



**BOURKE  
SHIRE  
COUNCIL**

## “From the General Manager’s Desk”

30 November 2023

### **Abattoir**

I took the opportunity to recently call my contact at the Thomas Foods International (TFI) Bourke Abattoir for my regular catch up to see how matters were progressing at the abattoir. Located some 18 kilometres north of the Bourke township on the Mitchell Highway, I was delighted to learn that for the Abattoir, it continues to be “full steam” ahead following the re-opening of the plant in September 2022. TFI have just employed another 60 staff with more staff likely to be employed before Christmas. The plant is currently slaughtering 2000 goats and 500 (light 16-24kg) sheep per day. My contact advised the TFI plant in South Australia is not currently slaughtering goats and hence the company expects to increase their Bourke plant slaughter numbers in coming weeks, with stock already booked in until the end of January, at this point.

This is a fantastic story for Bourke. The vision shown by the original developers, the financial assistance provided by the Federal Government, the significant work undertaken by many at Council and the subsequent work, knowledge and significant injection of funding by TFI, has resulted in a development that is already an important component of the Bourke community. In TFI the Bourke community has an operator that is a major exporter of meat products with access to markets in Asia, North America and Europe. TFI processes some 100,000 sheep and lambs, beef and goats every week at its various locations including plants at Bourke, Murray Bridge (SA) and Tamworth. I certainly look forward to further progression at the Bourke abattoir.

### **Drought Resilience**

As I have said before, with every day that passes we are a day closer to ultimately descending back into drought conditions in the Bourke Shire. After three (3) good seasons and with a long hot summer being predicted, we are, unfortunately, no doubt getting closer to deteriorating climatic conditions. Recognising the cyclical nature of our weather patterns, the NSW Government recently announced the commitment of \$250 million in funding to establish the Drought Ready and Resilient Fund (DRRF). Designed to bolster the resilience of NSW farmers for future adverse weather events and climatic conditions, such as drought, eligible primary producers can apply through the DRRF for a low interest loan of up to \$250,000. If in receipt of a loan, it can be repaid over a period of 5 or 10 years. The loan can be used to fund a broad range of products, activities and services, including the purchase and transportation of fodder and water; livestock feeding equipment; veterinary and animal welfare professional services; genetic banking; fencing and containment pens; shade structures; planting of trees; farm income diversification projects; pest and weed control; solar power conversion; soil conservation and earthworks; training and development; infrastructure repairs and maintenance ; and the purchase and installation of new on-farm infrastructure.

It is certainly an extensive list of potential projects with the fund being administered by the NSW Rural Assistance Authority (RAA). In addition to this fund, the Farm Innovation Fund has been rebadged and

will now be known as the Drought Infrastructure Fund. This fund will provide eligible producers with loan funding of up to \$1 million with a 2.5% fixed interest rate and a 20-year repayment period. Further information about both the Drought Ready and Resilient Fund and the Drought Infrastructure Fund is available from the Rural Assistance Authority website: <https://www.raa.nsw.gov.au>.

## **Cricket World Cup**

I like watching cricket. Have done so for most of my life. Whether it be a T20, a one day international or a test match, I am a fan. I must admit however, that the odds of Australia beating India in the final of the One Day Cricket World Cup at Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad India, were fairly long in my mind leading into the game. With a sea of Indian supporters dressed in blue expected at the world's largest cricket stadium for the game, the 132,000-capacity ground and the supporters didn't disappoint. As Billy Birmingham says in mimicking Bill Lawrie in the 12th Man parody, "It's all happening, the tension, the drama, the buzz, the atmosphere!" The final certainly had it all. What stood out for me was the strength of the leadership of Australia's captain, Pat Cummins. When he chose to field after winning the toss, I just thought to myself, "What are you doing?" It was in fact a stroke of genius. It wasn't until Travis Head took a super catch to dismiss the Indian Captain, Rohit Sharma, and shortly thereafter Virat Kohli playing a Pat Cummins ball onto his stumps, effectively silencing the very pro Indian and rather raucous crowd, that I started to think, "we can do this." And did it they did, winning in 43 overs, with 6 wickets in hand. I would love to say that I thought, "Never in doubt!"

I can't however say that, but I got to see one, if not the best World Cup wins, by any country of all time, with some fantastic batting by Travis Head and Marnus Labuschagne during the Australian batting innings. The ironic thing with these two (2) players is that it was touch and go as to whether Head would continue on tour after fracturing his hand back in September whilst Labuschagne was originally overlooked in Australia's extended 18-member squad for the World Cup when the squad was picked in August this year. With subsequent injuries to Steve Smith and then Cameron Green, Labuschagne was called into the squad and ended up playing in all 19 of Australia's One Day Internationals since he was dropped from the side in August. Everything happens for a reason.

## **Network Outages**

The recent Optus network outage, which affected some 10 million people across the nation, has not only cost the Optus CEO her job, but it also brought home to many people just how reliant we are on our home broadband or mobile phones. Waking up to no internet or no mobile phone left many people in somewhat of a spin. In a similar vein, now that we are moving towards an expected volatile summer period in terms of heatwaves and storms, we should be prepared for the prospect of network outages.

In terms of being prepared, Telstra have recently released information on "How to prepare and stay connected during a natural disaster." This can be accessed by going into the Telstra website <https://www.telstra.com.au> and searching for "prepare for natural disaster". Whilst we probably all think, "I don't need that" however when the system crashes, it will good to be prepared.

## **Volunteer Charter**

Volunteers are a major and important component of our community. I would suggest that there would be no Bourke Show, no Bourke Picnic Races and no Back O' Bourke Stampede, as recently conducted, to name but a few events, if not for volunteers getting involved and "pitching in." Following consultation with the volunteering sector across the State, the NSW Government has developed the NSW Volunteer Charter, an initiative of the NSW Volunteering Strategy 2020-2030. The Charter sets out a standard code of conduct that any volunteer involving organisation can adopt to ensure that all involved are working to

a common benchmark of good behaviour and quality practice. It provides a way to deliver best practice, support good communication and positive relationships.

The NSW Volunteer Charter is made up of 10 guiding principles, and is supported by a NSW Volunteer Charter Companion Document that provides guidance on how each can be implemented to support sector capacity building and improve the volunteering journey. The NSW Volunteer Charter is a free resource available to all volunteer involving organisations. It is a flexible tool that can be adapted to meet all organisations' circumstances and can be used to complement existing Codes of Conduct.

If you're running an organisation that involves volunteers, I would suggest you download a copy of the NSW Volunteer Charter by visiting, <https://www.nsw.gov.au> and then search for volunteer charter. Always good that all involved in pursuing an outcome are heading in the same direction of the pursuit.

**Quote: "We urge the Australian side to respect the facts, stop rude and irresponsible accusations toward China, engage in endeavours that are conducive in boosting mutual trust, and build a positive atmosphere for developing better bilateral relations and military-to-military ties."** A Chinese Government spokesperson responding to claims about a sonar incident that recently injured Australian navy divers.