



**BOURKE
SHIRE
COUNCIL**

“From the
General Manager’s Desk”

16 November 2023

Roads Inspection Tour

Councils Roads Manager, Paul Flanagan, and I recently undertook a tour of the western edge of the Shire to look at the condition of our roads and inspect various road projects that Council currently has underway. Whilst it was a long day, travelling close to 800 kilometres (km), the maintenance of Councils rural road network is one of our more challenging issues. With Councils transport assets having a value approaching \$213 million, and with the potential for further Government funding in upcoming months, I was keen to see the issues firsthand with respect to our roads. Whilst “out and about” we also took the opportunity to say hello to various village residents.

Our travels on the day commenced with an inspection of works recently completed on Janbeth Road (RLR28). This project involved 20 km of gravel re-sheeting. From there we travelled to Toorale Road (RLR10) and drove from the roads beginning to its end, in the Bourke Shire at least, at the Central Darling Shire boundary. We inspected 20km of gravel re-sheeting works which are currently underway along the road, meeting with the contractor who is undertaking/project managing these works.

Whilst travelling Toorale Road, we diverted into Louth and inspected the new picket fence that now surrounds the Louth Cricket Ground. It is a sight to behold. Paul and I also identified signage in the Village that required upgrading. We also inspected the progress of construction relating to the new bowling green in the Village, noting that the contractors had completed the concrete surrounds and the sub-base of the green had also been compacted. All in all, the project is progressing well.

From Toorale Road we travelled across to, and then along Landsdown Rd (RLR 13), onto Avondale Rd (RLR14), turned off onto Emaroo Rd (RLR29), before coming back onto Avondale Rd and then onto Wanaaring via Wanaaring Road (MR405). At Wanaaring, it was lunch at the local store where we were able to chat with various locals. From Wanaaring we travelled to Hungerford along the Mooleyarrah Road (RLR 50) and met with the grader crew who are undertaking a maintenance grade of this road. In Hungerford it was through the border gate and into Queensland and onto the Hotel to say hello to the publican. After Hungerford it was back to Bourke via Yantabulla and Fords Bridge on the Hungerford Road (MR404).

All in all, a most worthwhile day and in coming months Paul and I will be looking to inspect the many other roads in our Shire.

Council Elections

The NSW Local Government Act provides that an ordinary election of councillors for each council area in the State is to be held on the second Saturday of September in every fourth year. As per this cycle, an ordinary election for Bourke Shire Council would normally have been held on Saturday 12 September 2020. However, due to the outbreak of COVID and resulting restrictions, these elections were

subsequently postponed till 4 September 2021 and then again until they were ultimately held on 4 December 2021. In Bourke, the number of nominations to be a Councillor received equalled the number of Councillor positions available. This situation, referred to as an uncontested election, resulted in the 10 candidates who nominated duly elected to Bourke Shire Council. The term of these Councillors is for 3 years instead of the normal 4 years, with the next election to be held on 14 September 2024.

Given that we are now but ten (10) months from these next elections, I would encourage community members to start thinking about running for Council for the Council term commencing September 2024 and ending September 2028. As the NSW Office of Local Government states, as a Councillor, you get to represent “the community’s needs, wants and aspirations and make important decisions on behalf of the community. You don't need any formal qualifications and you will receive training, fees and superannuation if you are elected.”

The Office of Local Government has previously produced a document titled “Stand For Your Community – All you need to know about becoming a Councillor in NSW.” Whilst the guide is dated May 2021, the guide is a great starting point to assist you in deciding whether you would like to run in the upcoming Council election. The guide is available at: <https://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/public/about-councils/become-a-councillor-section/information-for-candidates/>.

Christmas in the Park

In conjunction with Maranguka Community Hub, Council is again holding the Christmas in the Park event from 5:30pm - 8.00pm at Central Park on 8 December 2023. With entertainment, a giant slide, jumping castle, sumo wrestling, a kid’s playground, markets and food and drink stalls, along with the obligatory visit by Santa and his Elves, a great evening is again anticipated. All are most welcome.

If you are interested in being a stall holder and selling your market wares to gain those extra dollars for Christmas, then Council would like to talk to you. If you are interested in holding a stall, please contact the Back O' Bourke Information & Exhibition Centre on 6872 1321 or send an email to info@backobourke.com.au and staff will be able to help you with any enquiries you may have.

Regardless of whether you are a stallholder or not, please mark the date of 8 December 2023 in your diary to attend this annual event which, traditionally, has been very well supported by the Bourke community.

Australia Day Awards

Don’t forget that nominations for the Bourke Shire Council's annual Australia Day Awards for 2024 are now open. With awards for Citizen of the Year; Junior Citizen of the Year; Sportsperson of the Year; Junior Sportsperson of the Year; Village Service Award; Emergency Services Person of the Year, and a new award, being the Event of the Year Award, nominations close with Council at 4.30 pm on Monday 4 December 2023. The nomination process allows residents to input into recognising those in our community that have made outstanding contributions to the local community during 2023 and/or contributions to the local community over a number of years. Nomination forms can be downloaded from www.bourke.nsw.gov.au or by accessing a copy from Council at 29 Mitchell St, Bourke.

Award winners will be announced at the Australia Day ceremony to be held at the Bourke Wharf precinct on Friday 26 January 2024.

Preparing for Summer

By all accounts it's going to be a very hot summer. Already in Bourke we have recently experienced temperatures approaching 40 degrees Celsius. The NSW Government is understandably most concerned at the threat of bushfires, storms and floods and heatwaves based on what occurred in the most recent northern hemisphere summer, where all these events occurred, some at a catastrophic level.

With summer being the time to get out and enjoy the warmer weather and focusing on the risks of storms and heatwaves in Bourke, it is important that we take the time to now prepare for like events such that if they do occur, the community can respond quickly and efficiently. It is important that we understand the specific needs and risks for ourselves, our households and our community. It is also important to stay informed, take preventative measures where you can and plan the steps you need to take when an event occurs. In terms of storms, now is the time to prepare your home for storms to help keep you, your family and the community safe. Check your roof and keep it in good condition, clean gutters, downpipes and drains to prevent blockages, trim trees and overhanging branches, and put away loose items that can blow around in strong winds. Further information is available at the following link on the State Emergency Services home page: <https://www.ses.nsw.gov.au/getready>.

In respect of heatwaves, as mentioned, the authorities are saying that there is an increased risk of heatwaves this summer. Your everyday actions can make a difference to staying cool and healthy. If you or your family are more at risk or sensitive to heat, NSW Health provides information on its website as to how to Beat the Heat: <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/beattheheat/Pages/health-in-hot-weather.aspx>. When the expected hot temperatures do arrive, reduce the risk by preparing your home by shutting windows and blinds, using fans or air-conditioning and by avoiding use of the stove or oven.

Quote: "The whole region is sinking in a sea of hatred that will define generations to come." - Jordans Foreign Minister talking about the current situation in the Middle East.