



**BOURKE  
SHIRE  
COUNCIL**

“From the  
General Manager’s Desk”  
13 July 2023

### **Aboriginal Ex-Servicemen**

Together with Mayor Barry, I will today be attending the Remembrance Ceremony for Indigenous Ex-Servicemen who served Australia in various theatres of conflicts both around the world and over the years. The ceremony is an important part of NAIDOC Week Activities and has been an annual event in Bourke for the past few years. The event is organised by the Bourke sub-Branch of the Returned and Services League of Australia NSW (RSL) led by Victor Bartley and Kelly Lienesch and hosted by the Bourke Aboriginal Health Service.

Research undertaken by the Australian War Memorial into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service in Australia’s armed forces has established that Indigenous people have served in military uniform from at least the time of Federation in 1901. Unfortunately however, due to the lack of source material and data, the numbers of volunteers signing up for duty who acknowledged their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage is unknown. Given racial restrictions within the 1910 Defence Act (Section 61 Clause H), it has been estimated that a 25 percent rejection rate based solely on race was the norm. Given this alone, what prompted Indigenous Australians to contemplate and then engage in voluntary military service is unknown, however it is important to take the opportunity that we stop and take the time to recognise and thank them for their service.

I am confident that once again, a good number of people from a wide cross section of our community will be in attendance, including a good number of younger members of our community who will participate in the ceremony.

### **Town Improvements**

There have been many positive comments regarding the improvements made to infrastructure around town including the Oxley Street (CBD) beautification, Central Park, North Bourke Oval and Davidson Oval. It is obviously pleasing to hear general appreciation comments in respect of such improvements. Whilst these improvements have a big impact on the aesthetic appearance of our town, with the cooperation of everyone within the community, the appearance of our town can be further improved if everyone undertook to maintain their nature strips and pick up any rubbish within the immediate vicinity of their residence. First impressions really count and with a little assistance, our town can look even more fabulous and inviting.

With the recent rain and the not too far away warmer weather, grass growth will again be on us. Maintaining grass on your property and adjoining nature strips makes such a difference to the visual amenity. The same with rubbish in the front yards of houses. A cluttered and untidy yard and surrounds is somewhat like a cluttered desk at work. In this regard psychologists have found that an uncluttered desk has been found to improve focus, which will mean you're better able to do your job and likely to be more productive. Similarly, if your yard is overgrown and has lots of junk just lying about, that too is a

cluttered mess. According to neuroscientists, having cluttered surroundings can lead to decreased work performance and increased stress. Further to this clutter can apparently overload senses, impair your ability to think creatively, and increase stress levels. Interesting.

## **Volunteering**

According to a report in 2020 by “The Centre for Volunteering”, being the peak body for volunteering in NSW, 75.9% of the adult population of NSW volunteered their skills and services during 2020. In doing so, 1.5 billion hours of volunteering was undertaken at an average of 25 hours a month or 5.8 hours a week. In dollar terms, this level of volunteering equated to \$127 billion with the cost benefit ratio for volunteering being 3.3:1. This means that for every dollar invested, approximately \$3.30 is returned. Put simply, it’s fair to say that without volunteering, our nation, state and local community would all be far lesser places. In Bourke, volunteering is such an important part of our overall community spirit.

The Centre for Volunteering promotes and supports volunteering and community participation with a focus on best practice in volunteer management. They are currently reaching out to volunteer involving organisations in the Far West Region of NSW and has issued a general invitation for community volunteers to participate in an upcoming virtual community consultation session to be held next Thursday 20 July 2023. It is a short one-hour session from 12.00 noon till 1.00pm. The purpose of the session is for the Centre to gain an understanding of the successes and challenges experienced by volunteer involving organisations in regional NSW. If you or a member of your organisation is interested in attending, it is requested that you contact Councils Executive Assistant, Margo Anderson either by email, [ea@bourke.nsw.gov.au](mailto:ea@bourke.nsw.gov.au) or by phoning Margo at Council on 6830 8000.

The Centre for Volunteering has also recently welcomed a brand-new website which contains an extensive library of free resources to assist volunteer groups. Go to: <https://www.volunteering.com.au/>

## **Water Matters**

Water management is a big issue for many in our Shire. To this end I noted that Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) - Water Group holds monthly webinars with a view to updating interested people about current consultations and engagements on important water policy and programs for NSW. This month’s webinar will be held next Wednesday, 19 July 2023 from 11.00am till 12.00pm. This webinar will see DPE confirm the starting water allocations for 2023/2024 along with a seasonal outlook for upcoming months. To find out more about the upcoming webinar visit:

<https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/stakeholder-engagement/roundup/stay-up-to-date>

In other water related matters, the NSW Minister for Water, the Hon Rose Jackson MP, has announced that the NSW Government will thoroughly review the non-urban metering rules to make it easier for water users across the state to become compliant and to ensure water use is being measured and managed fairly and sustainably.

It is understood that the aim of the review is to accelerate progress on water compliance and give water users a chance to have their say on proposed changes. In announcing the review, the Minister noted that five years had passed since revised water use rules were enacted in the State and that whilst many large commercial water users had jumped on board, thousands of smaller operators had apparently not. In defence of the smaller operators, I would imagine that they have experienced difficulties in accessing the right people to install new meters along with supply chain disruptions, the cost of equipment and recent flooding.

The Government has stated that the review will give all water users an opportunity to have their say on how improvements can be made to the way the water take is monitored so that everyone is getting their fair share and those doing the wrong thing are held to account. The review into non-urban metering is expected to be completed by the end of 2023. Water users will be notified when public consultation commences. Users are being strongly encouraged to provide feedback. Whilst the review is underway, there will be no change to the regulations and compliance expectations already in place with the Natural Resources Access Regulator (NRAR) continuing to “take a fair and measured approach to enforcing the rules.”

In NSW, water supply works must comply with non-urban metering rules. These rules require water supply works to have metering equipment, unless an exemption applies. A 'water supply work' includes a pump, bore, or any other infrastructure that takes water from a water source, such as a river or an aquifer. It can also include infrastructure that is used to capture or store water or reticulate or distribute water that has already been taken from a water source. The NSW Department of Planning and Environment has created the NSW Water Metering Guidance Tool to assist water users to determine how NSW's non-urban metering rules apply to user's water supply work and what users need to do to comply with the rules that apply to them. The tool comprises a series of short questions about your water supply work and should take less than 10 minutes to complete. The tool does not require you to enter your approval number with DPE not retaining any of the data entered. To access the tool, simply search NSW Water Metering Guidance Tool.

**Quote: “And what could be a worse look in the week of the Equity in Cricket report than puce-faced, dim-bulb snobs picking fights with a placid, softly-spoken Muslim player?”** Gideon Haigh, Senior Cricket Writer with The Australian putting it to the gentry in the Long Room at Lords, accused of jostling players after “that stumping”.