



**BOURKE
SHIRE
COUNCIL**

“From the
General Manager’s Desk”
9 June 2022

Flu and COVID Vaccinations

A number of people that I know have come down with the flu in recent weeks. When I say come down, I mean they have come down heavily with this year's strain knocking them around significantly and resulting in them taking considerable time off work to recover and just feeling miserable in themselves. Given the sharp increase in flu cases, the NSW Government has announced that it is funding free flu vaccinations for all NSW residents to strengthen immunity against severe illness. During the month of June 2022, free flu shots will be available from your General Practitioner (GP) for everyone aged 6 months and above and also at some Pharmacies for everyone aged 5 year's and above. Advice from the NSW Government is that the flu and COVID-19 vaccines can be given together, at the same time. Many people who are eligible for a free flu vaccine will also be eligible for a winter COVID-19 Booster. Ask your GP whether you need additional protection against COVID-19. I haven't written about COVID for some time, as we learn to live with the virus, but it is still certainly out there. There are still a significant number of daily cases across the west, and across the State and Nation for that matter. A friend of mine recently contracted the virus and he thought he was well and truly over it, after a couple of weeks of coughing, until he had to walk up some stairs. By the time he got to the top stair, he was absolutely breathless, and it took him a significant period of time to catch his breath and recover.

Draft Western Regional Water Strategy

I was pleased to receive advice recently that the NSW Government's draft Western Regional Water Strategy had been released for public exhibition on 1 June 2022. This long-awaited strategy has been prepared with input from Councils, Local Water Utilities and Aboriginal communities in the region. Online access to the strategy is available at: <https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/plans-and-programs/water-management-in-far-west-nsw>

The strategy will be on public exhibition for six weeks until 13 July 2022.

The NSW Government is holding a series of Public Information Sessions across the region to discuss the strategy and to facilitate community discussion on the key challenges and the options long list. Such a session will be held in Bourke on Thursday 30 June 2022 from 10:00 am – 12:00 pm at the Bourke Bowling Club. No registration is required, just turn up on the day. A discussion about the Barwon-Darling Water Sharing Plan and Floodplain Harvesting licencing will be held in the afternoon at the Bowling Club.

The Bald Archy

The official opening of the Bald Archy Art Exhibition was recently held at the Back O' Bourke Function Centre. The opening night to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the exhibition didn't disappoint with over 70 people attending the event to get together and take in the amazing artworks that showcased the winners of the past.

Founded by Peter Batey in 1994, the Bald Archy Prize quickly attracted attention for its irreverent and comic portraits which take humorous aim at the events of the past year. Living in Coolac, NSW, Peter first came up with the idea of a satirical art prize as a colourful addition to the town's Festival of Fun. It became the Bald Archy, whose winner was judged by a sulphur-crested cockatoo named Maude! According to Peter, Maude would flap her wings in front of the painting she liked best, and the decision was made. Peter went on to become a prominent playwright and founding member of the Melbourne Theatre Company, directing and producing theatre productions, operas, musicals, revue and puppetry. Australian comedian Barry Humphries credited Peter Batey with contributing to the creation of one of his most famous characters, Dame Edna Everage.

If you haven't seen these incredibly talented and amusing artworks, I would encourage you to call into the Back O' Bourke Exhibition Centre and purchase your ticket now. The Bald Archy Portraits will be on display in Bourke until 26th June 2022.

Louth Races

I was talking last week with the President of the Louth Turf Club, Mr Jim Strachan, about preparations by the Club for the upcoming 2022 Louth Races. With the 2022 event expected to surpass all previous meetings, given the cancellation of the races in 2020 and 2021 due to COVID, Jim advised that he and his Committee, especially Club Secretary Tegan Barton, are most busy at the moment responding to phone calls and email enquiries from race goers. Jim was telling me that racing at Louth dates back to 1880 when the Louth Christmas Races were held on 27 December. Featuring a two-race program, it comprised a Two-mile Open Handicap with prize money of 60 sovereigns and a Maiden Plate over 1¼ miles with prize money of 15 sovereigns. The next documented races were held in 1889 over two days. Day one consisted of 5 races and a 2-mile hurdle event, followed by an 8-race program on the second day. The most successful starter was a horse named "Winnie" who was placed first in three races, carrying a weight of ten stone(63.5kg). Her win was more memorable as her opponents were only carrying around eight stone(50kg). Some say that these early race meetings may have provided inspiration for Henry Lawson's prose "Louth on the Darling", in which he described Louth as a place that loved a drink, a punt and a party! The history of Louth is rather amazing. Back in the early days, Louth was a flourishing river port from where local wool was collected and taken by boat upstream to the railhead here at Bourke. Consignments of copper ingots were also brought from nearby Cobar by bullock teams, to be transported downriver by steamer and barge to Morgan in South Australia. Besides a substantial brick post office and residence, which had been erected during the 1880s, Louth had a school, police station and the Dan O'Connell Hotel, which had been built by Thomas Mathews, the founder of the town. A large ferry operated across the river for the crossing of sheep, Cobb & Co. coaches and the travelling public. Electric telegraph services had already been extended, via Louth, along the entire Darling River.

Some 140 years later, the Louth Turf Club will again stage its annual event on Saturday 6 August 2022, being the Saturday after the August Bank Holiday. Featuring a 7-race program with prize money, plus trophies and sashes, Sky Channel will be in operation for off-course and interstate punters. There will be "Fashions on the Field" prizes for a variety of classes including Best Dressed Lady and Best Dressed Gentleman. Live bands will entertain the crowds at Shindy's Inn on Friday night and again following the races on Saturday at the track with plenty of camping spots available. To Jim and his hardworking Committee, I wish them all a very successful race event and thank them for their considerable efforts.

State of Origin

I write this Column almost a week in advance of its publication. At the time of writing the two (2) teams to play this year's State of Origin Series have been announced and are in camp. NSW Blues Coach, Brad

Fittler, has had to explain his selection choices and justify why he left certain players out. Nothing like a bit of drama and theatre in the lead up to the various Origin games. Both teams, on paper, look very strong and like every year, both teams go into the Series with much anticipation. In terms of some Origin Trivia, since Origin moved to a three-game series in 1982 there have been just seven series clean sweeps. The Blues have enjoyed three sweeps - in 1986 under Wayne Pearce's captaincy and twice under Brad Fittler, in 1996 and 2000. The Maroons have achieved the feat four times - in 1988 and '89 under 'The King' Wally Lewis, 1995 with Trevor Gillmeister at the helm and 2010 with Darren Lockyer leading the way.

Going into the first game, to be played in Sydney, I would expect that the Queensland side would be favourites, based on the composition of their side. Come the publication of this Column, the first game will have been played and won. Go The Blues.

Quote: “This is far more representative than any government party room has ever been in our history. We are making progress.” Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese announcing that there will be 10 women in his 23-member cabinet.