



**BOURKE
SHIRE
COUNCIL**

“From the
General Manager’s Desk”
21 July 2022”

Foot and Mouth Disease

I was raised on a farm at Fords Bridge. Whilst a tough environment, it was an idyllic lifestyle on a wide, open and expansive landscape. We loved our livestock, during both good and tough times. Many in the Bourke region have experienced this lifestyle, as have many others throughout the regions across the nation. With those good times in mind, my skin crawled in recent weeks when I learnt of the outbreak of foot and mouth disease in Indonesia, and specifically in the popular tourist spot of Bali. In terms of quantifying this popularity, the Indonesian Government is expecting to see some 1.4 million Australians return to Bali, following the relaxation of COVID restrictions, by the end of 2022.

If this insidious disease was to come to our shores, Australia’s \$80 billion (yes billion) livestock industry would be devastated. When Foot and Mouth afflicted the United Kingdom back in 2001, millions of pigs, cattle and sheep were required to be slaughtered and carcasses burned as part of the plan to overcome the disease. I remember the grim television pictures from the UK at the time as so many animals were burnt. Transport of livestock was halted as was the sale of animals. No exports. The livelihood and lifestyle of so many producers were similarly destroyed. Tourism suffered badly. I could go on and on in respect of the impacts, however I think it’s fair to say it would not be good for any of us.

The responsibilities of Government in these types of matters are enormous and there has been plenty of press from many calling on the Federal Government to take all necessary steps to protect Australia from the disease being potentially transferred to Australia. Personally, with so many tourists travelling between Bali and Australia, it is my view that as a nation, we are highly-exposed to the threat of foot and mouth coming to our shores. The NSW Minister for Agriculture, Dugald Saunders, who is also the Minister for Western NSW, has been active in lobbying the Federal Minister for Agriculture, Murray Watt, seeking increased surveillance for everyone coming back from Bali by having their luggage checked and their shoes, both what they wear and pack in their luggage, decontaminated. Our Federal Member for Parkes, Mark Coulton has supported the Federal Leader of the Nationals, David Littleproud in his calls for the Government to Act. We certainly can’t afford to miss the boat on this critical matter.

Staysafe Committee

The NSW Parliamentary Staysafe Committee, which the Member for Barwon, Roy Butler is a member, has recently conducted an inquiry into Support for Regional and Rural Learner Drivers. At the invitation of Roy, Councils former General Manager, Mark Riley, made both a written submission and gave evidence to the Committee as part of its enquiry. From Marks submission, on behalf of Council, he was of the view that there were significant impediments in obtaining a driver’s licence in the Far West. The Committee has now completed its report and submitted the report to the NSW Parliament. I read that Roy has reported that the main findings of the inquiry were: “That some people “face challenges in being able to present sufficient identification documents in order to apply for a driver licence.” Others face “literacy and numeracy challenges, resulting in the Driver Knowledge Test being less accessible to

them". In regional and rural areas many learner drivers face "significant barriers to accessing driving programs and instructors". Also, many drivers in the country "learn in vehicles with low safety ratings due to insufficient safe cars being available or affordable."

The report made 21 recommendations including that the Department of Customer Service look at improving and streamlining access to identification documentation and consider waiving or subsidising the cost. There is a recommendation that the government review the knowledge test to take account of varying levels of literacy and numeracy, and that they look at ways of making a range of driver training programs more accessible as well as creating "a publicly accessible database of all driving programs offered across Australia." In his submission, Mark made comment of the success of the Birrang Enterprise Development Company who provide a Learner Driver Program in Bourke. Mark noted that Birrang assist in working out the finances of getting a licence, with eligible students able to access funding in respect of test and licence fees. Birrang also assist students master the Learner Driver knowledge test and then help students accrue the driving hours needed to finalise their licence.

