



**BOURKE  
SHIRE  
COUNCIL**

## “From the General Manager’s Desk” 9 November 2023

### **Welcome Baby Back**

In my weekly column of 21 September 2023, I wrote regarding the then upcoming “Welcome Baby Back to Bourke Community” event being an excellent initiative of the Western NSW Local Health District. I am delighted to note that the Secretary of NSW Health, Ms Susan Pearce AM shares my views of the event with the “Welcome Baby Back to Bourke Community” winning the Secretary’s Award at the recent 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary NSW Health Awards in Sydney. This is a major award with the Secretary, NSW Health being the person responsible for the overall governance, oversight and control of the NSW public health system and public health organisations, including public health system performance. In this capacity, the Secretary, NSW Health has the function of giving directions to local health districts, to ensure that they fulfill their statutory and financial obligations and to assist the State meet its own obligations as system manager. The Secretary is also responsible for entering into performance and Service Agreements with local health districts and employing staff of local health districts on behalf of the State. That is one very important role.

The “Welcome Baby Back to Bourke” ceremony reduces the cultural disconnection and gives the babies a sense of identity and belonging right from the beginning. Babies go into life knowing who they are and the country that they belong to. They can take pride in their culture, their traditions, and their identity. It is a significant way to connect new babies to their community, country and Aboriginal Elders. The ceremony is facilitated by Aboriginal Elders and Health staff. It includes a traditional welcome, a formal welcome and a presentation of the children to the community. The whole family is involved and supported by other community members and importantly acknowledged by the Aboriginal Elders. In 2021, 32 babies were welcomed in the ceremony, this number increased to 35 babies in 2022. Additionally, a special ceremony where 137 older children (3 - 21 years) were welcomed to Bourke was held. The 2023 ceremony was held 26 September with 30 babies being welcomed to Bourke.

My congratulations go out to all involved in this important cultural event for our community. From the initiators of the ceremony right through to the families who participate in the ceremony, all are to be congratulated on the receipt of this award.

### **Net Zero Emissions**

Readers have no doubt heard the term “Net Zero”. The NSW Government has committed to reach net zero emissions by 2050 (OEH 2016). Achieving net zero emissions seeks to slow down the increase in global temperatures and the associated increased likelihood of climate-related risks for natural and human systems. This will require action by governments, communities, and business. Working towards a net zero emissions target is about more than meeting our obligations, it will help us plan for and drive the transition to a cleaner, more efficient and resilient society. The world which we live in today is in transition. As the world moves to net zero emissions, Australia will be part of the global transformation of the world’s energy system. This will attract investment and job opportunities in emerging industries such as advanced energy, transport, carbon farming and environmental services. Councils are uniquely

positioned to help the drive towards net zero emissions through their connection to local communities, and their existing mandate to provide support and infrastructure to residents and businesses. Net zero related actions include carbon-positive energy efficient buildings, smarter infrastructure, renewable energy technologies, circular economy waste solutions, sustainable transport services and increasing canopy cover and green restoration projects.

As part of the pursuit of Net Zero Emissions, I am happy to share a great initiative that residents can use in regard to Solar. This initiative is titled SunSPOT and it has been developed by the not-for-profit, Australian PV Institute and built by solar engineers at the University of NSW. Supported by the Australian and NSW Governments, the SunSPOT website allows householders and business owners to undertake a simple but reliable roof assessment of their property in regard to their energy usage and solar provisions. Before getting quotes from solar sales companies, users can quickly and simply get key benchmark figures from SunSPOT to help them understand solar on their roof. Users can learn what their suggested system size for the best return on investment is and get an estimate of the cost, annual savings, and what size system they can fit on suitable parts of their roof. Users can also find out about potential savings from installing a battery. SunSPOT is free and private to use, so get your most recent electricity bill and try the website at: [www.sunspot.org.au](http://www.sunspot.org.au).

## **NSW Public Works**

NSW Public Works is a state government organisation whose operation in NSW dates to 1859. Public Works have a very strong history of bringing major projects to fruition including the icons of the Sydney Harbour Bridge and the Sydney Opera House. Council regularly engages with and utilises the services of NSW Public Works who provide an extensive range of infrastructure services for state and local government agencies. Its staff are engaged in asset and facilities management; architectural, landscape and urban design; heritage and conservation; and all aspects of project management and water cycle management. Most recently Public Works undertook the project management on behalf of Council in respect of the successful construction and commissioning of the new Bourke Water Treatment Plant. Their expertise in delivering major infrastructure projects is of great benefit to their clients.

I was interested to recently review their 2022/2023 Annual Report which reported that over the past financial year, Public Works had supported 1,983 critical projects across NSW and partnered with more than 300 government agencies and councils. Reflecting the wide expertise that Public Works “brings to the table”, they also worked across more than 40 asset classes, helping rural, regional and metropolitan communities realise the benefits from the federal and state governments' significant investment spend. They also helped NSW communities recover from the horrible natural disasters of last year and for Bourke Shire Council, they are but a phone call away for assistance and advice, as was the case during our floods of last year.

## **Water Update**

Towards the end of October 2023, NSW Water provided its monthly update on the state of all things water throughout NSW. I noted that throughout the State, total rural storage levels are at 88% of the total accessible storage capacity, compared to 102% this time last year. In terms of the climate and water outlook, the Bureau of Meteorology have now released their long-range forecast overview for the November to January which, and there are no surprises here, predicts that median rainfall is likely to be below average for NSW; above median maximum and minimum temperatures are very likely; maximum and minimum temperatures are two and half times more likely to be unusually high and the El Nino and a positive Indian Ocean Dipole are underway. A video of this overview can be accessed at the following link: <http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/outlooks/#/overview/video>

## **Movember**

It's been around for quite some year's now, but Movember is a great and successful initiative across the world each November to raise the level of knowledge in respect of men's health and raise funds to undertake research to improve men's health. Men's health is an issue. Men die on average 4.5 years earlier than women, and for largely preventable reasons. A growing number of men – around 10.8M globally – are facing life with a prostate cancer diagnosis. Globally, testicular cancer is the most common cancer among young men, and across the world, one man dies by suicide every minute of every day, with males accounting for 69% of all suicides. These are not good figures. Movember encourages men to grow a moustache and in doing so, they seek sponsorships to raise funds to undertake men's health research projects globally.

At this stage in November, it's probably too late to start growing an effective moustache come 30 November! However, if you know someone who is growing that sometimes elusive moustache, please donate and assist this most important of causes.

**Quote: “They are trying to bulldoze through with a [basin] plan that will shut down farms, destroy jobs and increase the price of food.”** – National Farmers Federation President, David Jochinke, commenting on the Murray Darling Basin Plan water buy back proposals.