



**BOURKE
SHIRE
COUNCIL**

“From the
General Manager’s Desk –
17 October 2024”

Mayoral Election

I take the opportunity to congratulate Councillor Lachlan Ford and Councillor Sally Davis who were elected as the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, respectively, for Bourke Shire Council at Councils Extraordinary Meeting held on Tuesday 8 October 2024. Up until the September 2016 elections, the Mayoral term for those Mayors elected by Councillors, as is the case in Bourke, was a 1-year term. This term was extended to a 2-year term when the NSW Government passed the Local Government Amendment (Governance and Planning) Bill 2016. Accordingly, Councillors Ford and Davis will hold their positions until September 2026 at which point a further election for the positions will be held for the following two (2) year period ending September 2028, at which point the next Ordinary Council elections will be held. I look forward to working with both Councillors for the betterment of residents in Bourke Shire.

New Rest Area

I was happy to have recently received advice from the Assistant Minister for Regional Development, Senator Anthony Chisholm, on behalf of the Australian Government, advising of funding to allow the construction of a new Heavy Vehicle Rest Area some 80 kilometres west of Bourke on the Bourke to Milparinka (Wanaaring) Road at Goonery.

In reading the advice I noted that the Assistant Minister had announced six (6) new road safety projects across the Nation under the Government’s Heavy Vehicle Rest Area (HVRA) initiative. The heavy vehicle rest area projects being funded are in NSW (3), Western Australia (2) and the Northern Territory. The funding package for the six (6) projects across the Nation totals some \$6.85 million with the Australian Government contributing \$5.48 million, with the balance made up by State Governments and the respective local Councils. With these six (6) projects comprising the third tranche of the HVRA, a total of \$140 million in federal funding will be provided over the 10-year program from 2022-2023 till 2032-2033. Under the program, new rest areas with facilities such as toilets and picnic areas, resurfacing, line-marking and bitumen sealing will be constructed.

It doesn’t seem that long ago that a road trip to Wanaaring Road was a bone jarring three (3) to four (4) hour journey, or longer, from Bourke. So rough, some truck operators would refuse potential jobs along the road, concerned at the potential for damage to their equipment. Today with all but 10 kilometres of the roadway to be sealed, a trip to Bourke Shire’s most western village takes under two (2) hours. The proposed Heavy Vehicle Rest Area is part of improving road safety for all users.

Long Weekend

I wrote in last week's column about the then upcoming October Long Weekend and hoped for an exciting NRL Grand Final between the Penrith Panthers and the Melbourne Storm. My hopes were certainly realised with a fantastic game ultimately played with the better team winning.

In addition to the NRL Grand Final, the 52nd NSW Aboriginal Rugby League Knockout Carnival was held in Bathurst over the Long Weekend. With some 30,000 people reported as attending over the weekend, games shown live on NITV on Sunday and Monday, 60 teams entered in the Men's draw, 16 teams in the Women's draw, 15 teams in the Under 13's Boys, and 16 teams in each of the Under 15 and Under 17 Boys categories, the Knockout has grown significantly over its 52-year history.

Congratulations are extended to the Bourke Warriors Women's Team who made it all the way through to the Final on the Long Weekend Monday ultimately playing against the Redfern All Blacks. Being the first Bourke Women's team to be entered in the knockout in 41 years, the Bourke Women put in a series of sterling performances to make it through the weekend to Monday's final. Although they went down to Redfern, the Bourke team certainly played strong. Interestingly, Redfern lost last year's knockout final but bounced back this year to win the final. Perhaps for the Bourke Women's Team it's a case of the adage 'that you can't win a Grand Final until you've lost one.' That was certainly the sentiment of Melbourne Storm Coach, Craig Bellamy, when reflecting on his team's loss on Sunday night. For the Bourke Warriors Men's Team, they also played strong, making it through to the Semi Finals before going down to the Nanima Common Connection (NCC) Team from Wellington. The NCC went onto play the strong Walgett Aboriginal Connection (WAC) Team, who went onto win the Knockout for the second consecutive year.

In Bourke over the Long Weekend, Councils expanded Café facility at the Back O' Bourke Information and Exhibition Centre operated for the first time with a significant number of locals and visitors alike taking advantage of the expanded facilities. It was pleasing to learn of many positive comments as to the quality of the coffee and the lovely gardens that surround the now re-opened café.

Shearers Hall of Fame

Hay in south-west NSW is the location of the Australian Shearer's Hall of Fame, with the Shear Outback Exhibition being a popular attraction with a substantial building, containing many exhibits, reflecting on the history of sheep shearing in the Outback of NSW. On the October Long Weekend, the Hall of Fame announced its 2024 inductees. One of the four (4) inductees was well known North Western NSW shearer, Peter William Orcher. The citation unveiled at the Hall of Fame in respect of Peter reads:

"Peter began his shearing career at age 17 and mainly shored in North Western New South Wales with narrow combs.

Peter became a contractor with his teams being in great demand due to the high standard he set and expected from his shearers and shed staff who on occasions were all indigenous."

I take this opportunity to congratulate Peter on his induction into the Hall of Fame. As I say Peter is well known in our area and his contribution to the shearing industry is significant in terms of the training and work ethic that he instilled into many youngsters over the years. I would hate to think how many sheep Peter has shorn over the years.

On the topic of the town of Hay, it was Australian Bush Poet, A.B. 'Banjo' Paterson who wrote the poem "Hay and Hell and Booligal" in 1896 with Hay and Booligal being towns down south with 'Hell' in the poem being a reference to the flat expanse of country between the two localities, known as the 'One

Tree Plain.’ The Australian National Dictionary defines the phrase “Hay, Hell and Booligal” as a description used to “designate a place of the greatest imaginable discomfort.” Understandably, the residents of Hay and Booligal were rather aggrieved at the time by Paterson’s comparison of their towns to ‘Hell.’ Funnily enough it is reported that “it is unlikely that Paterson ever visited Hay.” Nothing like not letting the truth get in the way of a good story!

Kris Kristofferson

I think I first came across Kris Kristofferson, the American actor, singer and songwriter who passed away recently at the age of 88, when he appeared in the Movie ‘Convoy’ with Ali MacGraw, in the late 1970’s. I subsequently heard him singing with the Highwaymen, where he joined with Johnny Cash, Waylon Jennings and Willie Nelson. I knew he was a big player in the performing scene but had no idea as to his career until his passing. I was interested to learn, for instance that he received a Rhodes Scholarship to attend the prestigious University of Oxford in England, studying poetry, specifically William Blake, earning a master’s degree. He was a US Army Ranger flying Helicopters and when he finished his military service, he was offered a teaching position at the West Point Military Academy but turned the offer down. Rather, he began to pursue a career in music, apparently despite his parent’s objections, mainly as a song writer. He was married for some six (6) years to country singer Rita Coolidge and then to lawyer Lisa Meyers for 41 years, who he met at a gym.

It was Kristofferson who wrote such classic songs as “Me and Bobby McGee,” “For the Good Times,” “Sunday Morning Coming Down,” and “Help Me Make It through The Night.” His filmography extends to appearing in 118 films extending from 1971 through to his last film in 2018. An amazing career and the author of some amazing songs.

Quote: "Keep your face always towards the sunshine - and shadows will fall behind you." Poet and journalist, Walt Whitman on maintaining a positive attitude.