



**BOURKE  
SHIRE  
COUNCIL**

“From the  
General Manager’s Desk”  
2 November 2023

## Cyber Security

The need for people and businesses to be cyber smart is at an all-time high with reports of scams being most regular. Recently, various Councils across NSW were targeted by multiple phishing activities, including impersonation attacks and payroll diversion scams. Basically, cybercriminals were getting the name and email address information of council employees via Council websites and other means and then sending emails pretending to be those people. These impostors then asked the targeted employee to do things like buying gift cards or changing bank details, and in doing so asking the staff to keep things discreet and only communicate through email.

To mitigate these cyber risks, it is suggested that people take the following precautions:

1. **Be Sceptical:** Always exercise caution when receiving unsolicited emails, especially those requesting sensitive information or financial transactions. Verify the sender's identity if in doubt.
2. **Check the Email Address:** Scammers can easily change the display name for who an email is from, but it is harder to change the address. Always check the email address next to the senders name.
3. **Report Suspicious Activity:** If you receive any emails or messages that seem suspicious, report it to the forwarding organisation immediately.
4. **Verify Requests:** Independently verify any unusual requests, especially those related to financial transactions, by contacting the person directly using trusted contact information, not the information provided in the email.

To assist businesses, the Australian Government has previously established the Cyber Security Centre. The Centre has developed what it calls the Exercise in a Box Tool for businesses. Business can use the tool to develop and test their cyber threat response and understand how they can improve their cyber practices. The tool includes a number of exercises that addresses scenarios such as a ransomware attacks delivered by phishing emails; mobile phone theft and response; being attacked from an unknown Wi-Fi network; third party software compromise; threatened leak of sensitive data; home and remote working and supply chain software.

Further information is available at: <https://www.cyber.gov.au/resources-business-and-government>

## Country Mayors Association

Originally established in 1980, the Country Mayors Association of NSW Inc. (CMA) is an organisation formed to advocate to Government in respect of rural and regional councils and issues that affect their communities. Bourke Shire Council, along with 81 other NSW Councils, is a member of this important organisation which represents the vast majority of local government areas outside the metropolitan areas of Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong.

Recently the Association joined forces with the NSW Police Association and NSW Farmers in calling for a Parliamentary Inquiry into crime and law and order in rural and regional New South Wales. The background to calling for such an Inquiry is the unfortunate statistics that show that residents of rural, regional and remote NSW are more likely to be sexually assaulted, more likely to have their cars stolen, more likely to have their homes broken into and more likely to be impacted by domestic violence, all when compared to metropolitan localities.

The CMA have examined data released by the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR) to determine their position. What the CMA found, in addition to alarmingly high incident counts in regional New South Wales, was that the rate of incidents per 100,000 people was, in some cases, “horrificing” when compared to metropolitan figures. Up to 90% of crimes including vehicle theft, breaking and entering, sexual assault and domestic assault are happening in regional communities.

We are all unfortunately aware of incidents of crime occurring in our community. The inquiry would bring to the fore the many issues that rural and regional communities constantly face, that is of course, if the inquiry proposal ultimately proceeds. My understanding is that the proposal will be considered this month by the NSW Parliament with Mayor Barry and I certainly seeing it as a worthwhile pursuit.

### **Basin Plan**

The Murray Darling Basin Plan has had a significant negative impact on Bourke Shire. Unfortunately, and despite Councils considerable efforts, it would appear that such negative impacts are not finished yet. The Water Amendment (Restoring Our Rivers) Bill 2023 is a piece of Federal legislation that has passed the Federal House of Representatives and is currently before the Senate for consideration. The Bill seeks to make numerous amendments to the *Water Act 2007* and *Basin Plan 2012* including expanding the type of projects that can deliver the Basin Plan target of 450 gigalitres (GL) of additional environmental water.

Council in recent times has been vocal in its opposition to the Federal Governments plans to acquire (buyback) a further 450 gigalitres of water for environmental purposes. Some of the impacts of the Plan on Bourke, as raised by Mayor Barry during recent forums, has been repeated in Federal Parliament by Members of Parliament as they spoke in opposition during the debate on the Bill in the House of Representatives recently. Our Federal Member for the seat of Parkes, Mark Coulton MP, in speaking against the Bill, stated that “the 450 extra gigs that came in later was not part of the plan. I've never supported that, and now we have the member for Indi saying: 'That's fine, leave my area alone. We'll take it from up in the northern basin.' Incidentally, the Parkes electorate represents a third of the northern basin. My community has already been gutted by this. I suggest that the members might like to..... go to Toorale station and see what it's like at Bourke when a hundred jobs and 10 per cent of the ratepayers at Bourke Shire Council are removed.”

In addition, as part of a Statement to Parliament by a Member on the Basin Plan matter, Rowan Ramsey MP, Member for Grey which is centred on Port Pirie SA, made comment regarding a recent Senate enquiry hearing at Moree. He stated “that Barry Hollman, the Mayor of the Bourke Shire Council, said: “When they bought Toorale (station and water) it was like taking BHP out of Wollongong. Ten percent of our productivity was gone. It used to employ 100, now it employs three. Schools closed. We lost two tractor dealers and the Ford and Toyota dealerships.”

If you're interested in reading what our Nation's political leaders are saying about further water buy backs, you can read the House of Representatives Hansard from Wednesday 18 October 2023 available at [https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Hansard](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Hansard)

## Caravans

As a “caravanner” I have noted not only a significant increase in the number and size of caravans on the road, but also a significant increase in the number of news articles which report on caravan related accidents. The industry advice is that overweight vehicles and a lack of experience are the key factors contributing to these caravan incidents. In a lot of cases, drivers simply attach the new van and head off with basically no experience in respect of not only driving such a large load, but also making sure their van is packed such that their load is correctly balanced.

To assist “caravanners” in Bourke, Transport for NSW will be hosting a Safety Information and Caravan Weighing Day in Bourke, tomorrow Friday 3 November, from 9am-2pm at the Back O' Bourke Information & Exhibition Centre, Kidman Way. It is a great opportunity to make sure that your car and van are up to the task.

When towing a van, “I know caravans” or “nothing will ever happen to me” approaches aren't appropriate. As an example, a friend of mine and his new wife were recently on their caravan honeymoon, when, travelling along a freeway near Melbourne at some 100km/h, their van became unhooked from the tow ball of their tow vehicle. The van fell and scraped along the ground, being held to the vehicle by safety chains. As a long time triple road train driver, my friend had the wherewithal not to hit the brakes but rather coasted to a stop after the van had reacted rather violently when it came off the tow ball. Whilst he acknowledged that it was his fault as he hadn't checked the vans locking system on the tow ball, the couple acknowledged they were very lucky that the honeymoon didn't come to a very quick end.

**Quote: “There are only two different types of companies in the world: those that have been breached and know it and those that have been breached and don't know it.” — Ted Schlein – US Venture Capitalist talking on IT data breaches Capitalist.**