



**BOURKE
SHIRE
COUNCIL**

“From the
General Manager’s Desk –
11 July 2024”

Caretaker Mode

With the upcoming Local Government Elections, NSW councils enter what is called a ‘caretaker period’ which commences four weeks prior to the date of the election and extends up until the day of the election. With the election being held on Saturday 14 September 2024, caretaker provisions commence on Friday 16 August 2024.

The Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 provides, at Regulation 393B, that during the caretaker period, council must not enter a contract or undertaking involving the expenditure or receipt of an amount equal to or greater than \$150,000 or 1% of the council's revenue from rates in the preceding financial year (whichever is greater), nor determine a controversial development application. In addition, the Council is unable to appoint, reappoint or remove a person as the council's general manager.

As I have previously advised, if you're interested in nominating to become a candidate, there is a significant amount of information on both the NSW Electoral Commission website and the NSW Office of Local Government website at www.olg.nsw.gov.au In terms of nominating to be a councillor, it is advised that the lodgment of nominations open at 8am, Monday 5 August 2024 with nominations closing at 12 noon on Wednesday 14 August 2024. Electors who wish to nominate as a candidate for Bourke Shire Council in the Local Government election, must complete a valid nomination application and present it to the Returning Officer before nominations close. This form will become available on the Electoral Commission website during July.

Australian Local Government Association (ALGA)

I am writing this Column from the Nation’s Capital of Canberra where, along with Council’s Mayor, Barry Hollman, we are attending ALGA’s 2024 National General Assembly.

The theme of the 2024 Assembly is “Building Community Trust” which acknowledges the critical importance of trust in the different levels of government and amongst its citizens. The conference program features a range of high-profile speakers who are

exploring ideas about what creates trust, and how local councils nurture it. With 1200 members including mayors, shire presidents, councillors, general managers and council staff from across Australia converging on Canberra for the Assembly, I am confident that there will be good learnings for all in attendance.

Nationwide Publicity

I was reminded last week of the power of both social and mainstream media.

Following discussions at the June Council meeting, Council's Manager of Economic Development, Mel Milgate, put a further 'shout out' on Facebook seeking applicants for the vacant position of Captain of the PV Jandra, arguably Bourke's most popular tourist attraction. By the following Monday (1 July 2024) the Jandra advertisement had been viewed by some 25,000 people, but still no applicants for the role. All was about to change when last Tuesday, Mel received a call from former Radio 2WEB announcer, Sally Sara, who now presents *The World Today*, a weekday Radio Current Affairs program on ABC Radio.

Sally said that she has seen the Facebook advertisement for a Captain; understands that the Jandra isn't currently operating due to Council being unable to attract a suitable Captain for the boat and further, understands the importance of the Jandra in keeping the local tourism industry 'afloat.'. As an aside, whilst you might think that operating a vessel on the Darling Baaka River is a simple affair, the Jandra is a commercial vessel, which means the skipper must hold a commercial level licence, which involves a significant number of on-the-job training hours.

Anyway, Sally considers the lack of a Captain to be a great human-interest story due to, not every town having a working paddle vessel in their back yard, let alone in the outback. Sara organised Stephanie Smail to interview not only Mel, who talks on the need for a Captain and the importance of tourism to Bourke, but also interviewed historian and former Bourke resident, Dr Paul Roe, who talked on the history of the Jandra. You can listen to the ABC Radio interview in an ABC News article available at: www.abc.net.au/news/2024-07-03/paddle-steamer-captain-needed-bourke-shire-council/104049458

Following the airing of the interviews at a little after 1.00pm last Tuesday, by 6pm that evening, Mel had received seven enquiries from interested and appropriately qualified captains. But that was just the start. On Wednesday, Mel received a call from ABC TV News, Channel 24 - a dedicated 24-hour digital news channel - who were keen to interview Mel on live TV regarding the need for a Jandra Captain. As mentioned earlier in the Column, the Mayor and I were in Canberra and were delighted to gather round a television and watch Mel being interviewed on the matter from her office at Council by the ABC's Joe O'Brien, for a period of more than 5 minutes. With vision of both Mel and the Jandra being part of the story, to her credit, Mel didn't miss a beat as she most successfully promoted both her hometown and tourism in Bourke, led by the Jandra.

On Thursday, Mel was interviewed on Sydney commercial radio station 2GB, in the 12pm -3pm time slot, by host, Michael McLaren. In the March 2024 quarter for the Sydney Radio Ratings, 2GB was the top rating radio station in Sydney with an 11.9% share of the listening audience. Great exposure. To complete the week, Mel was interviewed by co-hosts, Natalie Barr and Matt Shirvington on the Channel 7 Sunrise show, under the banner of "Paddle Boat Captain Wanted." With captivating footage of the Jandra travelling the Darling Baaka River, including the North Bourke Bridge, along with strategically placed Bourke product in the background for when the camera moved onto Mel, Bourke was displayed in a very good light. Sunrise has a national reach of 930,000. Following is the web address where the interview can be viewed; <https://7news.com.au/video/sunrise/the-nsw-town-searching-for-a-new-paddle-boat-captain-bc-6356632647112> Later on Friday, Mel finished up with a final interview for the week on 2WEB.

At last count, Mel had received more than 20 solid enquiries for the role of our Riverboat Captain. That is a fantastic number, however on a wider scale, the positive publicity generated for Bourke from the various interviews is most significant. To be able to access such a wide audience and sell the Bourke story on a national level is just tremendous for Bourke. Congratulations to Mel Milgate for her work in "selling Bourke" and a big thank you to the various media outlets for their assistance in these important matters for our community.

Road Condition Signage

A resident recently brought to my attention a picture of a solar powered Road Condition Sign that had been recently erected on the Cobb Highway near Wilcannia, which provides advice as to whether the road to Hay/Ivanhoe/Barrier Hwy is either, Closed or Open.

The signage also advises that for more Information "visit Live Traffic.com" A quick discussion with Councils Roads Manager, Paul Flanagan, revealed that Transport for NSW will be installing similar signage at North Bourke for those travelling on the Mitchell Highway (Bourke/Barrington/Cunnamulla) and at Culgoa Street in North Bourke for travellers to Wanaaring and beyond. There will also be other signs placed on the other side of Wanaaring, outside of the Bourke Shire. It is expected that the signage will be installed in August 2024, in time to assist those travellers experiencing the far northwest during the peak visitation period in our region.

Tiger, Tiger, Tiger!

On my recent return to Bourke from annual leave, I arrived home in time to turn on the television, just as the second half of the game between the West Tigers and the Canberra Raiders restarted after the break.

I was pleasantly surprised to see that the Tigers were leading 18-2. The balance of the game was compelling viewing as the Tigers chalked up a 48 to 24 win. I wasn't so confident to say "never in doubt" but it was certainly great viewing as a follow up to

the victory the week before against the Titans. Good job Benji and team. Whilst the following week against the Roosters wasn't so great, the win against the Raiders was a highlight during what has been a tough season so far.

Quote: "When he uses his official powers in any way...he will now be insulated from criminal prosecution." Dissenting US Supreme Court Judge, Sonia Sotomayor raising concern as the Courts decision regarding US presidents and ex-presidents.