



**BOURKE  
SHIRE  
COUNCIL**

## “From the General Manager’s Desk”

22 February 2024

### **NSW Young Woman**

It was 1962 when 20 female ambassadors entered the first Sydney Royal Easter Show, Miss Showgirl Competition, as it was then known, with hopes of representing their region and working as ambassadors for women throughout rural New South Wales. Today the competition is known as “The Land Sydney Royal Ag Shows NSW Young Women” with the competition continuing to play a significant role in the development of rural women and their communities as they display great insight and knowledge about the very real issues facing rural NSW. The young women are deeply involved with their communities and are dedicated, confident and fitting ambassadors.

Judging takes place at a local level throughout the year at each of the participating local Show Societies with the judging for Zone Finals being conducted in February/March of each year and the State Final during the Sydney Royal Easter Show. The Bourke P & A Association is part of Zone 6, which is the largest Agricultural show zone in the state, comprising a total of 39 communities.

Following recent zone interviews held at Narromine, Bourke’s Charlotte McGrory was selected to represent Zone 6 in the Young Woman Final. Charlotte is passionate about Bourke and gives back to her community through her work as a teacher at St Ignatius Catholic School and other community activities that she is involved with. Congratulations are extended to Charlotte along with best wishes for when she travels to Sydney for the State Final at this year's Royal Easter Show being held from 22 March till 2 April 2024 at the Sydney Showground located at Homebush. Interestingly, the Sydney Showground delivers close to 150 national and international events annually. These events include, music festivals, sporting events, exhibitions, trade shows and of course, the Show, which is the largest annual ticketed event in Australia.

### **Easter in Bourke**

Talking of Easter, which this year sees Easter Sunday fall on Sunday 31 March 2024, preparations for the Back to Bourke Celebrations over the Easter Weekend are well advanced with the comprehensive program of activities for the weekend taking shape. A proposed return of the Long Table Dinner on Good Friday has raised a lot of interest, with investigations as to the holding of such an event continuing. This potential event, coupled with the regular Picnic Race Meeting, Wool Bale Rolling, Colour Run and the Easter Egg Hunt, will undoubtedly once again provide for a very successful weekend.

### **Bus Flashing Lights Campaign**

Throughout NSW, there are some 8,000 operational buses. Unfortunately, over the past five (5) year's there have been 48 fatalities resulting from bus crashes (including minibuses) in NSW. Of the 48 fatalities, 15 people were pedestrians, 8 were drivers (of vehicles other than a bus), 7 were motorcyclists, 4 were bus drivers, 11 were bus passengers, 2 were passengers (of vehicles other

than a bus), and 1 was a pedal cyclist. With these sad statistics in mind, the NSW Government is this week holding its annual Bus Safety Week to raise awareness among all road users on how to stay safe on and around buses with the goal to help reduce injuries and fatalities.

In Bourke, the community's largest buses are school buses with most bus stops being informal school bus stops that don't have signs or structures, such as bus shelters. Lights flash on buses to warn motorists that buses are picking up and dropping off children. As a motorist, you can help keep children safe by sticking to the speed limit and following road rules in school zones; slowing down to 40km/h when bus lights are flashing, unless a lower speed limit applies and looking out for children crossing the road near bus stops, in school zones or along bus routes. In addition, be courteous and give way to buses when they merge back into traffic.

For mums, dads and carers, family has an important part to play in keeping children safe around roads. Never drop off or meet your child on the opposite side of the road to the bus stop or call them to cross the road - always drop them off or meet them on the same side of the road as the bus stop; remind your children to always wait until the bus has gone before choosing a safe place to cross the road. Please talk to your children about Stop! Look! Listen! Think! every time they cross the road - stop one step back from the kerb; look continuously both ways; listen for the sounds of approaching traffic and think whether it is safe to cross and keep checking until safely crossed.

### **Wilba, the Empower Bus**

I was very happy to learn that the NSW Government recently confirmed the extension until February 2026 of a trial of the popular Wilba - the Empower Bus public transport service operating in Bourke. In its first 12 months of operation, Wilba has undertaken more than 2,000 trips around town and enabled hundreds of residents to access safe and reliable transport at an affordable price. The pre-booked 12-seater bus service offers residents the opportunity to get around Bourke more easily and attend appointments, access health care, maintain employment and purchase essential products or services. In addition, the service has created employment opportunities for more than 10 Aboriginal women and together with these women, a charity is being established to organise events and activities that strengthen community spirit in Bourke.

Wilba has been a wonderful help for many people who hadn't been able to leave their homes due to a lack of transport and they really appreciate the independence it gives them. People who were previously housebound or left to rely on the goodwill of others can now get out and about to the pharmacy, shops, medical and health appointments, and to social and recreational events. I extend the communities thanks to the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, the Hon Jenny Aitchison for her actions in respect of this important initiative for the Bourke community.

I also take the opportunity to extend the best wishes of Council to the founder of Wilba, Tsukasa Hiraoka, who has been named as a finalist in the NSW Governments prestigious Regional Woman of the Year awards. Tsukasa's vision is to address transport disadvantage in regional and rural NSW by providing affordable, reliable, efficient and environmentally friendly solutions to existing gaps in public transportation and helping residents access essential services. Award recipients will be announced at a ceremony on Thursday 7 March 2024 at the International Convention Centre, Sydney.

### **Back O' Bourke Exhibition Centre**

Construction work to upgrade Building One (1) at the Back O' Bourke Exhibition Centre is progressing well. Standing of the framework and lining of the extension works commenced last week. The internal works will begin in coming weeks with this work to include tiling and fit out of the café. The works on

the outdoor deck and paved area is also progressing well and will undoubtedly be well received by visitors and locals, alike.

The local team undertaking the outdoor construction work are doing an excellent job, with the team being led by Luke Milgate. The skills gained by the REDI crew on this project will allow these staff members the opportunity to gain employment in several industries. It is expected that project works will be completed come the end of March, and whilst this timeframe is a little later than anticipated, I am most confident that the wait will be worth it. I thank everyone for their patience while this important upgrade is being undertaken.

### **Operational Plan**

Work in respect of preparing Council's Operational Plan for 2024/2025, which is primarily Council's annual budget, is well underway. To ensure Council gets input into the budget, it programmed a series of village and town meetings to gain input from community in terms of proposals for funding, suggestions in relation to projects for inclusion in the budget, or amendments to the current service levels. Due to the high rainfall experienced on 8 January 2024 at both Louth and Wanaaring, it was necessary to reschedule these village meetings to a revised date. Following the 'mini tornado' that went through Bourke on the evening of 12 February 2024, causing significant damage throughout town, it was then necessary to postpone village meetings at Enngonia and Fords Bridge, which were planned for the following day. Certainly an unprecedented set of impacting weather conditions in respect of our village tours and meetings. Revised dates are published on the Bourke Shire Council Facebook page.

**Quote: "If everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself"** - Founder of the Ford Motor Company, Henry Ford, on the importance of teamwork.