



**BOURKE
SHIRE
COUNCIL**

“From the
General Manager’s Desk”

25 April 2024

ANZAC Day

I have no doubt that today’s Dawn Service and ANZAC Day Service in Bourke will once again see a strong level of participation from our community, as we recognise the heroics and bravery that was shown by our first ANZAC’s.

Despite being widely described as an ill-fated campaign, it was before dawn on 25 April 1915, when the first soldiers of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps landed on the shores of the Gallipoli peninsula. The Allies' mission was to destroy Turkish guns that were preventing naval ships from reaching and bombarding the Turkish capital, Constantinople. If they succeeded, Turkey might be forced out of the war and Germany would lose an important ally. Some 2000 Australians were killed or wounded on 25 April. At Anzac Cove, the Australians were the first to land. The New Zealanders followed later in the day. They advanced about a mile in some places, less in others, but they could go no further. For the next eight months, the campaign was a stalemate. In December, the Anzacs were evacuated. By then, about 8700 Australians and almost 2700 New Zealanders had been killed. They were some of at least 130,000 soldiers on both sides who lost their lives at Gallipoli.

Anzac Day is certainly not about glorifying war. Rather, ANZAC Day was initially instigated to give people a chance to honour the original Anzacs – the Australians and New Zealanders who fought on Gallipoli. It then became a day for those who had served in the First World War. With Australians experiencing the Second World War, and wars, conflicts and peacekeeping operations that have followed, Anzac Day has become an occasion to honour all who have worn our country's uniform in service. Today, we reflect on that service. We recognise more than a hundred thousand Australian service men and women who have lost their lives in military operations carried out in our country's name. We honour the values that have been invested in the original Anzacs – loyalty, selflessness, courage – and the ways in which later generations have measured their own achievements against those of the soldiers who fought on Gallipoli. Lest We Forget.

Regional Development Australia – Orana

I was recently talking to a rather excited CEO of Regional Development Australia (RDA) – Orana, Justine Campbell, who was telling me of their success in lobbying the Federal Government to provide access to more overseas workers above what the standard skilled migration program provides for. Her excitement stemmed from the basis that the Orana region, of which Bourke Shire is part of, will be able to better respond to its unique economic and labour market conditions.

Known as the Orana Designated Area Migration Agreement (DAMA), the DAMA is a formal agreement between RDA Orana and the Australian Government to provide access to overseas workers. This recently approved variation to the original Agreement, which has been in place since 2019, will see a geographical expansion that includes an additional 41 local government areas across inland NSW.

Justine is confident that the variation will provide for the development and growth of regional NSW expanding to 129 occupations under the Orana DAMA, giving businesses across 53 local government areas in NSW access to a broader range of skilled workers. The Orana DAMA has been granted a geographical boundary extension to include the RDA regions of Riverina, Murray, Southern Inland and Central West with RDA Orana to remain as the Designated Area Representative (DAR) with dedicated DAMA officers in each of the four RDA regions. Whilst the priority for RDA Orana and the Australian Government is to firstly promote jobs for Australians, the DAMA allows employers who are unable to find suitably qualified Australians to supplement their workforce with overseas workers. If you are a Bourke business that is struggling to find suitably qualified staff, have a chat to RDA – Orana to discuss your employment options.

Cemetery Levy

Council has been advised that the NSW Government has recently announced that effective 1 July 2024, an interment services levy will be imposed on effectively all burials and cremations across the State. The levy is to fund the cost of the Government operating its regulatory organisation, Cemeteries and Crematoria NSW. The levy will be set at \$156 per burial, as in the case of cemeteries located in the Bourke Shire. In localities where cremations are available, the cost of the levy will be \$41 per cremation and \$63 per ash interment. The Levy will not apply to the interment of destitute people or children under the age of 12. Commencing from 1 July 2024, the levy will be calculated based on the number of services the operator performs each financial year. For Council as an operator, this will mean that its first payment will be made at the end of the 2024/2025 financial year and will be based on the number of services the operator performs from 1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025.

Whilst Council is responsible for the payment of the levy, it will be necessary for the cost of such levy to be passed onto families of the deceased, thus increasing the cost of burials at Bourke Shire cemeteries. I will be reporting this matter to Council in May 2024 for inclusion in its 2024/2025 draft Operational Plan (inclusive of Councils Fees and Charges), which has been on exhibition over the past 28 days.

Climate and Water Outlook

It is noted that the Bureau of Meteorology has released its Climate and Water Long Range Forecast for the April-June 2024 period. Such outlook provides that southwest NSW is forecast for below median chance of rainfall whilst northern and eastern NSW are expected to receive median levels of rainfall. Near median and low flow is likely for sites across northeast NSW; high stream flow is likely for sites across southeast NSW; and warmer than usual days and nights are very likely for all of NSW.

The Bureau notes that El Nino continues to decline, with a “return to neutral conditions expected later in autumn 2024. Warm ocean temperatures persist around Australia with the Pacific Ocean conditions also expected to be neutral during autumn 2024.” A video in respect of the forecast is available at: <http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/outlooks/#/overview/video>.

Total rural dam storage levels across the state are at 72% of the total accessible storage capacity, compared to 90% this time last year. Burrendong Dam is at 59% capacity whilst the Menindee Lakes are at 53% capacity. There are currently various red alert warnings for blue-green algae across the state, including along the Darling River (at Pooncarie) and on the Bogan River at the Nyngan Weir Pool.

Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy

I was never a fan of Queensland in State of Origin rugby league games, but I did admire Wally Lewis for his toughness, footballing skills and his ‘never say die’ attitude which seemed to bring the NSW Blues

undone on numerous occasions in Origin games during the 1980's and early 1990's. People of my vintage would undoubtedly remember when Wally stood up to a rampaging Mark Geyer in 1991. No show of fear there. All that is a very distant past for Wally Lewis these days, following being diagnosed with the brain disorder, chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE). CTE is caused by repeated blows to the head which often triggers memory loss and the deterioration of basic cognitive skills and behavioural issues. Whilst Wally can remember the details of a game from 1983, it is reported that he can have a brain fade and not remember where something is in his house.

CTE goes back to the 1920's when it was referred to as the "punch drunk syndrome." Obviously, medical science has learnt a lot about the disorder since those early days, but there is no doubt the disease mainly occurs in people who have played high impact sports. There is currently no cure for the disorder, however treatment is available to slow progression. Sport is an important part of our lifestyle, and it is pleasing that many sporting codes are making changes to their rules to essentially, save players from themselves.

Quote: "They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old: Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn. At the going down of the sun and in the morning, We will remember them." – The Ode, from the poem "For the Fallen" by Laurence Binyon.