



**BOURKE
SHIRE
COUNCIL**

“From the General Manager’s Desk”

9 May 2024

Domestic Violence

April was a terrible time in NSW in terms of most disturbing incidents dominated by knife crime and domestic violence (DV). The Bondi Junction tragedy; the stabbing of Bishop Mar Mari Emmanuel at the Assyrian Christ the Good Shepherd church in Wakeley Sydney, which was subsequently deemed terrorist related; the DV related murder in Forbes of Childcare worker, Molly Ticehurst, allegedly by her ex-boyfriend; and then the stabbing death of a 10-year-old in a suburb of Lake Macquarie with the alleged murderer being her sister. What is going on with our society?

After so many terrible incidents, the focus is now squarely on our political leaders as to how these matters can be addressed in a macro sense. Reviews of knife laws, bail laws, a Royal Commission into DV, are all being spoken about as options. The question that has to be asked however in respect of the issue of DV, is why has it taken the death of another women in Molly Ticehurst for DV to finally be declared as a “national crisis?” Perhaps it’s the fact that her murder was so senseless and that Ms Ticehurst was, from what I have read, so let down by our legal system. She is unfortunately not the first. As a Council we have written to Government seeking the toughening of bail laws. Our focus was to protect elderly people from re-offending perpetrators. Council was effectively told, everything was fine, and it is suspected that others have written to Government seeking to strengthen bail laws to protect vulnerable women, also did so to no avail.

Up until the end of 2023, an average of one woman was killed per week in Australia. This year, that number has increased to be closer to one woman being killed nearly every four (4) days. At the time of writing that was 26 Australian women who had been murdered this year. In NSW, Police were called to more than 500 DV related incidents each and every day last year with the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR) reporting that in respect of nearly half of these incidents, there was a child at risk of harm. Compounding these figures is that it took an average of 26 incidents for a victim to make a report. In the past two (2) year's BOCSAR reports that DV assaults reported by NSW Police have increased by 6.7%, with intimidation, stalking and harassment reports having increased by 6.1%. I don't have the statistics for DV related injuries, but one could only imagine. I have to agree, it is a National Crisis that is going to take strong leadership to address. As a society, and as parents, we have an obligation to raise our children, showing respect to our partners and others. Kids replicate what they see and learn at home. In addition, in today's society, children also replicate what they see on the web, with many authors writing of the negative influence of social media in this space.

2024 Local Government Elections

Don't forget that the 2024 Local Government Elections, also known as the Council elections, will be held on Saturday, 14 September 2024. If you're a potential candidate, the NSW Electoral Commission is conducting a series of information webinars for candidates and political participants in the lead up to

the 2024 elections. For information go to: <https://elections.nsw.gov.au> and scroll down the home page to "2024 NSW Local Government elections".

Draft Operational Plan

Councils draft Operational Plan came off exhibition on 26 April 2024. The draft Plan includes Council's annual budget and associated documentation including its Revenue Policy and Schedule of Fees and Charges. The Revenue Policy sets out Councils annual rating structure and its approach to setting fees as listed in the Schedule of Fees and Charges. Whilst submissions have closed, the draft documentation continues to be available for viewing at Councils Website. In accordance with the requirements of the NSW Local Government Act, Council will proceed to consider any submissions received prior to adopting its annual Operational Plan. Such considerations will take place when a report on the draft Plan is presented to Councils 27 May 2024 Ordinary Meeting.

Northern Basin Connectivity

I wrote in last week's GM's Column that in September 2023, the NSW Minister for Water, the Hon. Rose Jackson, had convened the Connectivity Expert Panel to review the work undertaken by her Water Department through the Northern Basin Connectivity Program and to provide an independent assessment of its adequacy. For information, the department's Northern Basin Connectivity Program is taking action to improve water flowing across the connected catchments of the northern NSW Murray Basin at important times. This work is building on work undertaken by the NSW Government as part of developing the Western Regional Water Strategy.

Council has previously resolved to correspond with Minister Jackson regarding its opposition to the proposed Louth Weir Fishway and Weir Project and the proposed removal, or the lowering of weir heights, along the Barwon Darling water system, all proposed as part of the Northern Basin Connectivity Program. I am pleased to advise that I am in discussions with the Ministers office regarding the arranging of a mutually convenient meeting time to allow the Mayor and I to meet with the Minister to discuss this most important of matters.

James Barnet

I recently received an invitation to attend a function to be held in the "Jimmy Barnet Room" in what is now known as "The Exchange" in the main street of Dubbo. It is the big white building opposite Riverdale Shopping Centre and as the name suggests, was once home to the Dubbo Post Office and telephone exchange. Anyway, apart from a fleeting thought as to whom Jimmy Barnet might be, I didn't give the name any further consideration. Fast forward a few weeks and I am in the Sydney CBD at the former General Post Office (GPO) in Martin Place, Sydney. I looked to my left and there were some architectural drawings of the Post Office from when it was built in two (2) stages between 1866-1889 and details of the architect, one James (Jimmy) Barnet. Turns out that James Johnstone Barnet (1827 – 1904) was the Colonial Architect for NSW from 1865 until his retirement in 1890. Some quick research revealed that as Colonial Architect he oversaw the design of the Bourke Post Office in Oxley Street along with defence works at Port Jackson, Botany Bay and Newcastle, several lighthouses, courthouses, lockups, police stations and numerous other post offices throughout New South Wales.

In Sydney he designed and supervised the construction of several important public buildings: a new wing to the Australian Museum, the General Post Office (as previously mentioned), the Colonial Secretary's Office, Public Works and Lands Buildings, Customs House, Public Library, the Medical School at the University of Sydney and the Callan Park Asylum. All up, 1490 public works projects were carried under his direction.

Whilst Mr Barnet has long departed this world, I think he might now be following me! Last weekend, I was perusing a Magazine from one of the Sunday Papers and there was an article regarding the traditions that went into farewelling departed loved ones in Sydney in the late 1800's. The article included a picture of the Redfern Mortuary Station, near Central Station, "designed by James Barnet." With 1490 public works projects across the state, James (Jimmy) Barnet certainly left his mark on Bourke, Dubbo and much of the balance of NSW.

Bourke Show

The Annual Bourke Show to be held on Saturday 1 June 2024, is now but only some 3 weeks' away with all the necessary information for this major annual event being available at: www.bourkeshow.com. Contact details, exhibit entry forms, the pavilion exhibit schedule, the timetable for the numerous activities on the day, along with various booking forms, are all available on the web site. The Annual Show is an important component of Bourke's social calendar. I take the opportunity to thank the hard-working Committee and all volunteers on the day for what you do for the community in presenting the Show. Hopefully the weather on the day is fine and mild.

Quote: "As long as autumn lasts, I shall not have hands, canvas, and colours enough to paint the beautiful things I see." – Artist Vincent Van Gogh reflecting on the beauty of autumn.