

COVID-19 tipped to reach peak mid-August

PROTECT YOURSELF AND THOSE AROUND YOU



Stay at home if you are sick



Wash your hands regularly



Cover your coughs and sneezes

As more Queenslanders test positive to COVID-19, it's vital we know what to do to protect ourselves and everyone else in our community.

Balonne Shire Council's Environmental Health Coordinator Di-
anne Francisco said it's important to remember that a percentage of people in the community will become very ill from COVID-19, and they are the people we need to protect.

"As anticipated, cases of COVID-19 are increasing, with numbers expected to peak in mid-August," Mrs. Francisco said.

"Most people should remain relatively well and will only have mild symptoms, and they should be able to take care of themselves at home.

"However, COVID-19 can still be very serious for many people in our community, we need to ensure

we are taking all necessary steps to protect ourselves and others."

COVID in the south west

Over the past 12 months the South West has seen the rise and fall of COVID-19 positive case numbers, with some COVID-19-positive patients continuing to be managed through South West Hospitals and the virtual Hospital in the Home program.

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What's On

Day Out in Dirran

The Australian Army Band Brisbane is coming to Dirran! For a day out with music, food, market stalls and a chance to catch up with friends old and new, this is set to be a great day out.

WHEN: 21 Aug 2022

WHERE: Dirranbandi Rail and River Precinct

Thallon Truck Pull

Can a team of six people pull a prime mover 25 metres? And which team will be the fastest? This fun family day has markets, kids' activities, great food and plenty of entertainment while raising money for the Thallon P&C.

WHEN: 27 Aug 2022

WHERE: William Street, Thallon

Balonne Cutting Horse Futurity

More than 400 entrants from across the country will be competing in this week-long cutting event. Organisers have prepared 2,300 head of local cattle for the competition.

WHEN: 27 Aug to 4 Sep 2022

WHERE: St George Showgrounds

Bollon Charity Campdraft and Rodeo

The 2022 Bollon Campdraft and Rodeo will be held on the first weekend of September. This is an action-packed weekend full of rodeo fun and campdraft action..

WHEN: 2 to 4 Sep 2022

WHERE: Bollon Showgrounds

River Dragon Festival

An event that showcases the Balonne River with entertainment, arts, culture and sporting activities.

WHEN: 9 to 11 Sep 2022

WHERE: Balonne River, St George

Nindigully Campdraft

A great family-friendly event, get ready for a weekend of entertainment along with a full bar and canteen available all weekend. Saturday night is the main night with music, dancing, entertainment, and prizes to be won.

WHEN: 10 to 11 Sep 2022

WHERE: Nindigully Pub

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

Council has been very busy working on community infrastructure projects around the Shire. These projects are largely government funded under programs to develop the liveability and sustainability of our towns. We take great pride in delivering these improvements, which in many cases, provide a boost to the local economy through goods and services purchased here in the Balonne Shire. Among the current projects are:

- Thallon Campground Improvements – RV Campsite mapping has been completed, all new furniture and infrastructure has been procured and the job is being prepared to go out to tender within the month. (funded through QFIP & LRCIP)
- Hebel Showgrounds Canteen/ Shed – the shed has been erected and is awaiting fit-out and electricity connection. (funded through LRCIP)
- Mungindi River Park Stages 2 & 3 – all concrete works, rock pitching and handrails have been installed, and now awaiting irrigation and landscaping to be completed. (funded through MDBEDP, LGGSP & DLGRMA)
- St George River Foreshore Beautification – all concrete footpath works have been completed, and lighting and CCTV has been installed. Now awaiting installation of boardwalk, with the project expected to be finalised this month. (funded through MDBEDP)

Grants for flood affected primary producers, small business and non-profit organisations were released through Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority (QRIDA) late last month. I strongly encourage eligible applicants to take advantage of this program.

Links and details can be found on our facebook page, or you can contact QRIDA by visiting their website at www.qrida.qld.gov.au or phoning



ing 1800 623 946.

