



“From the General Manager’s Desk” 28 October 2021”

Council Elections

Nominations for candidates who wish to contest the election to become a Councillor on Bourke Shire Council are now open. With local government elections being held across the State on 4 December 2021, time is running out to nominate with candidate nominations closing at 12noon on Wednesday 3 November 2021.

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>

By the way, and just as a reminder for the community, voting at the election is compulsory.

Integrated Vaccination Certificates

It’s now possible for Bourke residents who are double vaccinated to integrate their COVID-19 digital vaccination certificate into their Service NSW app. The integration of the vaccine certificate with the app is designed to make things easier following the easing of restrictions as a result of NSW having achieved the 80 per cent double vaccination rate.

When someone visits a venue in town that requires them to be double vaccinated to gain entry, residents can show their green check-in tick and vaccination status simultaneously, saving staff and customers time.

As vaccine data sits in the Federal Australian Immunisation Register, to integrate the COVID-19 digital certificate into the Service NSW app you will need to:

- Ensure your Federal MyGov account is linked to Medicare
- Download the Express Plus Medicare app and sign in with your MyGov account details
- Select ‘Proof of vaccinations’ and then ‘View history’
- Select ‘Share with check in app’ and then ‘Service NSW’.

Prior to the integration option, there were already three ways to demonstrate the vaccine certificate. People could use the Express Plus Medicare app or the digital wallet on their phone. For those without a smartphone, they can print a vaccination certificate from their Medicare account or contact Services Australia for a paper certificate in order to prove their vaccination status.

The Service NSW app includes a number of security measures to help compliance officers and businesses with checking and validating a customer's vaccination status, including a NSW Waratah logo hologram and rotating QR codes, similar to the Digital Driver Licence.

2022 Regional Youth Taskforce

The Regional NSW Youth Taskforce is a Ministerial advisory group that advises the Minister for Regional Youth on issues that affect young people living in regional NSW. The Taskforce provides young people from all corners of rural and regional NSW with a unique opportunity to meet with government and inform decision making that will have flow-on benefits for their peers, communities and hometowns.

The Taskforce is comprised of 18 diverse members, aged 12-24, with two members representing each of NSW's nine regions. The Taskforce will meet four times throughout the year either online or in person. Travel costs and accommodation will be covered for Regional Youth Taskforce members travelling across NSW for meetings.

The Taskforce is an initiative by the Deputy Premier and Office for Regional Youth, headed by the State's first-ever Minister for Regional Youth, the Hon. Bronnie Taylor. The Office for Regional Youth is responsible for delivering a broad range of strategic programs to address regional youth issues and ensure young people have every opportunity to live, work and thrive in regional NSW.

This is a great opportunity for a young Bourke resident to make a difference to our community, I encourage young people to apply. Being part of the 2022 Regional Youth Taskforce connects young people and will engage you on issues such as entering the workforce, mental health and public transport in the regions. The Taskforce will provide you with the ability to influence important decisions the Government makes on these topics and many more.

Applications are now open now and close at midnight Sunday 21 November 2021 and young people aged 12-24 from regional areas are eligible to apply. The third Taskforce will be appointed from January 2022 until 31 December 2022. To find out more or apply, visit nsw.gov.au/RegionalYouthTaskforce.

Water Notices

Councils Water Notices were sent out to residents last week. This is the first round of Notices where Council has downloaded the water usage data by pressing a button following the installation of Councils electronic water meter fleet. This means that Council no longer has to send meter readers out to read each individual meter.

If you are having trouble reading the Notices, Council's Revenue Officer, Meredith, is happy to explain the Notices. Meredith can be contacted at Council on 68 308 000. In addition to the Water Notices being sent out to residents, a flyer explaining how to read the new electronic water meters was also provided.

NSW Accommodation Support Grant

There is certainly a myriad of grants out there at the moment to support business through the impact of COVID. The latest I saw was a NSW Accommodation support Grant which is for accommodation providers who experienced cancellations for stays between Friday 25 June and Sunday 11 July 2021. There are quite a few accommodation providers in Bourke, so if your business was impacted, you may be eligible for one of two grant amounts being \$2,000 for cancellations of 10 nights or less or \$5,000 for cancellations of 11 nights or more.

If you have more than one accommodation property in NSW, you'll be able to apply for each property. To be eligible for funding under this grant, you must:

- be an eligible business as defined by the ANZSIC codes in the guidelines, which are available at the Service NSW website
- have accommodation premises physically located in NSW
- have an active ABN that is registered for GST and held before 25 June 2021
- be able to show evidence of cancellations between Friday 25 June and Sunday 11 July 2021.

You may also be eligible for this grant if you run a private residence as an Airbnb or short-stay accommodation rental. You must meet the eligibility requirements for the grant and show that the income from the holiday accommodation is your primary income. Once approved, payment will be made to your nominated bank account within 10 business days. Applications are open until 30 November 2021.

Stronger Communities Programme (SCP)

I see that Expressions of Interest are now open for the next round of the popular Stronger Communities Programme (SCP) as provided by the Australian Government. Under this program, \$150,000 is available for community groups in the Parkes electorate to fund small-scale upgrades and new equipment.

This latest funding opportunity will finance up to 20 projects across the electorate, supporting jobs and delivering an economic boost on the other side of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Grants from \$2,500 up to \$20,000 are available to cover up to 100 per cent of eligible project costs, or up to 50 per cent of eligible project costs for local governing bodies.

Submissions must be submitted to Mark Coulton's Office by 5 pm Friday the 3rd of December.

Additional information is available at www.business.gov.au/scp

Vaccination Resistance.

I wrote last week about the leadership exhibited by LeBron James (thanks Damo!) in saying that he is fully vaccinated and that he got the vaccine to keep his family safe. This week it's a raspberry to leading international tennis players, such as Novak Djokovic who won't reveal his vaccination status, with dozens of top tennis stars from various countries unlikely to be vaccinated. Seriously? Victorian Premier, Daniel Andrews made the big line call when he said that unvaccinated players would be unlikely to receive a visa to enter Australia and, if they were, they would be likely to have to complete the full two weeks of quarantine. Might be a quiet Australian Open in terms of world ranked players. So be it!

Quote: "There was a sense of worry that this might happen. It felt kind of inevitable it would. But this week? On day three, week one? That was shocking." A parent from a Sydney School commenting that after 16 weeks her children had returned to school, only for a COVID case to be identified on day three of the return week.