



**BOURKE  
SHIRE  
COUNCIL**

## “From the General Manager’s Desk – 7 November 2024”

### **Mosquitoes**

With the water levels dropping in the Darling River and the warmer weather upon us, favorable breeding conditions for mosquitoes now exist. I have seen mosquito numbers rapidly increasing when I am out and about, especially at dusk and into the evening. Given this growth in numbers, I thought it timely to provide some tips on mosquito management.

To stop adult mosquitoes entering the home, ensure that undamaged flyscreens are on all house windows and doors and where applicable, screen chimneys, vents and other entrances. Consider using a surface insecticide spray in areas where mosquitoes like to rest.

For personal use on the body, the most effective mosquito repellents contain Diethyl Toluamide (DEET), picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus (OLE) (also known as Extract of Lemon Eucalyptus). The strength of a repellent determines how long it will protect you against mosquito bites, with higher concentrations providing longer periods of protection. Apply repellent to all areas of exposed skin, after you apply sunscreen. Avoid putting repellent near the eyes and mouth, or over open wounds, broken skin or abrasions. Always follow the product label instructions. It's important to reapply repellent after swimming. The length of protection from repellent is also reduced with sweating, such as during strenuous activity or hot weather, so it may need to be reapplied more frequently.

Most repellents are safe for use on children aged 3 months and older when used according to directions, although some formulations are only recommended for children aged 12 months and older - always check the product label for recommended age use. It is suggested that parents and carers don't allow children to apply their own repellent, apply it on them. Infants aged less than 3 months can be protected from mosquitoes by using an infant carrier draped with mosquito netting that is secured along the edges.

During the day, mosquitoes rest and hide in cool shady areas such as in and around the home before emerging at dusk to feed. If outside, wear loose, light-coloured clothing with long sleeves and pants. Also wear socks and shoes where possible. Clothing pre-treated with insecticides can provide additional protection but remember that repellent must still be applied to exposed skin.

Mosquitoes need water to breed, and some mosquitoes can breed in very small amounts of water, such as in the water that collects in a discarded soft-drink can.

Measures to reduce the risk of mosquitoes breeding in around the home include:

- Cleaning up your backyard and removing all water-holding rubbish, including tires and containers.
- Keeping your lawns mowed.

- Flushing and wiping out bird baths and water features once a week.
- Filling pot plant bases with sand to avoid standing water.
- Storing anything that can hold water undercover or in a dry place, and keeping bins covered.
- Flushing out the leaves of water-holding plants such as bromeliads once a week.
- Keeping drains and roof guttering clear to avoid standing water.
- Covering or securely screening the openings of septic tanks and rainwater tanks.

Properly cleaned and chlorinated swimming pools are rarely a source of mosquito breeding, however neglected pools can be a haven for mosquitoes.

Mosquitoes should not be underestimated. They can transmit a number of serious human diseases. In NSW, some mosquitoes transmit viruses such as Japanese encephalitis, Ross River, and Murray River encephalitis. Some parts of northern Queensland have mosquitoes that can transmit dengue fever infections. If after a mosquito bite, you develop a rash, flu-like symptoms such as fever, chills, headaches, joint or muscle pains (swelling or stiffness), fatigue, or you generally feel unwell, contact a doctor right away, or visit your nearest emergency department.

### **Bourke and District Children's Services**

The Bourke and District Children's Services recently held a successful Annual General Meeting. Congratulations to the outgoing committee, and welcome to the new team led by President, Tanya Jackson. I note from the service's Annual Report, General Manager Prue Ritchie highlighted the commitment to making a meaningful difference in children's lives and helping them connect with their community.

The BDCS has provided childcare and preschool services in Bourke for many years, and it continues to grow in both the number of children served and the workforce, thanks to significant funding to recruit skilled educators and develop a trainee program. This dedication to improving standards and programs is commendable.

Council back in July 2024 resolved that it continues its strong support in advocating for the Bourke and District Children Services model and in seeking funding for the Yanmali Early Childhood model. This resolution was in response to a report to Council which detailed Council's representations in respect of supporting the Bourke and District Children's Services (BDCS) following the announcement by the NSW Government of the proposed provision of funding for an alternative early childhood education model for Bourke.

A big thank you goes out to all staff, management, and the committee of the Bourke & District Children's Services for their hard work in enhancing outcomes for the children of Bourke. As the annual report states, "it takes a village to raise a child," and Bourke is fortunate to have such strong foundations in our community.

### **Bamara**

Bamara is an Indigenous-owned business created to deliver social impact programs to Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, focusing on providing culturally competent services that positively impact the lives of participants. Bamara is a Joint Venture between the David Liddiard Group and employment agency, Asuria. Earlier this year, Bamara launched the Bourke Digital Hub project to improve digital skills and job opportunities for participants over the next three years.

Funded by the Indigenous Skills and Employment Program (ISEP) through the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA), this initiative is part of the Australian Government's commitment to supporting First Nations people in their careers and training.

In September, I attended the first ISEP Graduation, where participants received laptops after completing their courses. At the event, I met Jamie Williams, the First Nations Program Operations Manager with over 30 years in sports medicine, who shared plans to conduct Sports Taping Information Sessions for local clubs and parents. Just last week, Jamie and the Bamara team held a successful event where participants learned about sports taping and received donations for local clubs to raffle. Following that, a community information session was held to share updates on Bamara's involvement in Bourke. I welcome Bamara's efforts and look forward to their contributions to the community. For more information about the ISEP program or Bamara, visit <https://www.bamara.com.au/>

### **Jockeys Facility – Renshaw Oval**

Council at its October meeting considered a report detailing tenders received for the demolition and construction of a new Jockey's Facility at the Renshaw Oval, here in Bourke. As part of the proposal the existing, and inadequate, Secretary's Office/Jockey's Facility at the Renshaw, would be replaced with a new purpose-built facility that would provide bathrooms and amenities for both male and female jockeys, as well as a Secretary's Office, kitchen and multi-purpose room, ensuring long-term functionality of the new building.

In all, Council received grant funding totalling some \$620,000 from the NSW Government's Stronger Country Communities Fund and the Federal Government's Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program. Whilst Council resolved not to accept any of the tenders received, Council has authorised its Manager Planning, Regulatory and Environmental Services, Dwayne Willoughby, to enter negotiations with a preferred contractor, with a view to bringing the necessary contracts to finalisation and a start to construction.

Funding commitments for the project have also been received from the Back O' Bourke Picnic Race Club (\$25,000) and the Bourke Pastoral and Agricultural Association (\$5,000) with Council resolving that such commitments, "be acknowledged." It is pleasing to see these major community-based organisations financially contributing to improved infrastructure that benefits the community. I thank both organisations for their commitments. With the Picnic Race Club racing as part of the Bourke Easter Festival on Sunday 20 April 2025 and the Bourke Show being held on 17 May 2025, the challenge for Council will be to have the new building completed in time.

**Quote: "I'd like to be with the winners circle on the first Tuesday in November – No, I'd love to be there."** – Melbourne Cup winning trainer, Gai Waterhouse reflecting on the Cup. Time will tell!