



**BOURKE
SHIRE
COUNCIL**

“From the Acting General Manager’s Desk – 20 June 2024”

2024 NSW Local Government election

Councils General Manager, Leonie, has previously written as part of her weekly Column, that the Local Government elections in NSW will be held on Saturday 14 September 2024. It is now advised that the NSW Electoral Commission, who is generally responsible for the conduct of such elections, is inviting Expressions of Interest from members of the community who are interested in potentially working at the elections. There are various positions available for the election, but the highest number of roles relate to the role of Election Official on election day.

The key accountabilities of being an Election Official are to ensure that electors are correctly marked off the authorised roll and issued with the appropriate ballot papers; ensure accurate record keeping and reconciliation to ensure timely communication of results on election night; undertaking the sort and count of ballot papers as directed by the Polling Place Manager; assisting with the decommissioning of the polling place at the completion of voting, including packing boxes, clearing and moving tables, taking down voting screens and removing rubbish; providing high quality customer service to stakeholders in a professional manner and acting with integrity, impartiality and transparency in the conduct of the election. My research shows that the total election day package fee (excluding super) payable to an Election Official is \$687.55 for the day. It should be noted that this election day package fee includes a meal allowance and online training fee. The online training fee is only payable on successful completion of training and election day duties.

If you are interested in working at the election you should complete an application online, with the Commission encouraging those interested to apply as soon as possible. Anyone who has previously worked with the Electoral Commission still needs to register again and create a new login, as previous login details are no longer valid. The link to register your expression of interest follows:

<https://eoi.elections.nsw.gov.au/eoi/eoiwelcomePage?EEID=LG2401>

As a “by the way”, it is advised that up until the proclamation of the 1993 Local Government Act, responsibility for the conduct of the local government elections in NSW every four (4) years rested with the Town Clerk of the particular Council area. All that changed in 1993 when the then Minister for Local Government and Member for Dubbo, (the now late) The Honourable Gerald Beresford Ponsonby Peacocke, oversaw the rewriting of the NSW Local Government Act, that had been in place since 1919. The ‘scuttlebutt’ in local government circles at the time of the new Act was that in changing the election process and introducing performance based contracts for the newly titled role of General Manager, which replaced the title of Town Clerk, was done so by Minister Peacocke and directed at various senior council officials that Mr Peacocke had had confrontations with over his years as an Alderman at Dubbo Council and then as a Member of Parliament from 1981 to 1999. On his resignation from Parliament, he was once again subsequently elected to Dubbo Council becoming Mayor.

Davidson Oval

Councillors have previously undertaken discussions regarding potential projects to be undertaken in the Shire as part of grant funding available at the time. One of the projects endorsed by Council was the development of Female Change Rooms at Davidson Oval. As part of such discussions, Councillors were of the view that investigations be undertaken with a view to the development of a Master Plan for the Davidson Oval Precinct. Councillors noted that the current facilities, particularly the grandstand, had reached their useful life, and an opportunity to improve all the infrastructure at the precinct should be included in the Master Plan.

To this end, a consultancy known as ROSS Planning was engaged by Council to develop the Master Plan for Davidson Oval. Following a thorough site analysis and a series of engagement activities with those who use the oval, it is advised that the preparation of the Draft Master Plan has now been completed. The Plan presents opportunities for a refresh of the existing site, providing a clear and strategic vision for its future. The site also functions as a community gathering space for community events and the Draft Master Plan is intended to increase community use of the site.

The Draft Master Plan was endorsed by Council for public exhibition and comment at its May 2024 meeting. The draft document is now on exhibition until 5 July 2024 with a hard copy available for inspection at the Council Office in Mitchell Street, Bourke during normal office hours. Alternatively, a copy of the draft is available on Council's website at www.bourke.nsw.gov.au Any interested person can make a written submission to Council with respect to the Draft Master Plan with submissions being received by Council up until 4pm on Friday 5 July 2024.

Once a Master Plan is adopted, having regard to submissions received, significant expenditure will be required to bring the Master Plan to fruition. Accordingly, I encourage the community, including sporting groups, to have their say now, either positive or negative, to allow the pursuit of grant funding; confident that the community is supportive of such pursuits.

North Bourke Bridge

Works on design plans to upgrade the heritage North Bourke Bridge over the Darling River with a view to converting the previously trafficable bridge to a footbridge, are proceeding. The preferred option is to deconstruct and ultimately replace the timber approach spans substructure and superstructure, refurbish the steel and lift spans and replace the timber decking on these spans. As part of these pursuits, a number of assessments of the structure are required to inform the design of the upgrade works. In this regard, residents may have recently noted activity on the water at the base of the bridge piers where highly trained and skilled divers are undertaking an assessment of the bridge's piers.

Underwater and Above-water Assessment of the piers is required to confirm the surface condition of the heritage structure as well as the extent of any corrosion of the wrought iron material. In addition to divers undertaking underwater inspections of three (3) of the wrought iron piers, noting that each pier comprises two (2) piles, they will also undertake high pressure cleaning of the pile surfaces, followed by visual and video inspections. As I say, the divers are highly trained and skilled. I am not so sure I would like to be diving in the current rather muddy waters of the Darling River. It was suggested to me that it would be somewhat like flying a plane without any instruments! In coming weeks, scaffolding will be erected for a period to allow engineers to undertake a comprehensive inspection of the centre spans of the bridge.

Petrol Prices

I have often heard people complain of the price of fuel in Bourke. Fear not. I returned to my hometown of Mudgee over the Kings Birthday holiday weekend and was somewhat shocked at the price of diesel being at \$2.30 a litre in the majority of service stations with one service station being a significant amount lower. Mudgee is located 250km from a western Sydney fuel terminal. In Orange, which is also located close to 240km from the western Sydney terminal, the price per litre was \$1.98. In Bourke, the price of diesel was \$2.15 a litre and Bourke is 740km from the terminal. That's a big difference in price between the three (3) centres.

I also travelled to Penrith took note of the prices on the way home and while the price for diesel varied was generally between the \$1.85 and \$1.95 mark coming over the mountains through Lithgow.

A similar price range was evident in Narromine and Nyngan.

One really has to question the age-old question of "why the variance?" Just to put the price variance in perspective, the 110-litre fuel tank of a 300 Series Landcruiser, from empty, would cost \$217.80 to refuel in Orange, \$236.50 in Bourke and \$253 to refuel in Mudgee on the last long weekend.

Quote: "I will not be doing any interviews or commenting further on any issues this weekend, so no need to maintain vigil outside my home." – Former Nine Entertainment Chair, Peter Costello after resigning as Board Charman following an incident with a journalist. It's interesting how media people react to the media when roles are reversed.