



**BOURKE  
SHIRE  
COUNCIL**

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

### **Australian Police Medal**

On the Monday of the recent Long Weekend, the Governor General of the Commonwealth of Australia, His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd), announced the 992 recipients of awards for meritorious, distinguished and conspicuous service as part of the 2022 Queen's Birthday Honours list. One category of the awards is the Australian Police Medal which was instituted in 1986 to recognise those who have rendered distinguished service as a member of an Australian police force.

As part of the Governor General's announcement, former Bourke Police Inspector and now commander of the Western Region, Assistant Commissioner Brett Greentree, was awarded an Australian Police Medal. On behalf of Council, I congratulate Brett warmly on this achievement. Brett joined the NSW Police Force in 1995, with his first posting being at Manly Police Station and later, at the City of Sydney Patrol. In 1997, he transferred to Moree, where he built an outstanding reputation in rural and regional community policing and criminal investigation. Designated as a detective in October 2002, he performed criminal investigation and child protection duties at Moree and Inverell, before his promotion to the rank of sergeant and transfer to Tingha Police Station in 2003, then Tweed Heads in 2004.

It was in 2007 that Brett was promoted to the rank of inspector and leading the Bourke Police Station. During his time at Bourke, he worked with the Bourke community to introduce alcohol restrictions which led to significant decreases in assaults and improved health outcomes in the community. In 2010 he received a commendation for his dedication and commitment to Aboriginal issues. More recently Brett led a project to raise the Aboriginal flag at regional police stations as evidenced at the Bourke Police Station. Upon leaving Bourke in 2012, Brett was promoted to the rank of Superintendent and undertook the role of Staff Officer to the Deputy Commissioner, Specialist Operations before being appointed as the Commander at Lake Macquarie, Newcastle City and Brisbane Water Police Districts. During the period 2013-17, Brett was the NSW Police Corporate Sponsor for Customer Service. As the Corporate Sponsor, he made substantial changes across the organisation including the introduction of the Community Awareness of Policing Program and implementing victim follow-up recording mechanisms.

I first met Assistant Commissioner Greentree when he gave me a call as General Manager to say hello when he was appointed to the role of Western Region Commander. We had a good discussion on all things Bourke. When Covid operations were in full swing in August-September onwards last year, I met him again, this time via an audio-visual link as Brett chaired the very regular meetings of the Western Region Emergency Management Committee. Comprising Members of Parliament, at their discretion, representatives from Police, Health, Government Agencies and representatives from Police and Councils comprising the 21 Local Emergency Management Committees across the region, Brett's calm and confident manner ensured the meetings weren't simply talk fests but rather outcomes driven discussions. I have subsequently been fortunate to meet Brett in person both in Bourke and Dubbo. The community of Bourke is lucky to have a Western Region Police Commander who has a thorough understanding of its community.

## Single Use Plastics Ban

On 16 November 2021, the NSW Government passed the *Plastic Reduction and Circular Economy Act 2021* which results in certain problematic plastics being banned. Under the Act, effective 1 June 2022, the supply of lightweight plastic bags has been banned. A lightweight plastic bag is one with handles that is 35 microns or less in thickness at any part of the bag. Thicker plastic bags like those from major supermarkets and boutique stores are not impacted. Lightweight bags made from biodegradable, compostable, or bio-plastics have also been banned, including those made from Australian certified compostable plastic. The ban **does not** apply to barrier bags such as bin liners, human or animal waste bags, produce bags, deli bags and bags used to contain medical items (excluding bags provided by a retailer to a consumer used to transport medical items from the retailer).

There will be further restrictions imposed from 1 November 2022 when single-use plastic straws, stirrers and cutlery will be banned. This ban applies to single-use plastic straws (exemptions will apply in certain settings for people with a disability or medical need so they can continue using straws), stirrers and swizzle sticks, and cutlery, including forks, spoons, knives, sporks, splayds, chopsticks, and food picks. The ban **does not** apply to serving utensils such as salad servers or tongs or items that are an integrated part of the packaging used to seal or contain food or beverages, or are included within or attached to that packaging, through an automated process (such as a straw attached to a juice box). **Single-use plastic bowls and plates and expanded polystyrene (EPS) food service items** such as clamshells, cups, plates and bowls will also be banned come November. Think polystyrene take away fish and chips containers. It is noted that the EPS ban **does not** apply to meat or produce trays, packaging, including consumer and business-to-business packaging and transport containers.

In accordance with the legislation, a person must not supply a prohibited plastics item in NSW while carrying on a business. This includes supplying an item while carrying on an activity for commercial purposes such as retail businesses like a restaurant, cafe, bar, takeaway food shop, discount store, supermarket, market stall, online store and packaging suppliers and distributors, and any other retailers that provides these items to consumers. The ban also applies to a manufacturer, supplier, distributor or wholesaler of a prohibited item. In addition to the ban applying to retail businesses it is also applicable to charitable, sporting, education or community purposes. For example, a community group, not-for-profit organisation or charity, including those that use a banned item as part of a service, for daily activities or during fundraising events. Hefty fines apply for breaches of the legislation with fines up to \$11,000 being applicable for a sole trader who breaks the rules, or a maximum of \$275,000 for a corporation failing to comply with a stop notice. From an environmental perspective, these single use plastics are a disaster. Plastic packaging and single use plastic items make up 60% of all litter in NSW. The bans are estimated to prevent 2.7 billion plastic items from entering the NSW environment over the next 20 years.

## NSW Energy Rebates

I wrote last week about the increased cost of living and focused on electricity costs and ways to potentially reduce your electricity bills. I was reminded during the week that the NSW Government assists eligible NSW customers pay their electricity and gas bills with a range of rebates and concessions available. There are various types of rebates available including the NSW Family Energy Rebate, Low Income Household Rebate and Energy Accounts Payment Assistance (EAPA) Vouchers. Full information as to available rebates and eligibility criteria is available at [www.service.nsw.gov.au](http://www.service.nsw.gov.au)

You will need to hurry though as the 2021/2022 rebates and concessions expire at 11pm on 30 June 2022.

## **Animal Burp Tax**

The New Zealand Government is considering a proposal to charge farmers for methane emissions emanating from their livestock in an attempt to address methane emissions linked to global warming. When it comes to cows and sheep, they are prolific methane emitters. I won't go into the detail of how their stomachs work, but needless to say they release carbon dioxide and methane into the atmosphere every time one of the animal's burps. It is reported that world-wide, bovine burps are responsible for roughly 10% of greenhouse gas emissions generated by human activity. Every one of the world's 1.4 billion cows burps up to 500 litres of methane a day. In Australia, farm animals are responsible for up to half of the country's methane emissions.

The New Zealand proposal, if adopted, would see livestock belches taxed from 2025 while also providing incentives to reduce emissions by feeding farm animals a special diet and planting trees to offset their pollution. The tax revenue it raises would be distributed back into research and farm support services. No, this is not an April Fools Day joke and naturally Australian agricultural authorities are not overly fussed by the proposal stating that any tax on livestock methane in Australia would ultimately be passed on to consumers through higher food prices.

**Quote: "I am not going to take credit for this. The boys ran out 120 minutes. It's a team game."**  
Socceroo Goalkeeper Andrew Redmayne after saving a vital penalty shootout goal attempt from Peru for Australia to progress to its fifth successive World Cup Final Series.