting, Council resolved to accept the tender submitted by Brockman Engineering P/L in an amount of some \$2.3m to undertake the design and construction of a replacement Charles Street Water Reservoir.

Brockman Engineering, who are specialists in engineering bulk storage tanks, have offices in both Sydney and Victoria. Whilst steel for the replacement reservoir has been procured to enable the contract to proceed, following discussions with NSW Public Works Advisory (PWA), as Council's Contract Manager, and then subsequently between PWA and Brockman, the on-site construction of the reservoir has been deferred till March 2022 in a bid to avoid issues relating to COVID. Surely come March with current vaccination rates, we will be able to get on with life, without border lockdowns and the like. Council has been most diligent in respect of avoiding interactions between its staff and in avoiding bringing contractors to Bourke as part of its role in stopping COVID spread both to and in the Bourke community.

NSW Water Strategy

The NSW Government launched its NSW Water Strategy last week. This 20-year blueprint aims "to deliver resilient and sustainable water resources to communities across the state ensuring NSW is leading the charge when it comes to innovation."

The NSW Water Strategy takes a strategic and integrated approach to looking after the state's water. The strategy is the first 20-year water strategy for all of NSW which looks to improve the security, reliability, quality and resilience of the State's water resources over the long term. It sets the priorities and outlines the implementation plan to deliver on the identified outcomes.

The NSW Water Strategy sets the overarching vision for 12 regional and two metropolitan water strategies, tailored to the individual needs of each region in NSW. Together, the aim of the strategies is to improve the resilience of NSW's water services and resources.

The Strategy certainly recognises that in the future there will be more demand for water and a more variable climate with climate modelling driving water innovation and efficiency," in the development of the Strategy.

In releasing the Strategy, I note that the NSW Minister for Water, Property and Housing, the Hon Melinda Pavey has advised that in the next 12 months Government will refocus its efforts on water conservation and leakage reduction in cities, towns and regional centres and deliver a state-wide water efficiency framework. Government will also look for opportunities to invest in research and

development and new technologies, including recycled water opportunities for industrial and agricultural uses and that the Government will investigate and invest in supply options including stormwater harvesting and water re-use, and developing a consistent approach to water restrictions.

To access the Strategy, go to: <https://dpi.nsw.gov.au/water/plans-and-programs/nsw-water-strategy>

Now that the Water Strategy has been released, Council very much looks forward to the completion and release of the Western Weirs Strategy.

Australian Rural Leadership Foundation

Whilst talking water, and with many of our dams now full or starting to spill, drought will unfortunately come again, hopefully though, some time away yet. Notwithstanding, the Australian Rural Leadership Foundation currently has applications open to either be a mentee or a mentor for its upcoming Drought Resilience Leaders Mentoring Program. You are an ideal mentee if you have the desire to learn from others and get help with identifying, setting and achieving your personal and professional goals. You can be a farmer, farm employee or contractor, advising or collaborating with farmers, working in the agriculture industry, and/ or living in, or linked to a rural community such as Bourke. On the other hand, you would be an ideal mentor if you have the desire to support the development of others and help them achieve their goals by sharing your knowledge and expertise. You can apply to be a mentor if you are a farmer, involved in agriculture, supporting farming or farming businesses, and regional communities, a drought or climate specialist, a business leader, and/ or someone who is passionate about minimising the impact of drought.

In our own day to day lives, each of us are involved in mentoring in some form or another. It is a two-way street where people learn from each other as both a mentor and mentee. If you're interested go to www.rural-leaders.org.au

Quote: "He's the one who started mouthing off" – South Sydney Rabbitohs Coach, Wayne Bennett, taking aim at Penrith Panthers Coach, Ivan Cleary, after Cleary called on the NRL to come down hard on coaches deliberately trying to influence referees prior to games. You have to get up fairly early to get one over Wayne Bennett!!