



**BOURKE
SHIRE
COUNCIL**

“From the General Manager’s Desk” 4 August 2022”

Louth Races

This Saturday, 6 August 2022, the iconic Louth Races will be hosted by the Louth Turf Club. Promoted as “one of the friendliest, and most unique, race days in Country NSW”, the 7-race program, with over \$90,000 in prize money, will see thousands of people flocking to the village located on the banks on the Darling River, south west of Bourke. I am told that the hard-working Committee has arranged for Sky Channel to be in operation on the day for off-course and interstate punters and further arranged for helicopter joy flights to be available. All the usual race day elements such as local bookies, TAB van, bar, morning and afternoon tea, various lunch and dinner options, fashions and novelty events, will also be available. Tickets are \$20 and are available at either the entry gate on the day or they can be purchased online from www.123tix.com.au

With many people taking the opportunity to take an extended break on the Darling at Louth, the village has again organised a series of lead up events to keep visitors entertained. Yesterday the Gundabooka Golf Challenge took place at Louth Golf Course with a solid field of players testing themselves against the course, before lunching and contributing to a charity auction for the RFDS. This evening at Shindy’s Inn, a Damper and Scone Bake Off will take place. The cut off for entries is 6:30pm. Proceeds are again to the RFDS who services the village and the region most professionally. Tomorrow, Friday, August 5th, the Louth School Fete will be held from 10.00am – 2.00pm. There will be a great selection of items on sale, including a delicious morning tea and BBQ lunch. If you're in Louth on Friday, be sure to wander and help support the school at their annual fundraiser. Friday evening sees the Louth Races Calcutta conducted. Tickets are on sale at Shindy’s Inn from late afternoon, ceasing around 7pm in preparation for the draw and auction. For the most up to date information on the various activities, you can follow Louth Races on Facebook.

Swimming Pool Reconstruction

The upgrading of the small (children’s) pool at the Bourke Memorial Swimming Pool Complex is progressing well. With the original pool having been previously demolished and removed, contractors have been taking advantage of the favourable weather to form up the pools base and side. Structural steel is expected to arrive in coming weeks with concreters then onsite to undertake the required concrete works. The filtration system and pumps for the new facility are already on site in readiness for installation once the concreters have completed their required works. With the high level of positive community comment regarding the works previously completed to the main pool at the complex, the upgrading of the children’s pool at the facility will only add to the quality of the complex.

Rural Fire Services Equipment

In recent years there has been considerable conjecture as to the accounting treatment of firefighting assets of the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS), known as the Red Fleet. In one corner are NSW councils, including Bourke Shire Council, and in the other, the NSW Audit Office. Somewhere in between are

various Departments of the NSW Government. It is the view of the NSW Auditor General, Ms Margaret Crawford, and her Office, that Rural fire-fighting equipment, specifically the red fleet vehicles, is controlled by council's and should be recognised in their financial statements. Bourke Shire Councils position, along with 67 other Councils throughout the State, is that the equipment is not Councils. How can it be, with one of my fellow General Managers writing as follows re the issue, *"these are RFS assets specified by the RFS, purchased by the RFS, garaged at RFS depots and sites, fuelled by the RFS, the keys are in the RFS's possession, managed on a day-to-day basis by the RFS, RFS trained personnel drive and operate the equipment, deployed by the RFS as and when required, transferred, repurposed and sold by the RFS and all this without reference to Council."*

I presented a report on the issue to last week's Councils meeting and despite advice from the Auditor General that Council may receive a qualified audit report in respect of its 2021/2022 Financial Statements, Council was adamant in its resolve that it does not control RFS assets and the assets should not be included in Councils Balance Sheet. Council has written to various State Government Ministers and our Local Member, Roy Butler MP, seeking their assistance to come together with Local Government NSW, on behalf of the 68 aggrieved Councils, to resolve this issue and acknowledge that control and ownership of these firefighting assets rest with the NSW Government and specifically, the NSW Rural Fire Service. Recognition of rural firefighting assets will require Council to recognise an increased annual depreciation expense which will negatively impact Councils reported bottom line operating result before capital grants. Across the State, it has been estimated that this figure could amount to some \$145m.

Reflection Seismic Survey

There was a recent advertisement in the Western Herald advising that the Australian Government, via its Geoscience Australia Department, is conducting a reflection seismic survey in South Australia and New South Wales as part of the Exploring for the Future program. The survey will pass through areas near Bourke, Louth, Wilcannia and Broken Hill. The advertisement noted that most of the survey *"will be carried out along public roads in late July to mid-August 2022. This will involve a number of heavy and light vehicles (10-15 vehicles) working within the road corridor. No lasting ground disturbance or damage to infrastructure will occur. Permissions to access any private tracks have been sought directly with landholders"*. Two (2) matters caught my eye in the first sentence. These were, what is a reflection seismic survey and what is the Exploring for the Future program?

After research I can advise that a reflection seismic survey is used to map the geology and structure of the earth. The data is utilised to learn more about how the earth's crust evolved throughout geological time. The data will be assessed with an emphasis on mapping potential groundwater resources and locating potential new mineral reserves and may be used to assess energy potential. Seismic surveys are carried out using what's called vibroseis trucks. The trucks are fitted with vibrating plates to send seismic (sound) waves into the ground that bounce off underground rock layers. The reflected signals are recorded by small sensors (geophones) and are processed to create an image of the earth, with the seismic waves causing no damage to infrastructure or the environment. The process is similar to a medical ultrasound scan.

As for the Exploring for the Future program, this is an Australian Government program to transform the national picture of Australia's geology. The vision of this work is to contribute to a strong economy, resilient society and sustainable environment for the benefit of all Australians through a better understanding of our mineral, energy potential and groundwater resources. Since 2016, the program has been working across Australia, exploring Australia's deep geological structures and potential resources in underexplored areas. So far more than 250 datasets and reports, covering over 3 million

km2, have been delivered to build a picture of Australia's mineral, energy and groundwater resources. Interesting.

Henry Lawson 100th Anniversary Celebration

The famous Australian Poet, Henry Lawson, who spent some time living in Bourke, once wrote to a friend of his "If you know Bourke, you know Australia". It is written that Lawson's time in Bourke, what he called the "Out Back", was "crucial to his development as a prose writer. Council intends to honour this great Australian writer by hosting a major event celebrating the 100th anniversary of his passing, on 2 September 1922, in a festival of his poetry and music. From Friday 2 September to Sunday 4 September 2022, this special event will celebrate one of Australia's best authors and poets with a gathering full of song, markets, poetry, stories, tours and history. Residents and visitors are invited to contact the Back O' Bourke Exhibition Centre for further information as plans for the weekend are developed.

Quote: "We just don't agree with the decision he made on Sunday". NRL Head of Football, Graham Annesley, following the decision of the bunker in the recent Tigers/Cowboys match which saw the Tigers robbed-according to my Tigers loving husband!!