

St George resident awarded Public Service Medal

When Di Francisco received an email telling her she had been nominated for a Public Service Medal (PSM), she thought it was a scam.

“I nearly deleted the email, thinking it was a scam. It was only that it included a couple of details not publicly available that I decided to check instead.

“It was quite a shock to find out it was genuine, and a little overwhelming.”

The Public Service Medal was instituted in 1989 to recognise outstanding service by employees of the public service. It is the highest award available for a public servant in the Queen’s Birthday Honours list.

Di’s award recognises the important role she played as Environmental Health Co-ordinator at Balonne Shire Council during the Covid-19 pandemic and local flood events.

Mayor Samantha O’Toole worked closely with Di as Covid-19 regulations changed and borders closed and re-opened and closed again.

She said that one of the reasons the Balonne community wasn’t as badly impacted as it could have been was largely down to the determination of Di and her small team.

“While this was part of her role at Council, Di also became a community advocate in the face of constantly changing circumstances. Keeping businesses open and allowing tourism to continue were at the heart of much of the work being implemented at that time.

“I know she talked to the community to find out their issues, and that she took a hands-on approach whenever she could if it meant keeping a shop open, or getting specialist ag workers into the



Mayor Samantha O’Toole congratulates Di Francisco on her Public Service Medal award.

Shire.

“This award is well deserved.”

Balonne faced some unique challenges during Covid-19, and Di recalls having to work with multiple government agencies across agriculture, tourism, hospitality and horticulture and she even got involved in wedding planning.

“We did whatever we could within the legislation to make sure the social fabric of the community could be maintained, and that was so rewarding for me.”

Setting up protocols to help businesses become Covid-safe during multiple lockdowns and managing the border

“bubble” at Mungindi were just two milestones achieved in the height of the pandemic. And on occasion she could be found helping the odd grey nomad through multiple State border pass processes.

Di has been with Balonne Shire Council for 22 years, and continues to enjoy the challenges that local government presents each day.

She will receive her medal from the Governor of Queensland at an investiture ceremony later in the year.

What's On

St George Cup Races

The St George Jockey Club offers a full racing card, TAB bookies and the much-heralded Fashions of the Field: a terrific day out for locals and visitors alike. Take advantage of our bus service between town and the racetrack.

WHEN: 30 July 2022

WHERE: St George Racecourse

Mungindi Show

The Mungindi Show is a fun weekend of activities for the whole family. A long list of events include the head-er-picker demolition derby, wood chop competition and fireworks on the Saturday and the Poets' Breakfast, dog high jump and grain shovelling comp on the Sunday.

WHEN: 6-7 August 2022

WHERE: Mungindi Showgrounds

Falling in Love... Again

Get all shook up at Dirranbandi's own chapel of love when Elvis comes to town. Bring the love of your life and recommit with the King at this vow renewal event on the lawn of the chapel. Enjoy a wedding high tea and some fun with friends old and new.

WHEN: 6 August 2022

WHERE: Dirranbandi Chapel, Retreat and Caravan Park

James Bond Mayoral Ball

The inaugural Mayoral Ball is taking a glamorous James Bond theme and features the Royal Australian Army Band from Gallipoli Barracks in Brisbane, who will also be playing at an open picnic in Dirranbandi on the following day. The Ball is a fundraiser for a bursary for CUC Balonne students.

WHEN: 20 August 2022

WHERE: St George Cultural Centre

Got a story, event or notice?

Tell us! We can include your information in the newsletter.

Phone: 07 4620 8888

Email: media@balonne.qld.gov.au

A message from the Mayor

The budget has been approved after many months of planning and hard work and details can be found online at Council's website and in a separate newsletter.

I encourage residents to view the budget document to learn more about how we administer funds for the many services, facilities and projects that Council provides.

It is never an easy task to find a balance that will ensure our community is supported across every area, and we believe this budget will continue to consolidate on the achievements of previous years.

I'd like to thank all the people and organisations who contributed to making the St George Career Expo such a great day for our young people and residents interested in study and career options.

