



## “From the General Manager’s Desk” 11 Movember 2021”

### **Bourke Small Stock Abattoir**

The big news for Bourke towards the end of last week was the announcement by Thomas Foods International that it had finalised a deal to purchase the Bourke Small Stock Abattoir from CAPRA Developments P/L. This is a most exciting announcement for Bourke and the region and is undoubtedly the culmination of a significant amount of work by both the seller and the purchaser. There was certainly a flurry of activity at Council as it addressed its obligations in respect of the project. With significant drought conditions affecting the Bourke region at the time CAPRA Developments P/L were looking to open, which in turn affected goat availability, it is unfortunate that CAPRA were not able to bring their vision for the abattoir to fruition. With the sale however, comes renewed hope for the abattoir complex. Whilst I haven’t been through the complex, I have seen many photos and the description as a “state-of-the-art” facility would certainly appear to be most appropriate.

Thomas Foods International (TFI) was established in 1988 by Mr Chris Thomas and has grown from small beginnings to become one of Australia’s largest family-owned food businesses. Now led by Mr Darren Thomas, TFI have teams in Australia, the US, China, Japan and Europe, growing, supplying, and distributing premium meat and seafood all over the world. The company has global turnover of \$2 billion in delivering some 170,000 tonnes of product a year to 85 countries around the world. These are impressive figures.

In coming weeks, Mayor Barry and I will meet with Mr Darren Thomas. We both look forward to firstly welcoming Mr Thomas and TFI to Bourke and then hearing of their plans for the abattoir moving forward. Already they have announced “plans to re-open the modern facility, expand its operations and employ more than 120 staff.” The announcement also advised that TFI are looking to make a range of capital improvements to the site over coming months including the addition of freezing and rendering facilities with the plan being to begin processing both skin-on and skin-off goats from around mid-2022.

Already TFI is seeking registrations of interest for jobs at the plant. For those people wishing to register their interest to work at the Bourke plant, they can contact TFI by emailing them at [recruitment@thomasfoods.com](mailto:recruitment@thomasfoods.com)

### **Council Elections.**

Candidate nominations for the 2021 Council elections for Bourke Shire Council closed at noon on Wednesday 3 November 2021. At the close of this nomination period, there were 10 persons who had nominated for the 10 Councillor positions. Given this situation, referred to as an uncontested election, the Returning Officer last week declared the 10 candidates duly elected to Bourke Shire Council. This means that there will be no election held in the Bourke community on 4 December 2021 as previously advised. Candidates won’t need to campaign, voters won’t need to vote, my staff won’t need to man the pre pole vote and so on. So many resources saved!!

The Local Government Act provides that where a person holds civic office without a poll being held, they are taken to have been elected on the day on which the poll for an ordinary election would have been held. In this case the election day is 4 December 2021.

Those elected to Council are as follows:

Victor Bartley. Sarah Barton. Sally Davis. Cec Dorrington. Lachlan Ford  
Barry Hollman. Samuel Rice. Grace Ridge. Nathan Ryan. Bob Stutsell

The term of these Councillors ends 14 September 2024, being the second Saturday of September in that year. Post 4 December 2021, I will be in contact with these Councillors to arrange an initial meeting of Council to elect a Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

I congratulate these Councillors on their appointment. In doing so, it would be remiss of me not to thank and recognise the input of Councillors Ian Cole and John Thompson to Council during their respective terms. These gents did not seek re-election to Bourke Shire and between them have provided 18 years of service to the community.

### **Diggers Clean-Up.**

No doubt the community is happy to see that the clean-up of the “Diggers on the Darling” site is well and truly underway. In matters such as this, it does take time to get everything in order in readiness for the site to be remediated. To their credit, since the fire on 1 September 2021, owners of the site, Phillip and Anne-Marie Parnaby have kept Councils Manager Environmental Services, Dwayne Willoughby, and me, up to speed with the various behind the scene activities undertaken to get to a point where the clean-up commenced. The contractor engaged by the Parnaby’s to undertake the work is Regional Demolitions with all material from the site to be transported to the Bourke Waste Depot where Council has built a waste cell to specifically accommodate the Diggers waste. The only waste from the site that will not be buried in the cell is the tin from the roof which will be washed down and recycled.

### **November Events**

I wrote in my Column last week about November being an annual, month-long celebration of the moustache, to highlight men's health issues, specifically prostate cancer and depression in men. In addition to highlighting this health issue, 8-14 November sees a focus on cervical cancer in women with National Cervical Cancer Awareness Week. The week is used to raise funds and promote awareness and education around cervical cancer and the impact it has on Australian women and their families every year. Currently Australia is on track to be the first country in the world to eliminate cervical cancer by 2035.

On Thursday 25 November, White Ribbon Day will be held. The White Ribbon Campaign aims to raise awareness among Australian men and boys about the roles they can play to prevent violence against women. The campaign calls for men across Australia to speak out and take an oath about violence against women. I am very comfortable to swear never to commit, excuse or remain silent about violence against women.

To end men’s violence against women, attitudes and behaviour need to change. Unfortunately, this will take time. Many people think violence against women is committed in public places by strangers. The fact is that women who are at risk of violence are more likely to experience it in their own home and from men they know. Watching the news, reading articles on the topic and seeking information will undoubtedly help men understand the impact of violence and abuse on women and the community.

Men are not naturally violent. Violent and abusive behaviours are learnt. When I spoke at my Dads funeral back in 2017, I spoke of the fact that in my time I had never seen my Mum and Dad have an argument. I recognised that I had a charmed upbringing, in many senses, and know that not everyone has been so lucky. Unfortunately, many children see and experience behaviours in their formation years that they really shouldn't be exposed to. As men we need to be an example to other men in terms of how we treat women with respect and as equals. We should be mindful of how language as well as actions can be disrespectful and abusive. Healthy relationships help create gender equality. We can express our feelings directly and in non-violent ways, for example, by expressing appreciation to our partner or having disagreements using well managed and respectful words.

White Ribbon Day allows us all to show a commitment to ending men's violence against women by wearing a white ribbon or wristband. Men can use the day as a starting point to talk with friends, family and colleagues about men's violence against women. Be proud to stand up, speak out and act to prevent men's violence against women.

I must say, if ever you see violence happening, call the police and never assume someone else has. Ensure you do something to stop the violence, but in doing so don't use violence yourself or put yourself in danger. Do not remain silent: stand up, speak out and act to stop men's violence against women. In addition, be a role model to other men, women and children. Teach them that violence is unacceptable and talk about ways to manage negative feelings that could result in conflict or violence.

**Quote of the Week:** *"We're confident the Bourke plant will become a successful long-running operation for the region"* - Thomas Foods International Livestock Manager, Paul Leonard, announcing the companies deal to purchase the Bourke Small Stock Abattoir.