



“From the General Manager’s Desk” 21 October 2021”

What’s Basketball Got To Do With A Bourke Vaccination Clinic?

The National Basketball Association (NBA) in America is a pretty big set up. Its sponsorship revenues exceed \$1.4 billion per season. I have to admit that I have never been a great fan of basketball, but I have heard of a basketballer by the name of James LeBron. He is apparently quite the star in the NBA earning around \$40m a season with more than 50 million Twitter followers and nearly 100 million on Instagram. Impressive numbers!

Of late, LeBron has stepped up and used his social media contacts and made his position clear on the COVID vaccination issue by saying that he is fully vaccinated and that he got the vaccine to keep his family safe. His comments resonated with me in terms of the super work that many people are undertaking in Bourke to maximise the percentage of COVID vaccinations in the Bourke Shire.

LeBron said, “I know that I was very (sceptical) about it all. But after doing my research and things of that nature, I felt like it was best suited for not only me but for my family and my friends. And, you know, that’s why I decided to do it.”

Today and tomorrow, various local health service providers have partnered together to provide those who haven’t been fully vaccinated the opportunity to “do it”. One BIG event, three different vaccination locations and no bookings required, just walk into a clinic on either Thursday 21 or Friday 22 October. How easy. The locations and times of the clinics follow:

Ochre Health are providing vaccinations from the Old Dental Practice in Green Street: Thursday 9am to 5pm and Friday 9am – 1pm. Pfizer and AZ available.

Bourke Aboriginal Corporation Health Service Oxley Street Clinic: Thursday 9am to 4.00pm and Friday 9am to 4.00pm. Pfizer and AZ available for either 1st or 2nd shots. BACHS is also providing home vaccinations on request. Give them a call on 6872 3088 to discuss a home visit.

NSW Outback Division of General Practice, Oxley (main) Street: Thursday 9am to 4pm and Friday 9am until close. Pfizer only. Walk in, and community transport drop-off (including Enngonia bus) Also providing home vaccinations on request. Call the ODGP to take advantage of a drop-off or a home visit on 6872 4777.

Please remember, you must not attend any of these Clinics if you are waiting on a COVID-19 test result (except if it was a surveillance test only), if you are a CONFIRMED close contact of a CONFIRMED positive COVID-19 case, if you are unwell, if you have any COVID symptoms - remember get tested and isolate until you receive a negative test result, or if you have received any other vaccination (including flu) in the previous seven days.

Those aged 12-15 years must be accompanied by their parent, guardian or nominated carer. Also don't forget to take a form of identification and where able, your Medicare card.

Getting back to the comments of James LeBron, they are most applicable to our community at the moment with an estimated 560 people above the age of 12 yet to have their COVID vaccination in Bourke. I understand that people may be sceptical. If you have questions about the vax, walk in to any of the clinics and have a chat to the staff. Their advice will allow you to make an informed decision. Ultimately, it would be hoped that you decide that the COVID vaccination suits for not only you but also your family and your friends.

Council Election

The election of the ten (10) Councillors for Bourke Shire Council will be held on 4 December 2021. In the lead up to the election there are some deadlines that must be met if you are planning on nominating for election to Council. Some of the key election dates and information for prospective candidates are provided below: -

- Monday 25 October 2021- Candidate nominations open; Close of electoral rolls (6pm).
- Tuesday 26 October 2021 – Postal vote applications open.
- Wednesday 3 November 2021 – Close of candidate nominations (12noon); Registration of electoral materials (how-to-vote) open.
- Thursday 4 November 2021 – Conduct of ballot paper draw
- Monday 22 November 2021 – Pre-poll voting period opens
- Friday 26 November 2021 – Close of registration of electoral material (5pm)
- Monday 29 November 2021 – Close of postal vote applications (5pm)
- Friday 3 December 2021 – Close of pre-poll voting period
- Saturday 4 December 2021 – ELECTION DAY (8am – 6pm)
- Friday 17 December 2021 – Return of postal votes close (6pm)
- 21 – 23 December 2021 – Results declared progressively as counts are finalised by Returning Officers.

Being a Councillor can be a rewarding experience because it provides an opportunity to make decisions that help people within the local community, influence the long-term strategic direction of a local community, learn new skills such as public speaking and advocacy, and work with a diverse range of people on a wide range of issues. More information can be found on the Office of Local Government website <https://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/public/about-councils/become-a-councillor/>

Women make up just over half of the population but only about a third of Councillors in local government in NSW. Women can connect with many different groups in the community and bring diverse views to Council. Council encourages women to stand for election to have a direct say in council decisions which influence the lives of people, families and communities. The Office of Local Government has produced information regarding the election of women to local government:

<https://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/public/about-councils/become-a-councillor/women-in-local-government-stand-for-your-community/>

Local communities are diverse, however, women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, people with a disability and young people, are under-represented on local Councils. The Office of Local Government has developed a range of resources aimed at increasing the representation of our diverse communities on local councils.

The Stand for your Community Candidate Guide contains a range of information on becoming and being a councillor and can be accessed from the Office of Local Government website:

<https://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/public/about-councils/become-a-councillor/information-for-candidates/>

The NSW Electoral Commission will be overseeing the election for Bourke Shire. As part of this role, they also oversee funding and disclosure requirements for candidates. To assist a range of information and fact sheets are available on the website for candidates and groups at the 2021 NSW Local Government elections covering the provisions of the Electoral Funding Act:

<https://www.elections.nsw.gov.au/Funding-and-disclosure>

Farming Labour Shortage

The rural sector in NSW is looking towards a very good season, however, as a result of COVID restrictions, the required labour simply isn't available to undertake work in the sector. As farmers head into what's expected to be one of the best harvests in 90 years, there is concern amongst farmers that they won't be able to get the crop off.

To assist, the NSW Government has come up with an innovative idea that will see more than 4,500 staff from the Department of Regional NSW, including Local Land Services and the NSW Department of Primary Industries, being able to access five days' special leave to assist farmers for an expected bumper harvest season in 2021.

When the word harvest is referred to, I would suggest that most people in this area generally think of the wheat harvest. However, under the proposal workers can volunteer to help out with any harvest, anywhere in the state - from harvesting blueberries in Coffs Harbour, oranges and table grapes in the Riverina and Murray, to cherries in the Central West.

In other good news for farmers, it was announced last week that from 1 November, the NSW Government will remove quarantine requirements and caps for those overseas arrivals who are recognised by the Commonwealth Government as fully vaccinated with a Therapeutic Goods Association approved vaccine. This will mean that it will be quicker and easier for foreign agricultural workers to safely start working on farms.

Passing of Norm Provan

Not many people get to play sport at the highest level. Even fewer get to play in and win a Grand Final, in any sport. Norm Provan, who passed away last week, had an unmatched record having won 10 straight premierships between 1956-1965 as a member of the St George Dragons Rugby League Club. Ten straight. I wouldn't mind the Dragons repeating that starting next season! Norm Provan's passing continues a sad 18 months for rugby league following the passing of Arthur Summons, Tommy Raudonikis and Bobby Fulton in recent times.

Quote: "We have a responsibility here to make sure we keep our regional communities safe." – Deputy Premier, the Hon Paul Toole announcing that Greater Sydney residents will be banned from travelling to regional New South Wales until 1 November 2021.