



**BOURKE  
SHIRE  
COUNCIL**

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

**Village Meetings**

Next Tuesday is the start of Councils meetings and consultation with both Bourke and Village residents as part of Council review of its 2022-2032 Community Strategic Plan (CSP), such that the 2025-2035 CSP is developed, and to input into the preparation of Councils 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 residents 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.

To further assist in the preparation of the 2025-2035 CSP, an on-line survey has been developed. Regardless of whether you are a resident, business owner, a visitor or a property owner who resides outside of the Shire, you are invited to complete the survey and, in doing so, share your ideas and thoughts. Like the Village meetings, feedback will guide Council in creating a plan that reflects the community’s goals for the next decade. The survey can be accessed from the following QR code by simply opening the camera on your phone and pointing the camera at the code. You then tap the yellow banner that appears, and the survey will be available.



More information can be found by visiting Councils website (<https://bourke.nsw.gov.au>) or the Bourke Shire Council Facebook page. If you wish to talk to a Council officer re the meetings or the survey, please email [bourkeshire@bourke.nsw.gov.au](mailto:bourkeshire@bourke.nsw.gov.au) or ring Mel Milgate at Council on 6830 8000.

### **Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman**

On the topic of surveys, I recently received an email from the Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman (ASBFEO) requesting that Council spread the word regarding a survey that the Federal Treasury is undertaking as part of a review being undertaken to ascertain whether the ASBFEO is meeting the needs of the small business community.

I suspect that most readers will not have heard of the Ombudsman. I must be honest and say I hadn't! Curiosity got the better of me and I subsequently learnt that the Ombudsman's role came to fruition in March 2016 to contribute to Australia being the best place to start, grow and transform a business. The Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman does this by assisting and advocating for small businesses and family enterprises, providing advice and research to improve policies and providing access to dispute resolution information and services and mental health support, should the need arise.

The Ombudsman has four (4) separate teams providing the following services:

- The Assistance Team helps small businesses and family enterprises to resolve disputes involving other businesses or Commonwealth Government agencies and avoid costly formal legal avenues.
- The Advocacy Team undertakes a number of different activities to advocate for small businesses and family enterprises to improve policies affecting them.
- The Communication Team ensure that their audience know about ASBFEO's work and other supports available for small business and family enterprises. They manage the ASBFEO's and Ombudsman's social media presence on Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, and Facebook, and chair a National Small Business Media Communications Network that brings together national and state government small business communications counterparts to share insights, information and collaborate on matters of importance for the small and family business sector.
- The Data and Economics Team brings together a wide range of data and insights to celebrate the important contribution of small and family businesses and highlight the conditions they face.

The services provided by the Ombudsman to the estimated 2.59 million small businesses in Australian sounds beneficial. I would encourage small business in Bourke to complete the Treasury Review Survey and, if you're like me, highlight the limited knowledge of the Ombudsman with a view to their presence improving into the future.

Small business can be a tough road. Increased knowledge by small business operators regarding the availability of resources for assistance is beneficial for all. The Review Survey is available till 31 March 2025 and is available at: <https://consult.treasury.gov.au/c2025-624500>

### **Sarah Wheeler**

Sarah Wheeler, is a 27-year-old farmer from Rowena, located to the north east of Walgett. She lost her Dad, Gavin, when she was just 12 years of age. When she was 24, Sarah lost her Mother, Therese, to Stage IV Bile Duct Cancer in July 2022, just five months after her diagnosis. Bile Duct Cancer is a form of Gastro-intestinal (GI) cancer that affects the digestive system. Each year more than 8,000 Australians will die of an upper GI cancer – pancreatic, liver, stomach, biliary and oesophageal cancers.

Upper GI Cancers account for approximately one in five cancer deaths each year. The five-year survival rates for upper GI cancers in Australia today remain worse than outcomes for all cancers observed in 1975. Unfortunately, Australians living in remote areas are 1.3 times more likely to die from cancer compared to those living in major cities.

In honour of her parents, and to raise awareness of Upper GI Cancer, Sarah in 2024 set off on a 5,500km solo horseback ride which she called 'The Outback Long Ride'. Over nine months, Sarah and her horses are traversing Rural NSW, including an overnight in Bourke last year, and QLD, covering 15-30kms a day, five days a week, with weekends off. Approaching Australia Day 2025, Sarah posted that she had spent, at that point, 950 hours in the saddle. Just to put that in perspective, if you drove a car or truck for 950 hours and averaged 75km/h, you would travel some 70,000km!

Sarah now has 9 days of her journey left, planning to ride back into Rowena on 22 February 2025. She has raised closed to \$220,000 under the banner of the Pancare Foundation, which is the leading organisation raising awareness, supporting families and funding research for upper GI cancer. Sarah is a credit to her late Mum and Dad, her family and friends. If you would like to assist Pancare in support of Sarah's efforts, please check out the following link: <https://pancare-gi-cancer.raisely.com/sarah-wheeler>

## Tariffs

Much has been written in recent times regarding the imposition by US President, Donald Trump, regarding heightened trade tariffs. Whilst he agreed to pause imposing an initially announced 25% tariff on goods from Mexico and Canada, he is reported as floating the idea of an additional 10% across-the-board tariff on all goods imported into the US. However, what are tariffs and how do they work?

Put simply, tariffs are taxes charged on goods imported from other countries. For instance, given President Trump's original proposal to impose a 25% tariff on goods shipped from Canada and Mexico to the States, a product with an original value of \$100 would see an additional \$25 cost applied to it, resulting in the imported product being available for sale in the US for \$125. Those companies that import the goods from abroad pay the tariffs to the US government with the cost of the tariff, in the above example \$25, generally passed on to consumers through higher prices.

Apart from the prospect of a 'tit for tat' trade war across the world, with the cost of products rising as a result of the tariff, it would be expected that inflation would again be on the march. At the time of writing, goods imported to the US by Australia have not been targeted. Certainly, interesting times.

## Paracetamol Pack Size Changes

Effective 1 February 2025, non-pharmacy retailers such as a supermarket, petrol station or convenience store, are only able to sell packs of paracetamol (eg Panadol) containing 16 tablets or capsules. If you are a non-pharmacy retailer and you currently have paracetamol packs containing 20 tablets or capsules, you need to return them to your wholesaler. It is illegal to sell packs of 20 from 1 February 2025. New restrictions also apply to pharmacies.

The Australian Government's Therapeutic Goods Administration has imposed these new pack sizes having regard to the fact that each year in Australia, some 225 people are hospitalised with liver injury and 50 people die from paracetamol overdose.

**Quote: "Ultimately, the flooding situation will be impacted by the amount of rainfall, the tides and dam releases."** – Queensland Premier, David Crisafulli, talking on the worst floods at Ingham, far north Queensland, since 1967.