



**BOURKE  
SHIRE  
COUNCIL**

## “From the General Manager’s Desk” 17 November 2022”

### **Central West NSW**

I would imagine that most readers of this column have seen pictures of the level of flooding from the Lachlan River across the Central West of the State, stretching from Cowra to Forbes to Condobolin and then down to Hillston. Having travelled through Forbes on numerous occasions, drone vision of the town showed familiar landmarks in the town underwater. In an interview with the Mayor of Forbes, Cllr Phyllis Miller, she made comment that during a helicopter inspection with the SES, so much of the town was underwater with just some pockets out of the water and further noted that in flying towards Condobolin “all you could see was water.” For Forbes, it is the worst flooding in 70 years with hundreds of businesses and houses affected with the clean-up expected to take months.

In Bourke, we are still at a major flood level with predicted water levels to reach 13.90 metres. The Bourke levee engineered and constructed in 1995 and restored during 2011 to ensure its structural integrity, and regularly inspected by engineers since, has a general crest height of 15.50 metres. The exception to this 15.50 crest level is at the Wharf which is 14.50 metres above the riverbed. The levee height can be increased at this location, if required. The Local Emergency Management Committee continues to meet regularly to discuss current issues and continue preparations for a high-water mark. Whilst we have our own challenges in Bourke with the rising river, God willing, the water only gets as high as predicted. Please spare a thought for those in the Central West who have been smashed by these flood waters and the impact on their lives.

Recently, Council issued an Information Sheet in respect of the Darling River to better assist residents to understand the river as significant flows pass Bourke township. The information document notes that the Bureau of Meteorology has predicted a flood height of 13.90 metres from tomorrow, 18 November until 24 November, and provides comparative data in respect of previous high-level marks in the river. The document also provides information on flood safety, SES, Police and Council contact details and levee details. It is a good read and if you would like a copy, you can view it on Councils Facebook Page or alternatively, drop into the Council Office in Mitchell St for a hard copy.

### **Proposed Heritage Listing**

The Heritage Council of NSW recently resolved to give notice of its intention to consider listing Toorale Homestead Precinct and Toorale Woolshed Precinct on the State Heritage Register (SHR). Located 80km southwest of Bourke, the proposed listing would acknowledge the heritage significance of the precincts to the people of New South Wales. Given this proposal, members of the community, owners, managers, organisations or other interested parties are able to make a written submission regarding the proposed listing.

The Heritage Council notes that Toorale Homestead and Woolshed Precincts have a long history and ongoing Aboriginal occupation by the Kurnu Baakandji people along with early European occupation and

settlement. Toorale (*Thurali*), sits on the lands of the Kurnu Baakandji people where the *Wariku* (Warrego) and *Baaka* (Darling) Rivers meet. The rich riverine landscape contains Aboriginal and European cultural heritage and shared history of both peoples. The Kurnu Baakandji became part of the pastoral industry in the 19th century and made significant contributions to the growth of Toorale Station which is recorded in historical records and oral histories. Toorale is highly valued by the Kurnu Baakandji, by other Aboriginal people who have an association with the place, and by the wider community.

Toorale also had an association with two of the most significant Australian wool barons of the 19th century, Sir Samuel Wilson, who owned Toorale from 1871 to 1880, and Sir Samuel McCaughey who owned the property from 1880 to 1912. The Heritage Council considers that the precincts demonstrate early pastoralism and ingenuity in outback NSW. The massive single storey Toorale Homestead precinct and outbuildings was the hub of the expansive Toorale pastoral station. Toorale Woolshed was designed and built in 1873/74 by Sir Samuel Wilson and is the earliest known farm building in Australia to have iron structural framework and fittings and electrical lighting. The Wool Scour is likely to be of State significance for its ability to demonstrate wool processing in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. It is further understood that the Toorale Woolshed had an association with the poet and writer Henry Lawson who was known to have worked in the woolshed.

Submissions close on 21 November 2022 with further details available on the Heritage NSW website at: <https://www.heritage.nsw.gov.au/protecting-our-heritage/nominate-listing-on-the-state-heritage-register/nominations-being-considered/>

## **New Impounding Laws**

New impounding laws have been passed by the NSW Government known as the Public Spaces (Unattended Property) Act 2021, with the new laws having commenced from 1 November 2022. The new Act repeals the Impounding Act 1993 and is supported by the Public Spaces (Unattended Property) Regulation 2022, along with Guidelines and implementation materials.

The introduction of the Act is the biggest reform to impounding laws in nearly 30 year's and include harsher penalties for owners of shopping trolleys, unregistered cars and trailers and stray stock animals. It never ceases to amaze me where you see out of place shopping trolleys. Legislation that makes operators more responsible for where they end up is a benefit to all communities. The new laws are expected to save councils across NSW more than \$10 million a year and aim to ensure that public spaces are safe, accessible and enjoyable for the community.

To allow the public and businesses to become familiar with the new laws, a grace period will apply for some penalties until 1 May 2023, where warnings will be issued, rather than fines, if certain items are left unattended in public places. The new laws have been shaped through extensive consultation with councils, key stakeholders and the public with more information about the new Act and supporting regulations and guidance being available at: [www.dpie.nsw.gov.au/unattendedproperty](http://www.dpie.nsw.gov.au/unattendedproperty)

## **Mosquitos**

I don't wish to sound like a broken record, however with all the water currently lying about, and will continue to do so for some considerable time yet, and with the warmer weather with us, the Shire area is undoubtedly in for a big mosquito season. This is a most serious issue and apart from the annoying bites, mozzies can also spread viruses such as Ross River virus, Japanese encephalitis virus (JEV) and Murray Valley encephalitis. While serious illness and hospitalisation from these viruses is rare, the more mosquitoes, the greater the risk. The best protection against mosquitoes and the diseases they carry is

to avoid mosquito bites. Bourke Shire residents are urged to take steps to protect and keep mozzies away this summer by:

Wearing and reapplying repellent: repellent containing DEET, picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus should be used on any areas of exposed skin and reapplied regularly.

Covering up while outside: wear light, loose-fitting long-sleeved shirts, long pants and covered footwear with socks, particularly at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active.

Keeping mosquitoes out: close doors and windows when indoors or install fly screens where possible. You can also use mosquito nets around beds or when camping.

Stop mosquitoes breeding: mosquitoes breed in stagnant water. Remove items from around the home that might collect water such as pot plant saucers, toys, and old tyres.

In NSW, a free Japanese encephalitis virus vaccination is available for people aged 2 months or older who live or routinely work in specified Local Government Areas, of which Bourke is one. In addition to living in the Bourke LGA, you must also spend significant time outdoors (four hours per day) for unavoidable work, recreation, education, or other essential activities, or, are living in temporary or flood-damaged accommodation (e.g. camps, tents, dwellings exposed to the external environment) that place them at increased risk of exposure to mosquitoes, or, are engaged in the prolonged outdoor recovery efforts (clean up) of stagnant waters following floods. If you meet this criteria it is suggested that you contact your GP to discuss the vaccination.

**Quote: “Your grandfather used to say you can’t fix a broken wagon wheel, but you can use the parts to make a new one.”** John Dutton from the Yellowstone TV series with the airing of the 5<sup>th</sup> Season having recently started, much to the joy of numerous Bourke residents.