As the first Career Expo in three years, it was gratifying to see so many employers, training organisations and universities taking a positive interest in the future job prospects of the people of Balonne Shire. It was also interesting to see that as many adult residents as students walked through the doors of the Cultural Centre that day, which indicates a broader interest in study and career alternatives.

This interest could be related to the presence of Country Universities Centre (CUC) Balonne at The Hub, which is supporting about 70 students at various levels of vocational and tertiary education. As a regional community, we have a real asset in the CUC, giving our Year 12 students the ability to study their chosen field while remaining in their home town.

There is a longstanding issue of students from regional areas dropping out of uni, not because of study issues, but from social issues like being away from family or the cost of living away from home. Our community now has the advantage of being able to offer support and a network of students through the CUC and I encourage everyone living in Balonne to consider how CUC Balonne could help them or their family members succeed in their study goals.

On the evening before the Career Expo, I attended an event at The Farmhouse to raise funds for the Youth Sum-



mit 2023. Through the generosity of those who attended, we raised around \$3,500 for the next Youth Summit, an inspiring event that gives our young people ideas and alternatives for their future career paths.

I believe the future of our Shire is tightly intertwined with the future of the next generation and I am delighted that we will be offering a bursary to a CUC Balonne student later in the year.

This bursary will be funded by proceeds of the inaugural Mayoral Ball which will be held at the Cultural Centre on 20 August. With a James Bond theme, this event promise to be a fun night out with music and dancing, so I encourage you to gather your friends and come along.

Balonne Shire was selected to trial new grader blade technology for the first time outside the United States and early indications are that using the new blades will result in time and cost savings.

Our Shire was chosen partly because we hold a great relationship with Hastings Deering, and also because of our unique white rock soil, which is a tough surface for this kind of equipment.

We've had visitors from neighbouring shires come and view the equipment in action and talk to our workshop team, who are closely monitoring the results of the trial.

Samantha O'Toole

St George Career Expo attracts healthy crowd

After a three year hiatus, the St George Career Expo has been held in The Cultural Centre, with over 30 stall holders bringing study, work and career path information to Balonne.

Students from high schools across the region were able to speak directly to providers of vocational training and university courses as well as employers from both the local area and public service organisations. The event was open to the public, and a number of residents took advantage of having so many tertiary organisations and employer groups in one place.

Mayor Samantha O'Toole said the event was very successful in bringing relevant information together to inform students about the various pathways they could take and offer alternatives to those who were still thinking about their future careers.

"The Career Expo was a great example of the community working together to deliver improved outcomes for our people and our region's future.

"This year's expo was a the result of a collaboration between many local organisations, with CUC Balonne, St George State High School, Balonne Shire Council, Care Balonne and South West Hospital and Health Service key players in bringing the event back to life.

"Students from local schools took advantage of the day to look into a wide range of career options including apprenticeship, working in emergency services and the Queensland Police and learning more about local opportunities."

One parent who attended the expo commented that her son was surprised about the amount of local opportunities available, and that could influence his decision about completing high school in St George instead of moving away to boarding school.

Around 100 students attended the event, some taking a two hour bus ride to make the trip. A further 100 or so community members called in during the morning to seek information about study or careers.

Mayor O'Toole said the exhibitors on the day spanned several industries and



Students from local high schools were able to speak directly to education providers and get answers to help them plan their future career paths.



The Career Expo wasn't just for school students, and a number of adult residents took advantage of the event to get information about study, training and work opportunities.



With 32 exhibitors at the Expo, there was a broad range of information available across VET, tertiary study and career options both in the region and further afield.

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professions.

"It was really great to see some of our local and regional employers at the expo, Moonrocks and the St George Machinery Centre among them.

"Cotton Australia and the Murray Darling Basin Authority, Queensland Police, Queensland Racing, various health services and emergency services were just some of the employers sharing information about potential careers with our students and residents."

Universities, TAFE and regional training organisations were kept busy answering questions about pathways to different jobs and qualifications, as well as more practical issues around moving away from home to study.

Throughout the morning, speakers from several exhibitors gave presentations. The speakers were selected based on specific requests, and previous engagement with schools and came from a range of industries.



