



**BOURKE
SHIRE
COUNCIL**

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

Councils Elections

Voting in the 2024 Council elections is now over, with the NSW Electoral Commission now undertaking the count for Bourke Shire along with a further 125 of the 128 councils in NSW. The Office of Local Government is not expecting the elections to be declared until 30 September 2024, at the earliest.”

Time will tell when the poll for Bourke is ultimately determined and declared. Once the election is declared however, it will be necessary to determine a date and time for the convening of an initial meeting of the newly elected Council to allow it to elect from one of its own, a Mayor for the two (2) year period ending September 2028. In this regard, the Local Government Act requires that Council must hold a mayoral election at a council meeting within three (3) weeks of the declaration of the ordinary election. Councillors may also elect a Deputy Mayor, as it has done in the past.

At this initial meeting of Council, another requirement of the Local Government Act will be included on the agenda; that being for each Councillor to take either an oath or affirmation of Office, “at or before the first meeting of the Council after the Councillor is elected.” In undertaking the oath or affirmation, Councillors either swear or solemnly and sincerely declare and affirm to undertake the duties of the office of Councillor in the best interests of the people of Bourke and Bourke Shire Council and that they will faithfully and impartially carry out the functions, powers, authorities and discretions vested in them under the Local Government Act 1993 or any other Act to the best of their ability and judgment.

A Councillor who fails, without a reasonable excuse, to take the oath or affirmation of office, will not be entitled to attend Council meetings until they do so and will be taken to be absent without leave. As General Manager, I am required to ensure that a record is kept of the taking of the oath or affirmation. I do this by recording the taking of the oath or affirmation by each Councillor in the minutes of the initial Council meeting.

In addition to the election of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, and the taking of the oath or affirmation, other matters to be considered at this initial meeting include the determination of meeting times and schedules; consideration as to holding a countback instead of a by-election in the case of a Councillor vacancy; the appointment of delegates to other organisations and delegations to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

Drug Driving

With the media recently reporting allegations of drug driving by a high profile NRL player in the week leading up to the Finals Series commencing, I was recently reminded as to just how prevalent drug driving is across the State following a recent focus by NSW Police.

With 32 people having lost their lives on the state's roads in September last year and the high number of road fatalities across NSW during this year to date, Police launched what they called Operation RAID (Remove All Impaired Drivers) with a view to reducing fatalities across NSW. The Operation, which commenced at 12.01am on Thursday, 5 September 2024, and ended at 4.00am on Sunday, 8 September 2024, saw an increased police presence on NSW roads targeting drink driving, drug driving and fatigue - three of the largest contributors to the state's annual road toll.

The results are quite staggering with 6,653 traffic offences detected comprising 1,895 speeding offences, 261 mobile phone or distraction related offences and over 4,200 other driving offences. Where it gets very interesting is the statistics that during the operation, police conducted 120,093 Random Breath Tests and charged 211 drivers for PCA and DUI related offences. Of the 10,885 Random Drug Tests conducted, 470 drivers returned a positive result. So, for all the Random Breath Tests conducted under the Operation, the "charge rate" (my words) for every test was 0.0017569. For the Random Drug Tests, the Police undertook 109,208 fewer drug tests compared to RBT tests, with the "charge rate" for the drug tests being 0.0431786. In other words, for every 570 people who were randomly required to undertake a breath test during the operation, one test was positive. This compares to a positive test resulting from every 23.2 people who were required to undertake a roadside drug test.

Like so many people in the Far West who drive long distances, I find these numbers disturbing. You really must wonder the state of the driver of the vehicle coming in the opposite direction at some 110km/h. Interestingly, September is Rural Road Safety Month, a national community-based road safety initiative designed to highlight the additional risks when driving on rural and remote roads across Australia. Despite being less populated areas, deaths on rural and remote roads accounted for almost two thirds of the 2023 road toll.

Remember, if two (2) cars travelling at a speed of 110km/h were to collide head on, the impact force exerted on each car is equal and opposite in direction. Such a collision would be equivalent to hitting a solid wall at 220km/h. To the NSW Police, please keep up the good work.

North Bourke Oval

The perimeter of the North Bourke Oval, and pending approval of the NSW Geographical Names Board proposed to be renamed the Neville Simpson Sportsground, is now home to a white picket fence following the completion of required works. With funding provided by the Australian Government under the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program, the construction of the fence followed community consultation undertaken by Council where the fence around the Oval was identified as a priority.

With the Oval backing onto industrial activity, the installation of the visually pleasing fencing will ensure that the perimeter of the oval is clearly defined and ensure the oval is closed off to any unwanted vehicular traffic. It is anticipated that with the completion of the fence, use of the oval by the wider community will increase. There will be access gates that will not be locked, allowing access to all pedestrian users. The visual aspect of the fence around the oval is also expected to attract users to the facility. Also included in the project is a fenced area as a barrier between the oval's carpark and the general sitting area of the oval.

Now that the installation of the fence is complete, the Swagman sign that was previously located at Percy Hobson Park will have a face lift and then installed at North Bourke near the oval, such that visitors and locals can once again enjoy the Gateway sign!

Bourke Pool

The Bourke War Memorial Swimming Pool will re-open for the 2024/2025 swimming season on Saturday 28 September 2024. With the recent improvements to the main pool, learners pool and surrounds and with construction of the new canteen and entry now complete, Council's Pool Contractor, Scott Parnaby, is working hard to ensure that the complex is ready to cater for pool users come the end of the month. Following the inconvenience of construction works last swimming season, I know that Scott is looking forward to an uninterrupted and warm season. Don't forget that general admission charges at the Pool (2yrs and over) are still just \$3.00 per head whilst for aged pensioners, there is no entry charge.

For the aged, the pool is a perfect venue to undertake regular water walking sessions to improve general health and fitness. It is well documented that water walking is a low-impact, low-weight bearing exercise that minimizes the risk of injury or undue stress on the joints. It reduces the foot-striking forces that so often "jar" muscles, ligaments, tendons and bones, lessening the burden on the body.

Magpies

Swooping magpies are certainly out and about in Bourke. On a recent Saturday morning Parkrun event, a resident magpie was not impressed by the 27 participants in the run. Park runners were kept very busy looking out for and attempting to avoid the swooping magpie as they ran or walked along the levee at the Renshaw. I am advised that there are other swooping magpies around town, so keep an eye out for them.

Quote: "I cannot tell you what a relief it is to have finally completed my chemotherapy treatment."

- Catherine, the Princess of Wales. Cancer certainly doesn't discriminate.