



“From the General Manager’s Desk” 2 December 2021”

Bourke Local Emergency Management Committee (LEMC)

Since 12 August 2021, I have had the privilege of chairing meetings of the Bourke Local Emergency Management Committee (LEMC), as part of the Bourke community’s response to the “Stay at Home” orders made by the NSW Government in response to the COVID pandemic.

From daily meetings to thrice weekly and more recently, weekly meetings, the LEMC has played an important role in Bourke responding to the pandemic. After 156 positive COVID cases having been identified and attended to in Bourke from 14 August 2021 up until the last identified case on 23 October 2021, members of the LEMC were advised this week that there would be no further COVID related meetings of the Committee, unless of course Bourke has further cases in the future. Hopefully that isn’t the case.

All members of the Committee have been very professional and forthcoming in their dealings with the Committee and I certainly thank each member for their contribution. It’s always dangerous to thank individuals in case you miss someone! I will take a broader approach and recognise the various organisations, in no particular order, who have been party to the LEMC meetings. The organisations who have been involved are: NSW Police, NSW Health, Western NSW Local Health District, Public Health Network, NSW Aboriginal Affairs, Essential Energy, Local Land Services, NSW Fire and Rescue, Bourke Aboriginal Community Health Service, Rural Fire Service, Transport for NSW, Family and Community Services, Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly, SES, Red Cross, Regional NSW, Bourke Shire Council, Maranguka Community Hub, Environment, Energy and Science (EES), NSW Ambulance, National Indigenous Australians Agency, Outback Division of General Practice, Ochre Health, Bourke High School, St Ignatius Parish School, Bourke and District Children’s Services and Koinonia Christian Academy. Thank you to all organisations for their assistance.

COVID Booster Vaccinations

With the Australian Government having announced that COVID booster vaccinations are available a minimum of 6 months after the 2nd COVID dose, some Bourke residents may already be eligible to receive the booster shot, depending obviously on the date they received their second dose. I note that Pfizer is the preferred vaccine regardless of the primary vaccine used for dose 1 & 2 (Moderna is not yet approved for Boosters). If an individual had an adverse reaction with Pfizer or Moderna vaccine when they received their primary doses, I have been advised that they can have AZ as the booster. People who are immunocompromised are eligible sooner, however these people must speak with their GP before booking for vaccine, with their GP being required to approve the earlier boost.

Ochre Health in Bourke have advised that Booster Clinics will commence in January 2022 for patients previously vaccinated in Bourke earlier this year, as January would generally be the 6-month mark. However, if anyone was vaccinated earlier, it is suggested you contact Ochre to discuss your individual

circumstances. Dates for Ochre vaccine clinics in January are every Tuesday 9.00am – 12.00pm commencing 4th Jan 2022. Bookings are essential for 3rd dose (booster), and you must provide proof of 2nd vaccination to the GP.

Street Trees.

Council is taking advantage of the current wet and mild seasonal conditions by purchasing a further 38 trees to begin Stage 2 of the street tree replanting program adopted by Council earlier this year. Stage 2 of the project will take in Richard and Darling streets in Bourke.

Stage 1 of the Tree planting project has been a success with trees planted in Sturt Street, Mitchell Street, Warraweena Street and Moculta Street. These trees are growing well, and no doubt the improved weather conditions have assisted this growth. Council encourages residents to look after a new tree if it is placed on the footpath outside your property.

Shop Local this Christmas and support our local business.

Bourke Shire residents are being encouraged to spread some holiday cheer this year by shopping locally for Christmas and supporting small businesses in the Bourke community. The past few months have been tough, even with click and collect and delivery services available. Residents can help make a small business owner's life a little brighter this year by choosing to shop local. This can include gift vouchers, spa treatments, work boots, dog biscuits or even Bourke's famous Mock Chicken Legs or Meat Pies packed ready for your trip to the family Christmas celebrations.

Call into our local businesses and ask what they can offer you. We encourage you to give a shout out to your favourite local business on social media. Bourke Shire Council will also be spreading the message on its social media pages with a focus on different industry each week. We thank the Western Herald and 2WEB for supporting our "Shop Local" campaign this festive season.

Purchasing from locally owned Bourke businesses allows more money to be kept in our community as locally owned businesses often purchase from other local businesses, trades, and service providers. On average, for every \$100 spent at a locally owned business, 65% of your money stays in the community. Local businesses hire people with more specific product expertise which leads to better customer service. Local businesses are owned by people who live in our community and so are less likely to leave and are more committed to our community's welfare and future. Spending your money at local businesses supports other local business which in turn stimulates our local economy. This is more important than ever as local business is impacted by COVID-19.

Some upcoming local events.

Christmas Markets, Friday 10 December 2021, 6-9pm Central Park – Bourke's Annual "Christmas in the Park Market's" are shaping up to be another fantastic community event. Plans are well underway with local agencies, businesses and crafty people having registered to host stalls on the evening. This free community event will transform Central Park into a wonderland for all kids with activities abound including, light displays and a Christmas tree, Santa Claus, a giant slippery slide and food and beverage outlets.

Back O' Bourke "Light up the Night" Christmas Competition – Council will celebrate the Christmas spirit once again by running this exciting event. Stock up on your Christmas decorations and lights from our local businesses and be the best Christmas Light display in Bourke for 2021. Residents are encouraged to decorate their home and get into the festive season. Judging will commence from the start of December

and the winners will be announced over 2WEB on Monday 20th December with lots of prizes to be won. Contact the Back O' Bourke Information and Tourism Centre to find out more details on 6872 1321.

Australia Day 2022, Wednesday 26 January 2022, 8am Bourke War Memorial Swimming Complex -

The 2022 Australia Day Celebrations at the Bourke Olympic Pool will celebrate the things that make our country great: the people, the land, the culture, our diversity, our sense of a fair go, our lifestyle and our freedoms. Breakfast, the official ceremony and plenty of activities to keep the kids (and Big kids) cool and entertained will be on hand as the community celebrates this special day.

Christmas Closedown

Christmas is now but four (4) weeks away. This year, Council's Shire Office, Service NSW Agency and Library will close at 4.30pm on Thursday, 23 December and re-open for business on Tuesday 4 January 2022. If residents encounter a problem such as water supply, a water main break or a sewer choke, or for that matter any urgent issue over the Christmas/New Year period, please contact Council's Duty Officer on 0419 722 055.

Rate and Water billing payments

A reminder to Ratepayers that the latest rates instalment was due on Tuesday, 30 November 2021 with water charges also due on that day. If you are finding it difficult to make your Rates or Water payment on time you are encouraged to make contact with Council's Revenue Officer at Council's office or by phoning 68308000 to discuss payment options that may be available to you.

Council Elections.

Don't forget that as a result of Bourke Shire Council receiving 10 nominations for 10 Councillor positions, the Bourke Shire Councillor elections are uncontested. Bourke residents therefore do not have to head to the polls on 4 December 2021 unlike most other residents across New South Wales.

Quote: "It could be something which is going to cause us a degree of concern going forward. We don't know if ... any of the vaccines will work with the Omicron variant." NSW Health Minister, Brad Hazzard making comment regarding a new strain of COVID emanating from South Africa.