Representatives from 32 exhibitors attended the Career Expo.

Rail and River Precinct project enters next phase

Further development of the Dirranbandi Rail and River Precinct aims to give travellers even more reasons to stop and stay a while in the town.

The Rail and River Precinct is a drawcard for tourists and a popular spot for community events. The first stage improvements added a children's playground, dry riverbed display, shaded rest areas and historical information.

They also included the construction of an outdoor deck overlooked by ma-

ture trees. This facility has become well utilised for events and parties by community groups and individuals, while the nearby rotunda provides a shady spot for tourists to enjoy a break from driving or sightseeing.

Council has been consulting closely with the community through the Dirranbandi Progress Association to determine the best approach to making the precinct more appealing and encourage higher visitation rates by travellers.

A staged approach has been taken, with the next phase of works now going out to tender. It's anticipated the works will begin later this year and are expected to be completed by June 2023.

Among the inclusions in the plan are the creation of vehicle access from the highway and additional parking behind

the bakery. A separate parking area at the opposite end of the area for long vehicles and caravans will allow more travellers to stop and spend time at the precinct and nearby shops.

Footpaths will link the two car parks, following a trail that takes in a new shade shelter and barbeque area, in addition to existing displays, while landscaping will add an attractive green zone. A neglected fountain at the precinct will be rejuvenated as part of improvements.

These projects have been funded through the Murray Darling Basin Economic Development Program, which focusses on improving tourism for the town.

Tenders are currently being called. For more information, visit www.balonne.qld.gov.au/tenders.



The fountain in Dirranbandi will be reinstated as part of second stage beautification works at the River Rail Precinct.



The existing features of the precinct will be linked via a new footpath between new car parks planned for the area.

Australian first in technology in Balonne Shire

Balonne Shire Council is trialling new road building technology for the first time outside the United States, thanks to great relationship-building and some particularly tough regional roads.

Mayor Samantha O’Toole said it was an acknowledgement of the excellent relationship Council has built with supplier of heavy equipment, Hastings Deering, that led to the Balonne Shire hosting the trial of new grading technology in Australia.

“Remote and regional councils like Balonne are experienced in every aspect of road building because of the hundreds of kilometres of graded roads, and the work we do for the Department of Transport and Main Roads in maintaining and building State roads.

“It’s a credit to our staff that we were approached to be the first Australian council to test new grader blades that have the potential to improve both productivity and cost for local government across the country.”

Hastings Deering supplies the CAT graders and equipment that Balonne, and many other councils in the country use for road maintenance and building.

Balonne was approached to host the trial, which commenced just three weeks ago, with Hastings Deering staff and representatives of Murweh and Quilpie Shire Councils on site to view the initial results.

Infrastructure Services Director, Andrew Boardman, said the trial was ongoing, with Council’s workshop team playing an important role.

“Traditionally grader blades comprise two blades of equal length, regardless of the surface or type of road being worked on.

“One of the issues with this method is uneven wear on the blades, resulting in a relatively quick replacement rate. Depending on the conditions of the road, this could mean replacing two sets of blades every two or three days.

“CAT has developed new technology that replaces the two blades with 70 nickel carbide teeth. The idea is that the only the teeth that become worn down will need to be replaced, resulting in cost and time savings.

“Hastings Deering approached Balonne

Shire for the trial because many of our dirt roads are hard white and red rock soil types, and this provides a real test for the new equipment.”

This new approach to grading is aimed at maintenance grading, and it’s expected the current twin blades will continue to be used for final trim on road building projects because of the finer results.

Andrew said that Council workshop staff were key to getting the most out of

the trial.

“Our team is monitoring the effectiveness of the new equipment as they go about their usual work. They measure the teeth for wear every second day, and early results indicate that they have the potential to outlast the two-blade system by up to 20 times.”

A benefit of participating in the trial is that Council will retain the equipment as part of the trial arrangements.



During the early stage of the trial, Balonne Shire Council staff were joined by visitors from Murweh and Quilpie Shires, and a representative from Hastings Deering..



