



**BOURKE  
SHIRE  
COUNCIL**

“From the  
General Manager’s Desk”

26 October 2023

### **Australia Day Awards**

Councils 2024 Australia Day Awards will be presented at the Australia Day ceremony to be held at the Bourke Wharf precinct on Friday 26 January 2024. At its meeting held on Monday this week, Council resolved that the various award categories for the 2024 Australia Day Awards be, Citizen of the Year; Junior Citizen of the Year; Sportsperson of the year; Junior Sportsperson of the year; Village Service Award; and Emergency Services Volunteer of the year. A new Award, being the Event of the Year Award, was also instigated.

Nominations in respect of these various categories open with Council on Wednesday 1 November 2023 and close at 4.30 pm on Monday 4 December 2023. Nominations forms will be available on Councils website ([www.bourke.nsw.gov.au](http://www.bourke.nsw.gov.au)) or by attending the Council office in Mitchell St, Bourke. Alternatively, potential nominators can phone the Council office, and, upon request, a form will be posted out to you. As a small community, we would all witness people who are regularly contributing to Bourke through their selfless actions. If you feel they are deserving of recognition, please get involved and nominate them. Your submission doesn’t need to be a novel. Rather, a “just the facts” nomination will suffice and considered by Councillors.

### **National Asbestos Week**

2024 marks 20 years since asbestos was banned in Australia. Notwithstanding the banning of the product, over 4,000 people still die every year of asbestos-related disease in Australia, more than four times the national road toll. To bring an ongoing awareness to the dangers of asbestos, National Asbestos Week will again be held in 2024 with this important week rapidly approaching. To be held from 20 – 26 November 2024, this years “Be Asbestos Ready” campaign will be rolled out through NSW Government agencies, local councils and industry groups. The NSW-specific campaign encourages everyone across the State, especially DIY renovators, to *be asbestos ready* before beginning a renovation project. The goal is to inform the community of the health risks and dangers of asbestos, where it can be found, and how to safeguard your health, avoid project delays and cost blow outs. If you’re renovating a home built before 1990, be asbestos ready. If the property was built before 1990, the advice is that you can’t tell if materials contain asbestos just by looking at them. Asbestos is dangerous when disturbed, so you shouldn’t just go ahead and remove it yourself. Having a plan will save you money by avoiding delays and cost blow-outs. A licensed asbestos professional will provide advice on how to protect everyone's health and help you proceed safely. With the previously mentioned 4,000 people dying every year from asbestos-related disease in Australia, how we deal with remnant asbestos is a most serious issue that deserves our attention. Further information can be sourced from [www.asbestos.nsw.gov.au](http://www.asbestos.nsw.gov.au).

## **Domestic Violence**

NSW Police recently undertook a four-day operation throughout the State that targeted the state's most dangerous and high-risk domestic violence offenders. During the operation, 421 people were arrested, and in addition to domestic violence-related offences, various other serious offences were detected – including prohibited firearm and weapon possession, drug possession and supply – with a total of 768 charges laid. Of those arrested, 109 were identified amongst NSW's most dangerous domestic violence offenders and 65 had outstanding warrants for violent offences. Over the four days, police engaged with high-risk domestic violence offenders on 2,755 occasions, made 292 applications for Apprehended Domestic Violence Orders (ADVOs), served 403 outstanding ADVOs, completed 4,828 ADVO compliance checks and 1,071 bail compliance checks. Officers also conducted 98 Firearms Prohibition Orders (FPOs) searches at properties linked to those who are subject to FPOs. Of concern, Officers also seized 29 firearms and 13 prohibited weapons, as well as various types of illicit drugs located with 57 detections. The work by Police was the culmination of four high-visibility operations under what the Police refer to as the Operation Amarok model. In total, police arrested 2,333 offenders, and laid more than 4,185 charges. Officers seized 95 firearms, 150 weapons, completed 19,082 ADVO compliance checks, and 5,567 DV bail compliance checks.

This fantastic work by the Police with their persistent targeting of the most dangerous domestic violence offenders led to the arrest of more than 2000 high-risk perpetrators. It is understood that more than half of those arrested remain in custody whilst on remand. Despite these considerable efforts, 14 women have lost their lives in NSW in the past year as a result of domestic and family violence. This is a sad reflection of society. In an earlier GM's Column, I wrote about the 'Empower You' app that had been developed by Police aimed at helping victims of domestic violence discreetly document abuse and access support services. Since its release in July 2023, the app has now been downloaded by more than 6,000 users. It has also been deployed to more than 13,000 NSW Police handheld devices for officers to use and recommend to victims or users in the field. Victims of domestic and family violence can find information about support services by contacting 1800RESPECT (1800 737 732) or visiting: <https://www.1800respect.org.au>.

On Friday, 17 November 2023, the annual White Ribbon Day will be held. This day is for the community to stop and reflect on the challenge we face in overcoming violence against women and renew our commitment to make change. I encourage residents to be part of the day by purchasing a white ribbon and further, think about the whole issue that domestic violence is.

## **El Nino Weather**

There is no doubt that the current weather is most variable with temperatures one day being in the high 30's and the next day back in the mid 20-degree range. Already in recent week's there have been examples of lives being lost, and property destroyed by out-of-control bushfires. Following three (3) exceptional years of a La Nina weather pattern filling dams and rivers, the weather pattern is such that we are now in an El Nino pattern. With the world having experienced its hottest year on record, this dry weather pattern is all about heat. The Bureau of Meteorology has advised that whilst a typical El Nino peaks in December, they are saying that this year is anything but typical with "Climate models indicating this El Niño is likely to persist until at least the end of February. El Niño typically leads to reduced spring and early summer rainfall for eastern Australia, and warmer days for the southern two-thirds of the country." Certainly, that has been the case in respect of the lack of rainfall and some very warm days in the Bourke Shire, and for that matter throughout most of the western region.

## Sydney Opera House

The day was 20 October 1973, when one of the greatest buildings of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the iconic Sydney Opera House, was opened by Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II. Fifty years on, I was recently reflecting on this magnificent building remembering not so much the opening ceremony but rather the flotilla of boats on Sydney Harbour as part of the opening celebrations. It is said that there is “no gain without pain” and for the Opera House, that was certainly the case. Shrouded in controversy due to its radical design and ever-increasing costs, the vision and strength of character shown by the States leaders at the time in pushing ahead despite the naysayers, is most commendable. Reflecting on the controversy, Queen Elizabeth stated at the opening that the Sydney Opera House had captured the imagination of the world “though I understand that it's construction has not been totally without problems.” Possibly an understatement by Her Majesty! Notwithstanding the dramas of the project, the Queen added “The human spirit must sometimes take wings or sails and create something that is not just utilitarian or commonplace.” So true. Given the passing of time, it is hard to imagine Sydney Harbour without the Opera House being the design that it is or it being located at an alternative site, away from the Harbour Bridge. Since its opening, the Opera House has hosted many extraordinary events and people and undoubtedly it will continue to do so as it marches on towards its centenary in 2073.

**Quote: “You’ve got to learn to leave the table when love’s no longer being served.”** — Nina Simone, American singer, songwriter and civil rights campaigner.