



**BOURKE  
SHIRE  
COUNCIL**

“From the  
General Manager’s Desk”  
22 September 2022”

### **Queens Memorial Service**

I wrote in last week's Column of my sadness at the passing of Her Majesty the Queen. The scenes since then have been most moving and memorable. For the large majority of us, she is the only Monarch we have lived under in Australia. The respect shown by Australians, in the many periods of silence that have held to honour Her Majesty, has been spine tingling. Once the program for the period of mourning was announced and with the Australian Government then announcing that today would be a nationwide Public Holiday to coincide with a Memorial Service for the Queen in Canberra, Mayor Barry and I were quickly of the view that as a community, we in Bourke should also recognise Her Majesty given Her visit to Bourke back on Wednesday 22 March 2000. To that end, commencing at 9.30am today in Central Park, a Memorial Service will be held. Members of the public are encouraged to attend, especially those who were part of the visit to our town, back in 2000. I am delighted to say that former Bourke Public School Principal, Paul Loxley, will attend and recount events when Her Majesty visited Bourke Public, twenty-two years ago. The Bourke Service will be completed in time for those who wish to return home to watch the Memorial Service from Canberra.

### **Road Safety Action Plan**

The NSW Government has recently released its 2026 Road Safety Action Plan. Currently in NSW, someone is killed or hospitalised every 46 minutes because of a crash on NSW roads. Over two-thirds of fatalities in NSW happen on country roads. Almost half (47.7%) of the people who die on country roads are country locals, with males accounting for most of the fatalities. Whilst fatalities are trending down, the number of serious injuries per year is not declining. Factors in fatal crashes include speeding, tired drivers and riders, drink driving, seat belt non-usage, and illicit drugs being present. The 2026 Road Safety Action Plan features new targets to halve deaths and reduce serious injuries by 30% on NSW roads by 2030. The new Plan provides that these targets will be achieved by focusing on stronger local government action, engagement and education programs and using technology in the fight to end road trauma. As the Plan provides, the ultimate goal is zero fatalities.

### **Shopping Bags**

Don't forget to pack your reusable shopping bags when you go to the shops as lightweight plastic shopping bags became a thing of the past in NSW as of 1 June 2022. The state's ban on these highly littered bags is the first in a series of single-use plastic phase-outs that will see a number of other items added to the list. A second ban from 1 November this year will result in single-use plastic straws, plastic stirrers, plastic cutlery, plastic plates and bowls and cotton buds, expanded polystyrene food ware and cups, and rinse-off personal care products containing plastic microbeads, all phased out. Single-use plastic items and packaging make up 60% of all litter in NSW. For more information about the plastics ban visit: [www.dpie.nsw.gov.au/our-work/environment-heritage/plastics-action-plan/stop-it-swap-it](http://www.dpie.nsw.gov.au/our-work/environment-heritage/plastics-action-plan/stop-it-swap-it)

## **Back O' Bourke Stampede**

I am excited as the Back O' Bourke Stampede-Peter Simmonds Memorial Pro-Rodeo rapidly approaches. To be held on Saturday, 15 October 2022, at the Bourke Showgrounds (Renshaw Oval), I am most confident that it will be a super day for Bourke. It is fair to say that the Rodeo Committee has been overwhelmed by the line-up of sponsors who are prepared to contribute financially to the success of the day. The Platinum Sponsor for the Rodeo is local business, Frank's Outback Security. Proprietor Frank Kerr was very quickly "out of the chutes" to commit significant funding and secure the pole position as Platinum Sponsor for the event. Frank was a good friend of Peter Simmonds, after whom the rodeo is being held in honour of, with Frank being proud to be able to have the opportunity for his business to be the major sponsor of the Stampede for 2022. Frank spoke very passionately when he spoke of Peter Simmonds, and I quote, "I like to think of Peter as a mate. He was a quiet and humble man, always willing to lend a hand, and always helping any child with good solid advice when it came to horses, shows and pony club. Peter was always there for a yarn and with some pretty good grounding advice. I really looked up to Peter for who he was, for how he went about his life and how he helped others with no thought of his own personal gain, but simply just to help someone out because they needed it. Even if it was only a bit of encouragement. Peter was a great mentor, a quiet achiever and a real gentleman. The Back O' Bourke Stampede is a fitting tribute to pay respects to Peter. He loved Bourke, loved the people and was always proud to have been called a Bourke boy. Now Bourke has the opportunity to show how proud they are to have been blessed to get to know Peter, and to hold an event with some wild horses and awesome horsemanship." Great words indeed. A big thank you to Frank & Liz for their support and as I said, the Committee is overwhelmed by their kind gesture.

## **Regional Housing**

I was interested to read from the recent Job Summit in Canberra of proposals to increase the number of skilled immigrants coming to Australia next year to fill the many unfilled jobs across the Nation. I thought to myself at the time that that all sounded good, however, where would these people live. With housing difficult to find across Australia and with rental vacancies at some of the lowest levels ever recorded, I really didn't know where these additional people were actually going to live. On a similar vein, NSW Farmers recently issued a media release welcoming a push to increase the number of people living in regional communities, but in doing so warned that critical housing issues "must be solved first." I have to agree with them. Housing shortages both in the big cities and in the regions, are critical. Shortages are such that as a Nation we can have all the ideas we like to bring in more immigrants or push growth in regional areas, however, all will fall flat if a lack of housing is not addressed. I have read of a regional locality in NSW with a population of some 27,000 with 300 jobs advertised and just six rental vacancies. Similarly, here in Bourke, rental accommodation is at a premium. Council is working with its fellow member Councils from the Alliance of Western Councils however it is not necessarily an easy problem to overcome.

## **September Council Meeting**

Councils Ordinary Council Meeting for September 2022 will be held next Monday, 26 September 2022 commencing at 9.15am in the Council Chambers in Mitchell St, Bourke. Members of the public are most welcome to attend. The Agenda for the meeting will be available tomorrow from Councils website (<https://bourke.nsw.gov.au/council/business-papers/>). In respect of next month's meeting, just a reminder that due to a clash of dates between the previously determined date for Councils October 2022 meeting and the Annual Conference of Local Government NSW, Council has now determined that the date of the October 2022 meeting is now Monday, 31 October 2022.

## **Grand Finals**

Winter sports are rapidly coming to a conclusion, with the AFL Grand Finals being held at the Melbourne Cricket Ground this Saturday, 24 September 2022 and the NRL Grand Finals being held on the Saturday of the October Long Weekend, 2 October 2022. I happened to catch a bit of the recent game where the Rabbitohs were playing the Roosters. Having watched a little of the action, the words “game” and “playing” are probably misnomers. With the intensity of the hits, and the seemingly ever attempts to attack the head of their opponents and the resulting sin-bins, I thought that both teams lost the plot that afternoon. I write this column too far in advance to be able to say who is in the Grand Finals of either codes. Regardless of whether it is men or women teams playing, to the victors, the spoils!

### **Quote:**

**“If I might paraphrase the words of the great Robert Burns, my dear mother was ‘The friend of man, the friend of truth; The friend of Age, and guide of Youth: Few hearts like his with virtue warm’d, Few heads with knowledge so inform’d’.”** King Charles III describing his Mother when addressing the Scottish Parliament.