The new technology replaces two grader blades with 70 nickel carbide teeth, which can be individually replaced as wear occurs.

Networking event raises \$3,500 for Youth Summit

The Farmhouse has hosted a full house for Nibbles and Networking After Dark, a fundraising event supporting the 2023 Youth Summit.

Guests were treated to a night of music, great food and a number of speakers talking about youth related issues generally, and more specifically, the challenges and opportunities for young people of the Balonne region.

Balonne Shire Council Mayor Samantha O'Toole said it was important to recognise that youth living in regional Australia faced unique challenges, and their experiences often gave them an edge.

"I believe that young people from regions like ours grow up with a deeper sense of community and a strong resilience that comes from their everyday experiences living in a remote location and sometimes in trying conditions.

"While they don't have that on-tap access to the type of things their city cousins enjoy, many develop independence and a can-do way of looking at life. These are great skills to carry them through life no matter what they do."

The funds raised through ticket sales, raffles and an auction exceeded \$3,500 and will be used for the Youth Summit 2023. This year's Youth Summit aimed to inspire high school students to consider different career options, to think about and start planning a path to their future working life and to understand that changing direction is part of the experience of finding their best-fit occupation.

The 2022 summit was funded through a one-off Drought Communities grant. The success of that event

Planning is already underway for the 2023 Youth Summit and organisers are excited about bringing new ideas to help young people in our region think about their future direction.



Local residents and Career Expo visitors enjoyed a night out for a good cause.



Speakers at Nibbles and Networking shared youth related information with guests.

More trees for Bollon



Students from Bollon State School gave a helping hand to Council staff recently, when 46 trees were planted around the campdraft arena of the Bollon Showgrounds.

While the need for shade and a wind break was identified by the Bollon Showgrounds Users Group at the community facility, beautification of the area was also considered in the planting of 40 cottonwood trees and six drunken parrot trees.

Both species are fast-growing, hardy trees that will soon provide shade.



Top left: Council staff were joined by students from Bollon State School in the planting of 46 trees at the showgrounds.

Bottom left: Dripper lines have been installed and frost protection provided.

Date claimers

Mayoral Ball and open air picnic

New community events are being planned for August 2022, giving residents an opportunity to get together with friends old and new.

The announcement of the Mayoral Ball to be held on 20 August comes at the right time, Mayor Samantha O'Toole said.

"Long periods of drought and more recent challenges caused by flooding have really tested our resilience. The Mayoral Ball gives us all a chance to socialise and have some fun, with the added bonus of providing funds to create a bursary for students of CUC Balonne.

"We're very fortunate to have the Royal Australian Army Band from Gallipoli Barracks in Brisbane playing for us on the night, and they'll be backing it up the next day at a free open air events in the park at Dirranbandi.

"The band is really looking forward to coming out to our region and seeing a little bit of our country. I know they'll put on a great show for us.

"Tickets will be going on sale very soon, so mark the date in your calendar, call your friends and keep an eye on the *Balonne Bulletin* and Council's facebook page for more information and details of how to purchase your tickets."

Viva Las Dirran! Falling in Love... again

Meanwhile Dirranbandi will be inundated with brides and grooms on 6 August as part of the vow renewal event on the lawns of the chapel at Dirranbandi Retreat and Caravan Park.

Officiated by none other than Elvis, the 20 minute ceremony will be followed by high tea and time for "wedding photos".

Elvis will be joined by Buddy Holly in the evening for songs around the campfire, setting the scene for a honeymoon night of music and fun. Booking details will be promoted through facebook and future Bulletins.

NAIDOC Week

National NAIDOC Week celebrations are held across Australia in the first week of July each year (Sunday to Sunday), to celebrate and recognise the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The theme for this year's celebrations is "Get up! Stand up! Show up!" encouraging the community to keep momentum for change going and to keep pushing beyond just acknowledgement and good intentions.

A series of NAIDOC Week events is planned for St George, with a highlight being the announcement of winners of the National NAIDOC Week Awards for 2022 on Friday 8 July at The Australian Hotel back lawn.