Road Works

Councils Road Construction Crew has recommenced reconstruction and sealing works on the Wanaaring Road, being the Romani to Wangamana section of the roadway. Councils aim is to complete the sealing of a further 8km of the Wanaaring Road by August 2022.

Following the completion of the sealing works of the Romani to Wangamana section, the crew will then continue work on the 6th section of the upgrading of the Wanaaring Road project. This section of the road involves another 8 km of reformation and new seal. Council has programmed to complete 4 km of this section by October 2022.

When these works are finalised, only some 27 km of unsealed road between Bourke and Wanaaring will remain. Council is currently in the process of seeking funding to seal the remaining 27 kms of roadway. When successful, this will result in the Bourke to Wanaaring Road being totally sealed; something that was very much a distant dream only five (5) years ago.

Council road crews have also completed the reconstruction and sealing of 10 km of roadway on the Louth Road. This 10 km section is 48 km from the Kidman Way turnoff and joins the seal at the Rose Isle turnoff. In addition to these works, Council is planning to seal an additional 3 km as an add on to this section in September 2022. In addition, Council's maintenance crew has completed roadworks on the Bourke to Wilcannia and Dowling Track Roads and is now moving to the Mooleyarrah Road to undertake maintenance grading.

Davidson Oval Master Plan

Bourke Shire Council is currently developing a master plan for Davidson Oval in partnership with sport and recreation planning specialists ROSS Planning. The purpose of the master plan is a guide for the future use and development of Davidson Oval over the next ten years, ensuring that it meets the needs of the community and sporting user groups.

Staff from ROSS Planning will be on site on the afternoon of 25 July to undertake site inspections and to discuss issues with the sporting user groups. These groups will be contacted by ROSS Planning prior to the 25 July to arrange a suitable time to meet on site, most likely after school hours.

Members of the public who are not involved with any of the sporting groups are also invited to come along and provide their input between the hours 5:30-6:30pm at the PCYC on 25 July.

Local Heritage Fund

Applications for grant funding under the Local Heritage Fund are closing at 4.00pm on Friday, 5 August 2022. These are small grants that are offered in conjunction with the NSW Government on a \$ for \$ basis to private homeowners for restoration and repair work. Application forms can be downloaded from Council's website (<https://bourke.nsw.gov.au/planning-and-environment/heritage-funding/>) with forms also available at Council's office and the Library. Application forms can be emailed and/or posted, if required. Council has been offering this funding for a number of years and many projects have been completed during that time. Projects have included the replacement of front fences, painting of buildings, restoration of brickwork and window replacement, to name but a few.

If you think that you have a project that may be eligible for funding, or you wish to make an appointment with Council's Heritage Advisor, contact Council's Environmental Services Department on 6830 8000 for further information.

July Council Meeting

The next Council meeting of Bourke Shire Council will be held on 25 July 2022 with the meeting commencing at 9.15am. The meeting will be live streamed with the link for the livestream being advised on Councils Website at approximately 9.00am on the meeting day.

Should any resident wish to raise an issue in relation to the items on the agenda, they are invited to make application to address Council during Public Forum, which would be held at 9.00am on the day of the Council meeting. Applications can be made via email: bourkeshire@bourke.nsw.gov.au or via telephone 68308000. Such contact needs to be made by 4.00pm on the Friday prior to the meeting day.

Air Link Courtesy Vehicle

Air Link Airlines, who operate the air service between Dubbo/Bourke and return each Monday, Thursday and Friday, have recognised that there is a need to be able to provide their passengers with the opportunity to have access to a vehicle whilst in town, particularly those persons with no real connections in town. In this regard Air Link provide a courtesy car for that purpose. Air Link provide an excellent service to our community with the availability of this vehicle an example of this service. Details in respect of the flights and contact details to make arrangements in respect of the vehicle are available at: www.airlinkairlines.com.au

Quote:

"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

NSW Farmers Biosecurity Chair, Ian McColl, talking on the threat of Foot and Mouth disease.