Council also understands that some businesses have been negatively impacted by the flood in a different way. While these businesses weren't physically flooded, their incomes were dramatically reduced through weeks or months-long road closures that prevented customers and tourists from spending money in what is typically a busy period of the year.

As Chair of the Local Disaster Management Group, and as Mayor of the Shire, I have been advocating for this group through my government networks. It's been difficult to get a hearing from the Federal Government however we are continuing to do what we can to get this issue in front of the right people.

Finally, I look forward to joining the community at the inaugural Mayoral Ball on 20 August. While this will be a fantastic social event for the district, what's exciting for me is that as a community, we'll be contributing to the future success of local students through a Balonne CUC bursary. Supporting our country students in this way helps them to continue to live, work and play in the Balonne Shire, and develop skills and knowledge within our region.

Samantha O'Toole

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During July, our community went through the third wave of COVID-19 infections. Chief Executive Officer for the South West Hospital and Health Service Rebecca Greenway said “I acknowledge the outstanding effort from the South West community on working together to keep our community safe and well.”

“It has been a difficult few months managing COVID-19 outbreaks in our health service facilities, on top of annual Influenza impacting our hospitalisations and staffing.

“However, the South West Hospital and Health Service staff continue to work tirelessly to protect and deliver quality health services that meet the needs of their communities”

Despite the slowing of case numbers, COVID-19 cases are still being reported daily. Let’s slow the spread and protect ourselves and the vulnerable from viruses like COVID-19 and the flu by undertaking these everyday preventative measures:

- mask wearing in indoor crowded places
- hand hygiene
- physical distancing
- covering coughs and sneezes
- test if you have symptoms and stay home if you have COVID-19
- stay up to date with your vaccinations

In doing so, we protect not only ourselves and our community, but also help keep the pressure off our hospitals and health system

Vaccination Update

Vaccination remains our best protection against the COVID-19 virus and influenza. Vaccinations can reduce the severity of symptoms and prevent the need for

people to be hospitalised.

In the Balonne Shire, COVID-19 vaccinations are available through:

- St George Medical Centre
- St George Community Pharmacy
- Dirranbandi Medical Practice
- Mungindi Medical Practice

The COVID-19 vaccination is recommended for all people aged 5 years or older to protect against COVID-19.

As well as first and second doses, a third booster dose is recommended for everyone aged 16 years and older, if it has been at least three months since their second dose.

The third booster is recommended for those aged 12-15 years if they are immuno-compromised, have a disability or complex health needs or have other severe health conditions.

A fourth booster dose is also available nationally for everyone aged 30 years and older and is highly recommended for those aged 50 years and older.

What vaccine dose do you need?

If you are aged:

50+	four doses	30-49	three doses, option of fourth
16-29	three doses	5-15	two doses

Book your appointment now!
Call your GP or search online for COVID-19 vaccine booking.
Vaccines can be booked 3 months after your last dose or COVID-19 infection.

COVID-19 VACCINATION

COVID Testing

Testing for COVID-19 is available for free at all our facilities in the South West through a combination of Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs) and Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) tests.

Symptoms include fever, sore throat, runny nose, cough, short-

ness of breath, fatigue, diarrhoea, vomiting, nausea or lack of taste or smell.

You must isolate until you have received your test result. If you test positive, Queensland Health staff will provide information on isolating and the next steps. Staff will also assess your risk factors to establish if you should be formally admitted to a virtual ward monitoring and management system.

Please remember to report positive results from Rapid Antigen Tests (RAT) administered at home. If your test is not registered, we don’t know about you and your positive result. Positive home RAT results can be registered at: qld.gov.au/rat-positive

If you hold an eligible Commonwealth Concession card, you can get free RAT (Rapid Antigen Test) kits at Queensland Health RAT distribution points.

You can get up to 5 RAT kits per month and you can get all five from a single visit.