Enjoy a community fun day at St George Rowden Park, be pampered at the GHS Wellbeing Centre or play a round of golf after the official closing ceremony.

BALONNE SHIRE
Presents
2022
JAMES BOND
MAYORAL BALL
August 20th
Featuring the
Royal Australian
Army Band
TICKETS ON SALE SOON
Information - cdo@balonne.qld.gov.au
Funds raised will support the students of the
Country Universities Centre Balonne

For the People
Balonne
Shire Council

007

Country Universities Centre
BALONNE

ST GEORGE QLD NAIDOC
SUNDAY 3RD JULY - SATURDAY 9TH JULY 2022
WEEK
EVENTS

Sunday 3rd July - OPENING CEREMONY, HEALING MORNING TEA
9 AM - 11 AM. ST GEORGE CEMETERY . TRANSPORT AVAILABLE: 0448 016 879

Monday 4th July - MARCH & FLAG RAISE
9 AM - 12 PM. MARCH FROM CORNER SCOTT & VICTORIA ST. FLAG RAISE AT COUNCIL. MORNING TEA PROVIDED.

Tuesday 5th July - ELDERS MORNING TEA
10 AM. GHS WELLBEING CENTRE. MORNING TEA PROVIDED.

Wednesday 6th July - COMMUNITY FUN DAY & TALENT SHOW
10 AM - 2 PM. ST GEORGE ROWDEN PARK. ROTATIONAL ACTIVITIES. FOOD. MUSIC. STALL HOLDERS

Thursday 7th July - NAIDOC BINGO
5.30 PM - 7.30 PM. CASH PRIZES. FOOD & DRINKS PROVIDED. GHS WELLBEING CENTRE

Friday 8th July - NAIDOC PAMPER DAY
10 AM - 2 PM. GHS WELLBEING CENTRE. PROVIDE PERSONAL BEAUTY TREATMENTS. MORE INFO STEPHANIE

Friday 8th July - NAIDOC SENIOR & JUNIOR AWARDS
6 PM UNTIL LATE. THE AUSTRALIAN HOTEL BACK LAWN.

Saturday 9th July - CLOSING CEREMONY - NAIDOC GOLF DAY
10.30 AM UNTIL LATE. ST GEORGE GOLF CLUB. FOOD AVAILABLE.

You can contact any of the service providers listed below for more information

Lifeline
Crisis Support 24/7
Sukisa
Goolbarri
geondir
AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT
AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT
AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT

Made with PosterMyWall.com

UPDATE Roadworks

Local Roads

Bollon Crew

- Corack Road Maintenance Grading 9 days
- Honeymah Lane Maintenance Grading 17 days
- Crescent vale Road Maintenance Grading 5 days
- Mourilyan Road Maintenance Grading 12 days

Dirranbandi Crew

- Narine Road Maintenance Grading 16 days
- Gunnindaddy Road Maintenance Grading 23 days
- Diamond Tank Road Maintenance Grading 11 days
- Noondoo Mungindi Road 21 Days

St George Crew 1

- Chelmer Road Maintenance Grading 18 days
- Beltana Road Maintenance Grading 3 days
- Warrie Road Maintenance Grading 6 days
- West Haran Road Maintenance Grading 6 days
- Whyenbah Road Maintenance Grading 25 days

St George Crew 2

TMR Heavy Vehicle Breakdown Pad Balonne Highway 30 days

Disaster Flood Recovery Works

- Jacklewar-Goodooga Road North (completed – road open)
- Jacklewar-Goodooga Road South (current)
- Jakelwar Goodooga Road North is expected to be completed by the end of June with the crew then moving further South into Jakelwar Goodooga Road South

Works are also planned on the following roads

- Openbah Rd
- Whyenbah Rd
- Denholm Rd
- North Bindle Rd
- Link Rd
- Wagoo Rd
- Minnum Rd

Completed Roads

- Cardiff Road
- Kulki Road
- Mitchell Bollon Road
- Jakelwar South
- Kooroon Road
- Ula Ula Road
- Trackers Crossing
- Hollymont Road

