



**BOURKE
SHIRE
COUNCIL**

“From the General Manager’s Desk”

2 May 2024

Remembrance

As part of Councils monthly meeting agenda, Councillors stand for a minute of silence to recognise and remember those residents of Bourke Shire, or former residents, who have passed away in the previous month. At last week's April Council meeting, Mayor Barry added to the remembrance by asking Councillors and staff in attendance that they keep in their thoughts those people who died at Westfield Shopping Centre, Bondi Junction recently. It's a long way from Bourke to Bondi Junction. However, as a person who has attended Westfield Bondi Junction on many occasions, I was greatly saddened by the incident in terms of the six (6) lives lost, the people who were injured (both physically and mentally), and that the atrocity occurred in a place that, up until last week, was full of good memories for me, and no doubt so many others. Unfortunately, Bondi Junction won't ever be the same. With the recent knife crime in NSW, Premier Chris Minns has advised that it “would be irresponsible not to look at” tougher knife laws. In Queensland, laws have been passed which prohibit the sale of knives to people under the age of 18, but more importantly, the laws allow police officers to use metal detectors without a warrant.

Internet Service Option

In late March 2024, Telstra announced the launch of its Satellite Home Internet product, which is powered by Starlink. A world first on the Starlink network, this product will offer Telstra customers the option of a broadband service and home phone using Low Earth Orbit (LEO) Satellites. If you're interested to find out how these satellites work, information is available at:

<https://www.telstra.com.au/exchange/what-are-leo-satellites-and-how-do-they-work-->

With the introduction of this product into Telstra's fixed mix service, residents of regional and rural Australia will have available to them a different connectivity option, given that the diverse Australian terrain isn't always suited to more traditional technology types. The service will be available for \$125/month with an upfront hardware cost of \$599 for the latest Starlink kit. You can read more about the product on Telstra Exchange <https://tel.st/starlink> or on [Telstra.com/internet/Starlink](https://www.telstra.com.au/internet/Starlink)

Naming of Road

Located off Sid Coleman Drive in North Bourke, approximately halfway up the Drive as you head to the airport, is a currently un-named road. At its April 2024, Council resolved to approve the naming of the road, Buster Lane, and take the necessary action to invite submissions on the proposal and further notify various government agencies on the proposal, prior to a further report to Council to finalise the matter.

In proposing the name Buster Lane, Council did so in commemoration of the Bourke district cotton pioneer, Jack Buster, who died in 2014. History shows that Jack Buster was regarded as the father of cotton in the Bourke Shire. He and his wife, Harriett, moved from their home in the United States to

pursue their dream to develop cotton in Australia. They came by sea to Australia with their five (5) children and various farming and cotton-picker machines. Landing in Sydney in 1964, the family initially went to Wee Waa, to work in the cotton industry with his brother-in-law and father-in-law. Jack was inspired to move to Bourke where there seemed to be “unlimited water and very little irrigation development.” He was a pioneer in the development of cotton in the Bourke valley from the early days and developed thousands of hectares of land into cotton farms along with the development of major water storages. Jack and his family maintained a strong presence in the industry all the way from the early days through to the construction of a new cotton gin at North Bourke in the 1990’s. In addition to his farming interests, Jack Buster was an active member of the Bourke community, helping to establish the Bourke Christian Church, the Pera Bore Christian Community School and the Cornerstone Community in Bourke.

Jack Buster was always a keen pilot and owned several planes while in Bourke. Chief amongst these was his blue Tiger Moth that Jack used for work and travel, but mainly for recreational purposes, taking friends and visitors for flights around Bourke and performing all sorts of aerobatics. ABC News reported at the time of Jacks passing that “Jack loved flying and one of his chief pleasures was taking people for a spin in his Tiger Moth. He'd take them into the skies, loop the loop, do barrel rolls, and generally give them the full aerial treat. And then, sometimes, when he was looping the loop, he'd turn off the engine, for that added thrill. And then he'd laugh, and say "That's fun, isn't it?" And calmly restart the engine.” Jack also built and flew his own Short Take-off and Land (STOL) aircraft in his home shed which was signed by Nancy Bird Walton before its first flight. Jack was also a returned serviceman having served with the US Marines in the Korean War from 1950-1953.

Tour de OROC Auction

Whilst the 6th biennial Tour de OROC riders and support crew were previously in Bourke on 22 March 2024, due to conflicting events in Bourke on the day, the decision was taken to postpone the charity auction in support of the Macquarie Homestay facility in Dubbo, until a later date. With previous Tours having raised almost \$660,000 for the Homestay facility, the Bourke Charity auction went ahead on 19 April 2024 at the Bourke Bowling Club, with an enthusiastic group of bidders on hand. At the close of the auction, close to \$15,000 had been raised by the Bourke Community for the Homestay facility. I am confident that most Bourke residents are aware of the importance of Macquarie Homestay, as it provides affordable accommodation for people across the region who need to travel to Dubbo for medical treatment. Following the opening of the Western Cancer Centre in Dubbo, demand for accommodation is significant with Bourke Shire residents being high on the list of patrons.

It was great to welcome back to Bourke for the auction, Tour de OROC instigator and rider, Mathew Dickerson, fellow riders Andrew Graham and David Hayes, along with former Bourke Public School Principal and Tour support crew chief, Paul Loxley and his wife Julie along with Pam Dickerson. They all certainly enjoyed the evening and were most thankful for the generosity of those in attendance, as am I.

Congratulations to Councils Manager Economic Development, Mel Milgate, who, along with the evenings auctioneer, Greg Seiler, successfully navigated the evenings activities, with spirited and generous bidding on the 30 auction items being the outcome. A big thank you must also go to the Bourke Rotary Club for their assistance and to those individuals and businesses who supplied auction items for the evening. In this regard I extend my thanks to Neil Driscoll, Ronny Gibbs, Andrew Hull, Jordan May, Ros Milgate, Paul Quigg, Liam Rice, Bronwyn Whitbread, Back O' Bourke Collective, Back O' Bourke Exhibition Centre, Bourke Betta Electrical, Bourke Furniture One, Bourke Home Hardware, Bourke's Butchery, Morrall's Bakery, Rice's Cordials, Dubbo Regional Theatre and Convention Centre, and Taronga Western Plains Zoo.

Northern Basin Connectivity improvements

NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water is seeking to take action to improve water flowing across the connected catchments of the northern NSW Murray Basin. This work is building on the analyses and consultation that occurred as part of developing the Western Regional Water Strategy. In September 2023, the Minister for Water convened the independent Connectivity Expert Panel to review the department's analyses and to independently assess their adequacy. The panel has recently released its interim findings and recommendations report, ahead of providing its final report to the Minister in June 2024. A copy of this report is available by going to <https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au> and then searching 'northern basin' and then scrolling down to and accessing the heading 'Northern Basin Connectivity Program'.

Two webinars will be held by the NSW Government to enable the panel to present their findings and recommendations and take questions from stakeholders. The webinars will include a presentation and Q&A session. One webinar was held yesterday; however, this webinar will be repeated tomorrow, Friday, 3 May 2024 commencing at 12 noon for an expected 1-hour period. Speaking on the webinar will be Peter Hyde, Director Inland Planning, Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water and Chair of the Connectivity Expert Panel, Amy Dula. Registration for the webinar is through the abovementioned links.

Quote: "My beautiful wife has dementia, please say HELLO to her." Wording on a t-shirt worn by the husband of a dementia sufferer in the seaside suburb of Manly. When people talk to his wife, she starts talking.