



“From the
General Manager’s Desk”
24 February 2022”

Renshaw Showground

The Bourke Skyline, looking towards the Renshaw Showground precinct, is looking rather different now that a new building has risen above the ground. Through funding under the NSW Governments Showground Stimulus Program, a substantial new shade shed and facility area has been constructed. The area covered by this new building is rather impressive, measuring 36 metres in length and being 20 metres wide, it certainly towers over the footprint of the former facilities that were demolished to make way for the construction. When completed the new facility will include a bar area, food canteens, seating areas and will provide users of the Renshaw facility a significant amount of space to mingle and network under cover. With staff and contractors working hard to ensure the facility and surrounds are in tip top condition for the Easter Picnic Races, I am confident that race goers will be suitably impressed at the new facility.

Remote Roads Upgrade Pilot Program

I wrote in my Column of 3 February 2022 regarding Wanaaring Rd and that at this point, there remains just 36.33km of road left to be sealed at an approximate cost of \$13.6m. With this project in mind, discussions have recently taken place with Council’s liaison officer at TfNSW regarding the guidelines for the Australian Governments Remote Roads Upgrade Pilot Program and specifically, whether projects submitted for funding can include the sealing of roads. This \$150m Program, as announced by Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon Barnaby Joyce, “would offer councils between 80% and 100% of funding to upgrade unsealed roads and improve safety with works including resurfacing, removing dangerous corners and managing vegetation.”

From reading the various media releases on the grant, the impression was that the program wasn’t about the sealing of roads. However the TfNSW Liaison Officer advised that from her reading of the guidelines, and discussions with relevant departmental officers, the guidelines don’t specifically exclude road sealing projects. Accordingly, Council will now be submitting an application under this program for funding to complete the Wanaaring Road upgrade. Time will ultimately tell in respect of our success or not.

Small Business Support Program

Small businesses in Bourke that experienced a downturn over summer are encouraged to apply for a NSW Government support payment of up to \$5,000 per week through Service NSW. The program provides targeted support to businesses with an annual turnover of between \$75,000 and \$50 million that experienced a decline in turnover of at least 40 per cent in January 2022 and the start of February 2022.

The payment for employing businesses will cover up to 20 per cent of weekly payroll, up to a maximum of \$5,000 per week. Eligible non-employing businesses, such as sole traders, will receive \$500 per week with funds able to be utilised to cover business expenses such as wages, rent, loss of perishable goods, professional services and other costs. Further information is available from the Service NSW website: www.service.nsw.gov.au/transaction/2022-small-business-support-program

Stories of Adversity

Two stories of adversity bought home to me the reality of life this week. The first was an event that occurred eighty years ago last week when a group of 22 nurses who had survived the sinking of the SS Vyner Brooke, a British Royal Navy armed trading ship which was escaping the fall of Singapore, were machine gunned by Japanese troops after being ordered by them to wade into the ocean at a place called Banka Island, east of Sumatra. Of the 65 Australian nurses who initially embarked upon the SS Vyner Brooke, 12 were killed during the air attack or drowned following the sinking, 21 were murdered on Radji Beach, and 32 became prisoners of war, 8 of whom subsequently died before the end of the war.

One of the nurses attacked on the beach, a Vivian Bullwinkel, was only wounded, but she played dead and survived the massacre. She hid from the Japanese, tending to other wounded people on the island, before later surrendering and spending over three years in a Japanese prison camp. Her story reminds us of what we owe to nurses, for their sacrifices, selflessness and resilience in tough times. To honour those nurses who died on Banka Island 21 scholarships have been set up in the names of those brave nurses.

The other story relates to a 25 year old woman who lost both her legs in a road accident in Victoria recently in her role as a truck driver in the traditional male dominated livestock transport industry. The truck she was driving rolled and it took emergency services 11 hours to get to her following the collision and in attending to her, had to amputate one of her legs at the accident scene. Since the accident, her other leg has been amputated and she is also suffering from a spinal cord infection. Such a situation would test anyones resilience and it is pleasing to hear that her local community is rallying around her.

New Street Sweeper

Council has recently taken delivery of a new street sweeper to replace its ageing sweeper that has successfully served the community for some years. The new sweeper is a Dual Control Scarab Mistral Sweeper and Unit which sits atop a Hino FE 1426 truck chasis.

The Scarab Mistral sweeper component of the vehicle gains its suction via a Cummins B3 turbo-charged diesel auxiliary engine. Operators have found that the Cummins engine is quieter than conventional engines as it runs at a lower RPM and is therefore also more fuel efficient. That's good news for the community. The Hino FE 1426 cab chasis has a GVM of 14 tonne and is powered by a 6.4 litre Hino diesel engine with an output of 191 kW (256hp) and 794 Nm of torque at 1500 RPM.

One of the more interesting features of the new streetsweeper is its ability for the operator to spray weeds along the sweeping route. In this regard the intention is for the sweeper to spray along gutters and medians to alleviate unsightly weed growth in the town.

Mark Gordon

Long serving employee, Mark Gordon, commences extended long service leave tomorrow before officially retiring after a stellar career at Bourke Shire over a period of 34 years. A wealth of knowledge on all things roads and other matters in the Bourke Shire, Mark will be very much missed at Council.

Mark commenced his employment with Council back in 1988 as a casual labourer collecting and emptying sanitary pans. He continued as a casual working with the bitumen and bridge crews and then with town services until his permanent appointment as a plant operator in April 1989. Shortly after, Mark went back to the bridge crew, this time as a truck driver, learning many skills such as culvert installation, building, repairing and demolishing bridges, plant operation and concreting. Mark subsequently progressed to the position of Relief Plant Operator and worked with road crews on the sealing of the Kidman Way and the Kamilaroi Highway and was appointed foreman and worked on the construction of the new wharf and the first main street upgrade in 1995.

Mark undertook studies from 1995 to 1997 which saw him achieve an Advanced Works Superintendent Certificate. Mark happily acknowledges that undertaking these studies were one of the best things he had ever done to progress his career in Local Government. Following this achievement, Mark was appointed Works Supervisor. He held that position for 10 years until approached in 2007 to undertake a six month trial as the Manager of Roads. As they say, the rest is history

I have only worked with Mark for a relatively short period. During that time, his knowledge and experience have been very much to the forefront. Mark successfully planned and led his crews in the reconstruction and sealing of the Bourke to Wanaaring Road and he is understandably proud of the work by his crews and the improvements that this road has brought to the local community. Mark and his wife Sandra are well known in the Bourke community and have relocated to Mittagong. On behalf of Council I certainly wish Mark and Sandra all the very best for the next phase of their lives and specifically publicly thank Mark for his significant contribution to Bourke Shire.

Quote: "It's a beautiful day at one of Sydney's most beautiful beaches, but there's a real dark pall hanging over our community today." Maroubra MP, Michael Daley reflecting on last weeks fatal shark attack by what is believed to be a Great White at Little Bay Beach, the first such attack at a Sydney beach in 59 years.