



**BOURKE
SHIRE
COUNCIL**

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

Stolen Generation Memorial Plaque

I was privileged last Thursday to attend the unveiling of a memorial plaque at the Bourke Railway Station which acknowledges the role that the state’s rail network played in the removal of Aboriginal children of the Stolen Generations from their families and country. Local and visiting survivors of the Stolen Generations and their families joined with members of the Bourke community to take part in the ceremony. The memorial plaques were among a number of recommendations included in the *Reparations for the Stolen Generations in NSW – Unfinished Business* report tabled in NSW Parliament back in 2016, seeking to make reparations to survivors of the Stolen Generations. Plaques have previously been unveiled at a number of other railway stations identified by the Stolen Generation Organisations as significant to the Stolen Generations and their descendants. These stations have included Central (Sydney), Berry, Bomaderry, Cootamundra, Grafton, Kempsey, Wagga Wagga and now Bourke. In attending the ceremony, I was delighted to hear recognition paid to Councils Manager Environmental Services, Mr Dwayne Willoughby for his high level of assistance in bringing the plaque in Bourke to fruition. Well done Dwayne and also to all involved. I encourage residents to attend the Station and view the plaque and in doing so, give thought to the actions of the past relating to the removal of the children.

Rising Costs

With the cost of living in Australia spiralling upwards at a most rapid rate, last week was a tough week for many families when firstly, the Reserve Bank increased interest rates by 0.5% and secondly, as a result of an announcement by the Australian Energy Regulator, residential customers in NSW will face electricity price increases of between 8.5%-18.3%. Coupled with the rising cost of food and fuel being generally over \$2 per litre, we certainly live in interesting times.

In terms of attempting to minimise your electricity account, there are many easy and effective actions that you can pursue to save energy and reduce your account. The most obvious action is to turn off lights and electrical appliances when you aren’t using them. I am writing this column from the family room in my residence and as I look around there are lights on in the kitchen, the hallway, the bedroom and the dining area. I am the only person currently in the house, so I can safely turn off some half dozen lights, which I have done! Every light costs. Turn off your heater, cooling units and appliances when you go to bed or leave the house. Turning appliances off at the power point can save even more power than when left on standby when using the switch or remote control. Switch off your computer along with equipment such as printers or Wi-Fi routers overnight, or while you're away from your house. Most computers have energy saving settings which can be activated to turn the computer and screen off after a period of inactivity. Shut doors to areas you're not using, and only cool or heat the rooms where you spend the most time. With the current cooler temperatures, make sure your curtains or blinds seal your windows properly. Talking of the cold weather, every degree that you set your thermostat above 20 degrees can add 10% to your heating bill. In winter, heating can account for over 30% of your bill. There are numerous

websites providing advice as to how to minimise your bills. Undertake a web search and read as to how best minimise your electricity expenses and other cost of living expenses.

Platinum Jubilee

I enjoyed watching the recent celebrations honouring the Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II. The Queen is the first British Monarch to celebrate a Platinum Jubilee after amassing 70 years of service to the Commonwealth. For most of us, The Queen has been the only British Monarch we have ever known. To celebrate and acknowledge her reign, there is an opportunity for all of us to congratulate the Queen on her milestone. All Australians are invited to send a personal message of congratulations and thanks to The Queen at www.platinumjubilee.gov.au/message-to-the-queen Messages will be accepted online until midnight tonight, 16 June 2022, and then collated and sent to Buckingham Palace and archived by the Commonwealth of Australia.

COVID and the Flu.

I have previously written regarding the intensity of this year's flu strain. We all need to be doing our bit to protect family, friends, relatives, work colleagues and fellow community members from the spread of flu, COVID and other respiratory illnesses. During winter, the risk of catching viral illnesses is higher given that when it's cooler outside we spend more time indoors where it may be difficult to maintain a physical distance from others. There are however some simple practices that each of us can implement to help protect ourselves and others as we interact:

- Stay up to date with vaccinations for both the flu and COVID-19. Most people can get both vaccinations together and free flu vaccines will be available at GPs for everyone aged 6 months and over and at some pharmacies for everyone aged 5 and over.
- Wearing a mask is recommended in crowded places and are a must on public transport, in airports and in health and residential care settings. Many people in our community are at higher risk of severe illness from flu and COVID-19, so it's a simple way we can look out for those who need it most.
- Where possible, meet others outdoors or in well ventilated areas. Keep doors and windows open to get better natural airflow.
- If you feel unwell, staying at home will reduce the risk of spreading illness to others. Test straight away if you have any COVID-19 symptoms. If you test positive, self-isolate for 7 days and follow the NSW Health advice. If you test positive with a rapid antigen test, register your result through Service NSW to get the right health advice for you. If you are at higher risk, get a PCR (nose and throat) swab test instead of a rapid antigen test. They are more accurate and earlier detection can help you access treatment earlier. This may include access to antiviral treatments which can only be prescribed in the early stages of disease. It is a good idea to speak to your doctor now about antiviral medication or other early treatment so you can ask questions and understand your options in advance. More details on what type of test you should take and what to do once you receive results is available at nsw.gov.au

With high rates of flu and COVID-19 continuing in the community, it's important that emergency departments are kept for emergencies. If you're unwell and not sure what to do, visit Healthdirect.gov.au or call Healthdirect for free on 1800 022 222 for fast, expert advice on what to do next. If you are seeking non-urgent health advice you can, speak to your doctor or pharmacist or contact free services such as the NSW Health Flu and COVID-19 Care at Home Support Line on 1800 960 933. If you are seriously injured, unwell or have a life-threatening medical emergency, you should always call

Triple Zero (000) or attend the Bourke Multipurpose Service (hospital) emergency department without delay. To learn more, visit www.nsw.gov.au

Cold Weather

I know its winter and I am getting older, but along with many others, I have certainly felt the cold weather of last couple of weeks, with reports that the first two (2) weeks of June this year having been the coldest start to winter in some 32 years. Whilst the temperature last Thursday around noon was some 10 degrees, I was advised that with the wind chill factor, the temperature felt like circa 5 degrees. Every speaker at the Stolen Generation plaque unveiling made comment to the effect that they were, understandably, freezing. There was a gent in front of me at the ceremony who took a video with his phone of a segment of the ceremony. Unfortunately, he couldn't keep his hand still due to his hand shaking from the cold.

Quote: "It's a reality check that I need to get better, but win or lose I will keep trying to get better and it is no different this time." NSW State of Origin halfback, Nathan Cleary, reflecting on his performance following the blue's loss to Queensland in Origin, Game 1.