



**BOURKE
SHIRE
COUNCIL**

“From the
General Manager’s Desk”
7 April 2022”

NSW Governor

The Governor of NSW, Her Excellency The Hon Margaret Beazley AC QC was quick to write in support of Bourke and at her shock when the Diggers on the Darling facility was destroyed by fire on 1 September last year. She and her husband, Mr Dennis Wilson, who once worked in Dubbo at M J Duffy and Son Solicitors, were in Bourke last week as Co-Patrons of the Isolated Children’s Parents Association (ICPA) to open the Association’s NSW State Council 50th Conference in Bourke. I was in Sydney last weekend and on a morning walk in the Sydney CBD when I came upon the Governor, walking in the opposite direction. She not only recognised me but knew my name following various interactions I had had with Her Excellency during and after her visit to Bourke last year. Amazing. It was great to be able to talk with the Governor and take the opportunity to update her on various current aspects relating to Bourke.

Since 26 January 1788, NSW has had 39 Governors. During my time as a Council General Manager since the early 2000’s, I have been honoured to have been able to interact at times in my role with three Governors, being Professor The Honourable Dame Marie Bashir AD CVO; His Excellency General The Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd) and since May 2019, Her Excellency The Hon Margaret Beazley AC QC.

COVID Vaccination Clinic

The Western NSW Local Health District (WNSWLHD), will be holding a walk-in vaccination clinic, today, 7 April 2022 at the Bourke Full Gospel Family Fellowship, 25 Short Street, Bourke from 9.30am – 4.00pm. No appointments are needed – you can just turn up on the day, with first, second, booster or kid’s doses being available. The Pfizer vaccine will be available for those aged 12 years and over. Kids Pfizer will be available for those aged between 5-11 years, with anyone aged between 5 -15yrs needing to be accompanied by their parent, guardian or nominated carer.

If you are seeking a second or booster dose, you will need to provide evidence of your previous dose(s) with only people aged 16yrs and over being eligible for booster doses. Don’t forget to take a form of identification and where able, your Medicare card. If you are waiting on a COVID-19 test result, are a close contact of a CONFIRMED positive COVID-19 case, are unwell or you have recently tested positive for COVID-19 on a PCR or Rapid Antigen Test (you can get your vaccine as soon as you have recovered, for most people this is around 4-6 weeks after infection) please do not attend the clinic. Only some 60% of residents aged 16 years and older in NSW have had a booster vaccine. With the war in Ukraine, the northern river floods and Warnie’s passing, COVID is no longer on the front page of the media. Rest assured the virus has not gone away. In Bourke, for instance, since August last year to now, there have been some 450 positive cases in the Shire. Since Christmas, there have been near 300 cases. Residents are encouraged to take advantage of this fantastic service offered by the WNSWLHD and I thank them for the ongoing provision of these clinics.

NSW Severe Weather and Flooding

It is difficult to comprehend the amount of rain that has fallen on the far north coast of NSW both during February and then again in the last week that resulted in Lismore, Ballina and Byron Bay once again being inundated by water. The Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) gauges recorded 282mm at Byron Bay with Alstonville, inland of Ballina, having received 431mm of rain in the 24 hours to 9am last Wednesday morning.

I certainly feel for the residents and business operators at this particularly tough time. Having any water enter your house is traumatic, let alone 2 metres on two (2) separate occasions. In Australia, the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) are a jointly funded program between the Australian Government and the state and territory (state) governments, through which the Australian Government provides financial assistance to support state governments with disaster recovery costs. Eligible costs include assistance measures for individuals and families, businesses, primary producers, non-profit organisations and local and state governments. Under the arrangements, state governments determine what assistance measures will be activated, and the areas in which they will be made available. The Australian Government may then reimburse state governments for up to 75 per cent of these costs. State governments are responsible for administering the DRFA assistance measures.

In response to the severe weather and flooding experienced since last year, DRFA assistance has been activated in sixty-two (62) local government areas in NSW, including Bourke. There are varying degrees of assistance having regard to the level of impact of the disaster. For instance, as a result of the tragic floods on the North Coast, assistance for individuals has been provided in terms of immediate assistance, grants for essential household contents and grants for essential structural repairs to homes.

Recovery Grants for small businesses, primary producers and non-profit organisations are also available. Grants of up to \$50,000 are available to small businesses, primary producers and non-profit organisations that have suffered direct damage to help cover eligible clean-up and reinstatement costs. These grants can be used for a range of activities including removing debris, cleaning-up, repairing damaged fencing and equipment, repairing damaged premises and internal fittings, replacing stock, salvaging crops and restoring fields. The NSW Rural Assistance Authority manages these grants for primary producers with the Authority contactable on 1800 678 593. Council works with Transport for NSW and Public Works Advisory in respect of addressing the restoration of essential public assets. This measure provides financial assistance to help with the costs of restoring or repairing eligible essential public assets damaged as a direct result of a disaster to their pre-disaster standard. In this regard Council is documenting the repairs required to its extensive road network emanating from weather events in November 2021 that led to the Bourke Shire being declared a Natural Disaster Area.

Council Election Outcomes

Whilst it was not necessary for residents of the Bourke Shire to go to the election polls last December to elect their Bourke Shire Councillors, voters in three Local Government Areas will have to go back to the Polls for a second time following a decision of the Supreme Court of NSW. Last week Justice Robert Beech-Jones, Chief Judge at Common Law in the Supreme Court of NSW handed down the judgment on the election outcomes of Kempsey Shire Council, Singleton Shire Council and Shellharbour Council Ward A. The Court deemed it necessary to declare all of the affected Councillors' elections void. The decision of the Court means that a totally new election will need to be held for these three Council areas. The Electoral Commissioner indicated to the Court that the councils involved will not have to pay for two

elections after the Electoral Commission's online voting system crashed at the local government elections in December. It was the Commission who applied to the Supreme Court to scrap the results in the three areas, "to protect the integrity of the electoral system".

One can only imagine the frustrations of both the affected communities and the previously "elected" candidates that will now have to return to the polls for a second go round.

Bourke Abattoir

I was out at the new abattoir complex last week to meet with Bill Adcock of Thomas Foods International (TFI). We were talking about the advertising of roles at the facility and how pleased TFI were in respect of the response. I had a quick look at seek.com.au for all jobs in Bourke and saw that TFI were seeking applicants for the following roles: Administration Assistant, Load Out and Stores Person, Process Workers, Livestock Handler, Quality Assurance Manager, Maintenance Manager, Plant Manager, HR and WHS Manager, Slaughter Floor Supervisor, Boning Room Supervisor, Cold Store Supervisor and so on. There is a wide array of roles available at the plant and if you are interested in working in the meat industry, check out the Seek webpage for jobs in Bourke

Quote: "We didn't have to do much to be happy. Life was so easy and peaceful with you in it. You never pressured me into playing cricket and all you ever wanted for me was to be happy." Jackson Warne in delivering a tribute to his father, Shane Warne, speaking at last week's Memorial Service.