



**BOURKE  
SHIRE  
COUNCIL**

**“From the  
General Manager’s Desk”  
23 March 2023”**

### **Bourke Easter Festival**

Easter is but two (2) week's away and once again, Bourke will host its Annual Easter Festival for both residents and visitors to town. Generally based on the successful formula of previous year's, the 2023 Festival will again feature a music session on Good Friday at the Back O' Bourke Exhibition Centre whilst Easter Saturday will see the return of the very popular Easter Parkrun, Easter Markets and the annual RAMS v Barbarians rugby game at Davidson Oval. One change is that there will be no street parade this year. Rather, the Bourke Historical Vehicle Club Inc. will be hosting a “Show n Shine” of vehicles at the Wally Mitchell Wharf. Vehicles, both historic and modern, will be lined up from 9.00am. With prizes for the “People’s Choice Award” and “Best Vehicle on the Day,” award presentations will be made at 11.45am. You don’t have to be a member of the Club, so bring your prized vehicle down to the wharf precinct for all to see. In addition to the display of vehicles, Andrew Lewis will have many of his old tractors out for viewing.

The Markets will also take place at the wharf precinct as will the Wool Bale Rolling. For this year, the Bale Rolling Races will have prize money with the prize money for the winner of the Open 50m Roll being \$500. The Men’s and Women’s Teams (4 persons) will have total prize money of \$400 per team, for winners only.

On Easter Sunday commencing at 8.00am at the Back O’ Bourke Exhibition Centre, a highlight of the weekend for children kicks off, when the Giant Easter Egg Hunt gets underway. With a raft of prizes on offer, this event is for Children 12 years and under only with the kids having to enter to be part of it. Book at the Exhibition Centre.

Sunday afternoon and its down to the Renshaw for the Annual Harry Hart Memorial Picnic Races hosted by the Back O’ Bourke Race Club. Club President, Frank Kerr, and his hard-working team have a fair challenge in presenting this year's race meeting after the success of last year's race meeting, described by Western Area racing doyen, Tim Mosses, as the best picnics he had been to in some 40 year's. As I say, a big challenge but one I am certain the Club is up to! Already the Corporate Tent Sites have sold out. A good problem.

I am happy to advise that after an extended period of hibernation due to flood waters, which resulted in both high water and strong currents, the PV Jandra will be back operating for Easter. Fresh on board will be Captain Stephen Coad who will arrive in Bourke from Murray Bridge in South Australia to captain the paddle vessel.

The various events mentioned herewith are but some of the activities on the Easter Long Weekend. For a full listing of activities, a comprehensive brochure is available on Councils website ([www.bourke@nsw.gov.au](http://www.bourke@nsw.gov.au))

## **Tourism Visitation**

With the coming of the milder weather, and certainly cooler night's, an increase in the number of tourists in our community is evident. It's been a tough period for Bourke in terms of tourist visitation numbers having regard to COVID and then a very wet 2022 which saw floods in March and then again in November and December. Naturally, from a tourist's perspective, when there's a natural disaster resulting in the closure of roads, travellers either reschedule their trip or find another route. I look forward to seeing good numbers of tourists experiencing far north west NSW during the coming months.

## **Wilba The Empower Bus**

Since its official launch and the commencement of it servicing the Bourke community on Monday, 27 February 2023, as a 12-month trial, Wilba The Empower Bus has been very well received by the community. Operating on Monday - Fridays from 8am - 7.30pm and Saturdays from 9am - 2pm, the pre-booked minibus travel service has received upwards of 30 bookings on a weekday. With Bourke having been without taxi transport facilities for the public for some time, the number of bookings is most pleasing to hear. Wilba, the 11 seater bus, is owned by Tsukasa Hiraoka and after running Wilba in Dubbo for the past two years, I am happy to welcome Tsukasa and her bus service to Bourke. Tsukasa is keen to work closely with the community to create a service that works best for everyone. Fares on Wilba start from \$1.15 for concession card holders. There is also an option for organisations and individuals to prepurchase 10-day travel cards. Child car seats are required for children 0-7 years, Wilba can help if booked 24 hours in advance. Children under the age of 15 must be accompanied by an adult. To book, travellers can call or text 0493 252 207 or visit [www.wilba.com.au](http://www.wilba.com.au) Passengers will need to provide their name, pick up and drop off location, preferred travel time and contact number.

## **Spar Supermarket**

It would be fair to say that the Bourke Community was in a state of shock when the Spar Supermarket in Bourke was destroyed by fire on 27 December 2021, coming just shy of four (4) months from the destruction of the Diggers on the Darling facility, also by fire. Whilst it's easy to say after such a traumatic event, "we're going to rebuild," bringing such a statement to reality is an often-difficult journey. Recently Mayor Barry and I were privileged to partake in a guided inspection of the new SPAR Supermarket at the corner of Warraweena and Darling Streets, Bourke. To say Barry and I were impressed would be an understatement. By the time this column is published the new Supermarket will be open and the community will be able to see for themselves the wonderful job that has been undertaken. Bourke Spar owners, Chandra and Ramia Kollipara, are to be congratulated for not only bringing their rebuilt supermarket to fruition, but also for having the confidence to progress such a large investment in our community. I raise my glass to you both.

## **Mental Health First Aider**

In any one year, approximately 1 in 5 Australians aged 16-85 have a common mental illness. Evidence suggests that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experience this at a higher rate. On 18 and 19 April 2023, facilitators from Mental Health First Aid Australia ([mhfa.com.au](http://mhfa.com.au)) will be in Bourke to conduct Mental First Aid Training to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This 14-hour educational course will train attendees to recognise common mental health problems affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; teach them how to provide initial support using a practical, evidence-based Action Plan; encourage the seeking of appropriate professional support and teach attendees how to respond in a crisis situation.

At a cost of \$150 for the two (2) day course at the Back O' Bourke Exhibition Centre, bookings and further information are available by phoning Tanya at Maranguka on 0458 835 002 or by emailing her: Tanya@maranguka.org.au

### **Road Construction Activities**

I mentioned in last week's Column that Council had engaged Downer Works Pty Ltd to undertake the resealing of the runway at the Bourke Airport. For the resealing or sealing of road infrastructure in the Shire, Council currently has a separate contract with NSW Spray Seal.

Upcoming work by Council, on behalf of Transport for NSW, the owners of the Mitchell and Kamilaroi State Highways, includes the final sealing of the temporary primer seals which were laid a couple of years ago on construction work, including heavy patches and widenings. On these highways, pending ultimate approval by TfNSW, it is proposed that NSW Spray Seal will blend recycled rubber into the bitumen mix to provide a higher level of wear resilience and thus a longer life when compared to a standard bitumen seal. Council is also going to be constructing heavy patches on the State Highways to repair the damage caused by the recent flooding. NSW Spray Seal will carry out the bitumen sealing of these patches, working in sequence with Council crews who will be constructing the patches.

NSW Spray Seal will also be sealing Council Roads including new seals on the Bourke-Louth Road (3km) and the Bourke-Wanaaring Road (4km), which are currently under construction.

**Quote: "I've watched it a couple of times, I've got to say, under sufferance."** PM Anthony Albanese, reflecting on the TV Show "Married at First Sight."