



**BOURKE
SHIRE
COUNCIL**

“From the General Manager’s Desk”

4 April 2024

Easter Festival

Another most successful Bourke Easter Festival has come and gone, and I take the opportunity to thank both the Council staff and the many members of the community who assisted and participated in the various activities over the weekend. I had a sense that the weekend would be another success when I saw the high number of nominations that had been received for the five (5) race program of the Back O’ Bourke Picnic Race Club meeting held on Easter Sunday. From the official opening of the Percy Hobson Mural on Good Friday through to the final river cruise of the Jandra for the Easter weekend on Easter Monday afternoon, the myriad of activities on offer for the weekend were all very well attended.

It’s difficult to pick a highlight for the weekend and after much consideration I still couldn’t decide on one particular event. Notwithstanding, a sold out Long Table Dinner, the Markets and Vintage Car Display, the Wool Bale Rolling, the Rugby games, the happy faces on the many children at the Giant Easter Egg Hunt, and the large crowd of attendees at the Harry Hart Memorial Picnic Races, would all be part of the list.

Percy Hobson Mural

As part of his speech in officially opening the Percy Hobson Water Tower Mural and Park on Easter Friday, Mayor Barry reflected on the excitement in Bourke when Percy Hobson in 1961 broke the state high jump record that had stood for almost three decades and then again, 12 months later when Percy won the High Jump Gold Medal at the 1962 British Empire and Commonwealth Games held in Perth. In 1961 it was reported that a “brass band and hundreds of people singing *For He’s a Jolly Good Fellow*” met him at the Bourke railway station, with a banner stretched along the platform which read, ‘*Congratulations Percy.*’ Following his success at the Games, history reports that Percy’s win was wildly celebrated in Bourke and then a welcome home at the airport, a victory procession, and subsequently, a park named in his honour and a feature in the visitors’ centre. Mayor Barry recalled his own excitement when on Wednesday 21 April 2021, he was driving back from Broken Hill listening to the live crosses on 2WEB as the Bourke community took the opportunity to visit the mural and leave their handprints on the John Murray painted water tower.’

The Mayor noted that on his arrival back to Bourke that afternoon, people were still filing through and making their mark on the mural with their handprints. He stated that you could feel the excitement in the air. Most of us can only imagine the level of excitement in Bourke back in 1961 and 1962 as the community celebrated the achievements of Percy Hobson.

Anzac Day

With Anzac Day for 2024 rapidly approaching, the Bourke Shire Library has advised that there will be an Anzac Day display in the library from 22 April till 4 May 2024. The display will feature information and newspaper articles on Bourke servicemen and women from the World Wars. Regardless of whether or not you had relatives who fought in these Wars, the display will no doubt be worth visiting.

On the topic of Anzac Day, I recently saw ANZAC Day written in capitals and got to thinking what the correct way is to write the word. Is it Anzac or is it a capitalised ANZAC? As most readers would be aware, ANZAC is an acronym which comes from the initial letters of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps. Following a google search, I found a definitive document from the Australian Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) titled "Use of the word "Anzac" Guidelines. It states that "there is no rule or law that indicates how the word 'Anzac' should be capitalised. For example, DVA only uses 'ANZAC' when referencing the ANZAC Corps itself and uses 'Anzac' in all other circumstances while the Australian War Memorial (AWM) generally uses 'ANZAC' given the AWM's focus on historical records and memorabilia." Accordingly, from this information, it would be Anzac Day. Interesting.

Youth Crime

I wrote last week that the NSW Premier, the Hon Chris Minns, was proposing legislation to make it harder for teenagers to get bail and criminalise "posting and boasting" about offences on social media. The proposed legislation would see the Bail Act changed to include an extra test for 14 to 18 year olds charged with committing certain serious break and enter or motor vehicle theft offences while on bail for the same offences and seeking further bail. The new legislation was passed by the NSW Government during an all-night session on Thursday 21 March through to Friday morning, 22 March 2024. I happened to be in Sydney for a meeting of the Country Mayors Association on the Friday morning, which was held at Parliament House, Sydney. There were certainly many bleary eyed members of Parliament to be seen. To their credit, all the Members of Parliament who had previously been arranged to address the Country Mayors Meeting, fulfilled their obligation despite having had no sleep the night before.

The BIG discussion point at the Country Mayors meeting was the announcement by the Premier on Wednesday 20 March 2024 that community safety in regional and rural communities would be the subject of a NSW Parliamentary Inquiry. Initially proposed by the NSW Country Mayors Association, the Committee on Law and Safety will undertake the inquiry and report back to Parliament in February 2025. The adopted Terms of Reference will see the Committee inquire into:

- (a) the drivers of youth crime across regional and rural NSW, particularly since the COVID pandemic;*
- (b) how a whole of government approach can reduce the drivers and root causes of youth crime in regional and rural NSW;*
- (c) the wraparound and diversionary services available for youth and families in the regions and rural areas and how they can be better matched to individuals, measured, improved and integrated into a coordinated approach to divert youth from crime, having regard to the NSW Government's commitment to working in partnership with Aboriginal people;*
- (d) staffing levels and workforce issues, including police staffing, in regional and rural areas and how services can be improved to reduce youth crime in these areas;*
- (e) recidivism rates in regional and rural areas, and related impacts on the community, services and law enforcement;*
- (f) the range of functions being performed by NSW police officers, including mental health assistance and youth welfare, on behalf of other agencies in regional and rural areas, and the supports required to assist police; and*

(g) any other related matter.

Council will certainly be preparing and lodging a submission with submissions closing on 31 May 2024. I would encourage any member of the Bourke community who has experienced youth crime, is concerned about the level of youth crime or wishes to make comment regarding the services that are provided to youth, to have their say. All the required information can be sourced from:

<https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/committees/inquiries/Pages/inquiry-details.aspx?pk=3042#tab-members>

Operational Plan Exhibition

The Council as elected in December 2021 has previously adopted its Community Strategic Plan, Delivery Program, Asset Management Policy, Strategy and Plan, Long Term Financial Plan and Workforce Plan. To deliver the objectives of these various documents, the Local Government Act provides that an Operational Plan must be adopted by the Council annually. The Operational Plan is local government speak for an annual budget.

Council at its meeting held on 25 March 2024 adopted its 2024/2025 draft Operational Plan for the purposes of it being exhibited for public comment prior to any adoption of a final document. Councils' adoption of the draft comes after an earlier workshop with Councillors to allow staff to present and discuss the Plan with them. From the Council meeting, Council resolved that the Plan and associated documentation, such as its proposed fees and charges, be exhibited from Thursday, 28 March 2024 until 9.00am Thursday, 25 April 2024. The Plan is available for viewing at Councils Website (www.bourke.nsw.gov.au) with a copy also available at the Council offices in Mitchell St, Bourke. Council is required to have considered any submissions received prior to adopting its annual Operational Plan. Such considerations will take place when a report on submissions is presented to Councils 27 May 2024 Ordinary Meeting.

Quote: "At this time, I am also thinking of all those whose lives have been affected by cancer. For everyone facing this disease, in whatever form, please do not lose faith or hope. You are not alone." - Princess Kate, announcing her own battle with cancer.