



**BOURKE
SHIRE
COUNCIL**

“From the
General Manager’s Desk –
6 February 2025”

Village Meetings

As previously advised, don’t forget that Councillors and staff will again be “on the road” in coming week’s meeting and consulting with both Bourke and Village residents as Council commences a review of its 2022-2032 Community Strategic Plan and the preparation of its 2025/2026 Operational Plan (Budget).

The timetable for the meetings is as follows:

Tuesday 18 February 2025: 8.30am - Enngonia (CWA Rooms) and 11.00am - Fords Bridge (Warrego Hotel).

Tuesday 25 February 2025: 8.30am – Louth (Louth Tennis Club Rooms) and 1.00pm – Wanaaring (Wanaaring Memorial Hall).

Thursday 27 February 2025: 12.30am – Byrock (Mulga Creek Hotel) and 5.30pm – Bourke (Back O’ Bourke Exhibition Centre-Conference Centre).

All members of the public are very much invited to attend and contribute as Council seeks to draw from the community their strategic objectives and requests for works and services in respect of our Shire wide community and any other current concerns regarding their respective locality. As I mentioned in last week’s Column, it is important to note that Councils Community Strategic Plan is not limited to the services provided by Council, but rather also include services provided by State and Federal Government Agencies and other providers. Identification of common issues relating to these levels of government can see strategies developed and included in the Plan such that Council can act as an advocate for the community in relation to these issues.

Sports Volunteers

The Australian Sports Commission was established by the Australian Government in 1985 “to increase involvement in sport and enable continued international sporting success through leadership and development of a cohesive and effective sports sector, targeted financial support and the operation of the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS).”

The ASC invests in high performance and national sport participation programs, performance pathways, people development and wellbeing, and research and innovation. The Commission manages high performance operations at the AIS Campus in Canberra, supports seven (7) National Training Centres of Excellence, and a European Training Centre in Italy. In addition, the Commission supports thousands of athletes and dozens of Australian sports through guidance and collaboration.

As part of the Commission's commitment to celebrating sport volunteers around Australia, they are currently on the lookout for sport volunteers within local communities. To this end, the ASC is planning a campaign for National Volunteer Week (NVW) in May and is seeking to incorporate the stories of sport volunteers from all backgrounds, roles and sports, who make a difference within communities across the Nation.

Following last week's Australia Day Awards in Bourke where local people were recognised for their contributions to the Bourke Shire community in terms of their volunteering efforts, I am certain that community members would have someone (or a few people) in mind who have made a difference in local sport. All you need to do is to complete a form detailing the volunteer's name, sport, role/s and a short blurb about them and why they deserve to be celebrated. The form is available at:
https://sportaus.syd1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_4GX7VwVdbxW41Ey

Education

Educating our children is one of the best gifts that we can give to them as parents and carers. Education however, comes at a cost especially during these tough financial times for so many families. The Smith Family has acknowledged the financial difficulties that many people encounter and has previously launched a program titled Saver Plus aimed at enhancing people's financial skills, such that they develop, and keep, good savings habits. Saver Plus has helped overcome the barriers around education expenses, assisting families set themselves up for a brighter future.

To be eligible for the program, you must have all of the following:

- A Health Care Card or Pensioner Concession Card
- An eligible Centrelink payment
- Be studying yourself OR have a child in school (can be starting school next year)
- Have regular income from work (either yourself or your partner) including Carers Payment / Child Support / Cash in hand
- Be 18+ years old
- Agree to join in free online financial education workshops called Money Minded
- Not completed Saver Plus previously.

Full terms and conditions are available at the following link:

<https://www.bsl.org.au/services/saving-and-managing-money/saver-plus/saver-plus-terms-and-conditions/>

Eligible savings goals are education related products or services such as laptops and tablets; books and supplies; uniforms and shoes; sports fees and gear; music lessons and activities; and camps and excursions. If you are eligible for the program, you will work with your Savings Coach to set a savings goal for your education related item(s). You then open an ANZ Progress Savings bank account, and you start to regularly save over a 10 month period. During this period, apart from saving, you can join in with financial education workshops. When you reach your saving goals, the ANZ bank will match your savings, up to \$500, to put toward your children's education expenses.

Should families like to learn more about Saver Plus, information is available at the following link:

<https://www.thesmithfamily.com.au/programs/financial/saver-plus>

Alternatively interested people can ring 1300 610 355 and a local coordinator from the Smith Family will contact you directly.

The Smith Family has reported some excellent results from the program including that:

- 84% of former participants are still saving more than 7 years after completing Saver Plus, including 71% still saving regularly.
- Financial wellbeing scores of participants increased from 35 out of 100 before Saver Plus to 66 out of 100 following involvement in the Saver Plus program. (Compared with the average Australian financial wellbeing score of 54 out of 100.)
- 87% of former participants felt more in control of their finances.
- 92% felt more confident generally after achieving their Saver Plus goal.

Saver Plus is Australia's longest running financial education and matched savings program. The up to \$500 contribution is a great incentive, however the ability to learn some financial skills and get control of one's finances is a forever life skill.

Summer Cricket

With the 14th season of the Big Bash League over, the Cricket Australia controlled 2024/2025 season in Australia has come to an end. Whilst the Australian men's side lost the One Day series against Pakistan, they went on to win the T20 series also against Pakistan and then winning a most exciting test series against India. Our women's team defeated the New Zealand women's team in their T20's series, defeated the Indian women's side in the one-day series and totally dominated the English team in all forms of the game (Ashes Series). In addition, the Hobart Thunder won its inaugural BBL title. What a busy season. On the BBL Final between Sydney and Hobart, I thought that after their twenty overs, Sydney were looking well placed, scoring 181. The game was essentially run and won by Hobart after 3 overs with Hobart opener, Mitchell Owen, making the game look very easy as he went on his way to score 108 runs from 42 balls, including 11 sixes. It was the equal fastest ever century in the history of the BBL. I enjoy watching all forms of cricket and Owen's effort were certainly sterling, especially during a final!

Whilst the Australian men's side is now playing a series in Sri Lanka and with local cricket still continuing, for me the sporting focus shortly turns to the 2025 National Rugby League Competition. With talk "fairly cheap" in the pre-season as to the how hard every team is training, including the mighty Tigers who have been reported as undertaking a "gruelling pre-season army camp" in Queensland where players were "pushed to their physical and mental limits" it is a case of time will tell once the season is actually underway.

Council Meeting

There was no Council meeting held in January 2025.

Following the September 2024 Council elections, the newly elected Council met in October 2024 with one of the Agenda Items being the Determination of the Date and Time of Meetings. Councillors acknowledged that the month of January was traditionally a quiet time in Bourke due to the holiday

season and the resulting number of people away from the town. In doing so it was resolved that there be no meeting in January 2025 nor in January 2026.

The first meeting of Council for 2025 will be held on Monday, 24 February 2025 in the Bourke Shire Council Chamber, 29 Mitchell St, Bourke, commencing at 10.15am with members of the public welcome to attend.

Quote: “We need to respect each other. Unfortunately, the world has not developed to that effect.”
– Australian Businessman, Sir Frank Lowy, whose Father was murdered at Auschwitz, reflecting on what society must learn from antisemitism.