



**BOURKE
SHIRE
COUNCIL**

“From the
General Manager’s Desk –
12 September 2024”

Council Elections

Don’t forget that the Council elections will be held this Saturday, 14 September 2024 with voting being compulsory for registered voters. There will be two (2) voting locations available to voters on Polling Day, these being in Bourke at the Bourke Public School Hall, Green St Bourke and at the Enngonia Public School. Both these polling locations will operate from 8.00am until 6.00pm on the day.

Come the time of the publication of this Column, Pre poll voting at the Shire office in Mitchell St, Bourke will have been underway since Monday, 9 September 2024. The Pre-poll is also operating on Thursday 12 September 2024 and Friday, 13 September 2024 at the Shire office from 8.30am to 4.00pm each day.

In the NSW council elections, the option of ‘absentee voting’ is not available to voters, like it is in State or Federal government elections. For instance, if you're travelling to Dubbo on Saturday with a dawn start, you can’t attend a poll in Dubbo hoping to lodge a vote for the Bourke Council election. Rather, if you're going to be away on Saturday, or for that matter today and tomorrow as well, you must pre-poll vote in Bourke.

If you're an elector who has recently moved to Bourke, you can vote in the Bourke council election by completing a declaration vote to update your address. Electors should tell an election official that they need to update their enrolment so they can be directed to the appropriate table on the day. To be accepted to vote, you will need to produce to the Electoral Official a current NSW Drivers Licence or NSW Photo Identification Card showing your new address in the Bourke Shire.

If you are a carer of a resident who is blind or who has low vision, it is advised that telephone assisted voting for such residents is now available with applications for telephone assisted voting closing at 6pm on Friday, 13 September 2024 with telephone assisted voting closes at 1pm on Saturday, 14 September. The telephone number for this service is 1300 248 683.

Secure Your Home Day

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has reported an increase in the average trend in national break-ins for the first time in over a decade. 2% of Australian households experienced a break-in over the last 12 months, with an additional 2% of Australian households experiencing an attempted break-in with property stolen in two-thirds of break-ins. Common evidence of an attempted break-in includes a door or window being damaged or tampered with (45%) and/or someone being seen or heard trying to break-in (27%). There has also been an increase of break-ins associated with motor vehicle theft, where car keys are stolen from homes. Unfortunately, residents of Bourke have experienced their fair share of these types of crime in the community.

National Secure Your Home Day being held on 28-29 September 2024, is a Neighbourhood Watch Australasia initiative, aimed at improving home security for all Australians. Your home is certainly a place where you and your loved ones should always feel secure. By dedicating one day per year to home security, householders can seek to reduce the risk of crime by conducting a 'home health check' by assessing how secure your property is and identify where security can be improved.

There are various simple ways that you can make your home more secure. These include installing locks on all entry points to your home (windows and doors); moving items that could be used to assist with access to windows, such as ladders or wheelie bins; locking gates or installing fences; installing motion sensor lighting and security cameras; locking security screens on windows and doors once installed and making sure that valuables cannot be easily seen from outside your home, such as computers, wallets, handbags, cash, jewellery or keys.

Another great way of securing your property is by getting to know your neighbours. Neighbours can help secure your property by keeping an eye on your home when you are out or away on holidays. Your neighbours are your closest source of help and assistance in the case of emergency. Studies show that crime is lower in neighbourhoods where residents know each other. If you don't know your neighbour, it is suggested that on National Secure Your Home Day you take the opportunity to introduce yourself to your neighbours if you haven't previously done so.

You can register to participate in National Secure Your Home Day, and in doing so receive tips on how to improve home security, useful resources, activities for kids, plus more! Simply go to:
<https://secureyourhomeday.com.au/>

Author Visit

During May the Bourke Public Library hosted a visit from the internationally renowned bestselling Australian author Chris Hammer. To their credit staff at the Library organised for another amazing author to recently visit the library with Nicole Alexander attending. Nicole, who was born, raised and lives north-west of Moree, is the bestselling author of eleven historical fiction novels and her novels, poetry, travel, creative writing and genealogy articles have been published internationally. Her debut novel, 'The Bark Cutters' was shortlisted for an Australian Book Industry Award. Her most recently published novel, titled 'The Last Station' is centred around a dying riverboat trade along the Darling River.

A precis of this novel reads: "In nineteenth-century New South Wales, the name Dalhanty stood for prosperity and prestige. The family's vast station was home to more than 80 people, and each year their premium wool was shipped down the bustling Darling River to be sold in South Australia. Yet, just decades later, Dalhanty Station is on the brink of ruin . . .

In the summer of 1909, eccentric Benjamin Dalhanty and his son Julian anxiously await the arrival of the *Lady Matilda*, the first paddle-steamer to navigate the river in more than two years. It will transport their very last wool clip to market. Twenty-year-old Julian wants more from life than the crumbling station, but as the eldest son his future has been set since birth.

Until the day his mother invites a streetwise young man from Sydney into their home . . . Ethan Harris's arrival shines a light on a family at breaking point. But he also unwittingly offers Julian an escape, as the young men embark on a perilous journey down the Darling and west into untamed lands." Sounds a most interesting, and a close to home, novel worth a read.

Mental Health

Our mental health continues to be such an important issue for all communities. Unfortunately, 9 people die by suicide in Australia every day. In addition, 1 in 5 Australians experience a mental illness each year and 50% of people living with mental illness do not seek professional help. What was once a rarely talked about illness, organisations such as the Black Dog Institute have done a sterling job in bringing the topic into the open, such that more people are opening up about their mental health.

Apart from providing a most comprehensive website with a raft of information on mental health, the Black Dog Institute (<https://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au>) has deemed October as Mental Health Month and in doing so promotes what it calls its 'One Foot Forward' program. Under the program, people are encouraged to join with the Institute to "walk, run or roll in solidarity" to support all those Australians who experience a mental illness each year.

You can sign up for free (<https://www.onefootforward.org.au/register/one-foot-forward/join>), then share your page and raise funds to help Australians impacted by mental illness and then you walk, run or roll and log your kilometres achieved during October. By getting involved you not only get to enjoy the fresh air and get your blood moving, with exercise being so important for your mental health, but it's also a fun community activity. It also helps raise awareness that help is out there if you need support for your mental health.

Final Football

I know a few "welded" on St George Dragons supporters who have been remarkably quiet in recent week's following their teams shock loss to the near last place Parramatta Eels. The loss saw the prospects of the Dragons playing finals football in 2024 basically evaporate as they moved out of the top eight and now needing a miracle to sneak back into the top eight. Mind you, Roosters supporters have also gone quite following ACL injuries to a couple of their more prominent players. Luckily, it's just a game!

Quote: "Since I became minister, I've made it very clear that vulnerable children do not belong in hotels, motels or caravan parks with shift workers instead of foster carers." – NSW Families and Communities Minister, Kate Washington, announcing changes to last-resort care emergency options.