For eligibility and where to collect the RAT kits visit: qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19/exposed-to-covid/covid-testing-in-queensland/free-rat-concession-card-qld

COVID-19 Symptom and Antiviral Eligibility Checker

If you’re unsure whether you need medical care for your symptoms, or you’re unsure what type of care you may need, you can:

- call the National Coronavirus Helpline 24/7 on 1800 020 080. Press 8 if you need an interpreter.
- Visit Health Direct Australia COVID-19 Symptom and Antiviral Eligibility Checker at healthdirect.gov.au/coronavirus

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COVID Reinfection Timeframe

Another recent change was set by the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee, who recently released that we are moving through a new wave of COVID-19 infections. The BA.4 and BA.5 variants are associated with increased immune escape.

Given reinfections may occur as early as 28 days after recovery from a previous COVID-19 infection, the AHPPC advises that the reinfection period be reduced from 12 weeks to 28 days. People who test positive to COVID-19 more than 28 days after ending isolation due to previous infection should be reported and managed as new cases.

For more information about COVID-19 in QLD visit: qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19

The South West Hospital and Health Service thanks everyone for helping keep our community safe.

Current as of 5 August 2022.

Winners are grinners - and return visitors

The winners of our Country Races Weekend in St George Region reckon we've got a pretty great town, and we have to agree with them.

Our winner Luke Sprott and his partner Erin brought their son out for the races weekend and loved it.

"We had the best weekend. Met some great locals and tourists who were in town for the weekend. Everything was perfect.

Thank you so much for arranging. We can't wait to come back down in a week's time doing Adventure Way in a caravan."

The races attracted great crowds of both locals and visitors either

Author visits hometown for book chat about her new novel



Above: Clare Fletcher at the St George Library author event on 5 August.

Below: Luke Sprott with his partner Erin and their son at the St George Races.



driving through or flying in especially for the event.

For a photo gallery of the St George Race Day, as well as the recent Dirranbandi Polocrosse Carnival, head to pages 6 and 7 of this issue of the Bulletin.

There was a full house at the St George Library on Friday night 5 August, when author Clare Fletcher returned to her hometown to promote her debut novel, *Five Bush Weddings*.

Clare's training as a journalist and writer has taken her all over the world, spending 15 years in Sydney and New York. Clare now works in communications for the prestigious Walkley Foundation for Journalism.

With all of those years living and working in large international cities, it's evident that she still holds a strong affection for St George, with her country upbringing providing the backdrop to her first novel.

Clare spoke fondly of her bush upbringing and hoped that locals would recognise places and traditions that feature in the lives of many people living in small rural communities.

Clare is working on her second novel.

Upcoming Events

AUGUST 2022



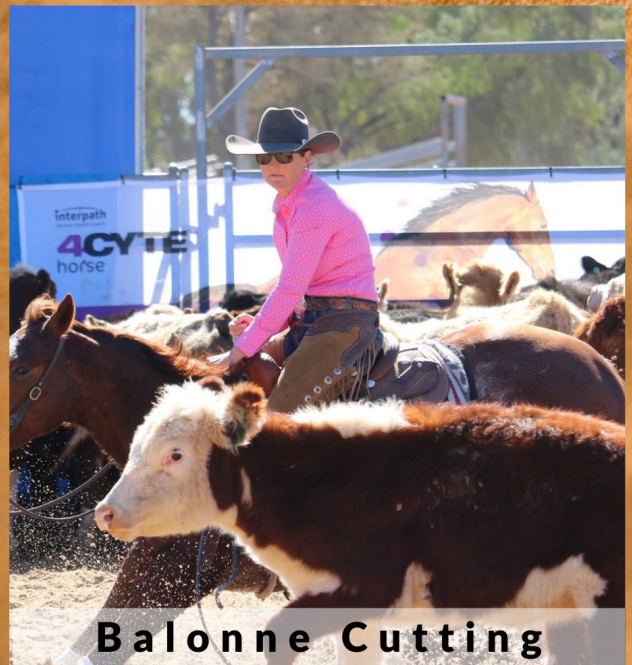
**Hebel Campdraft
13-14 August 2022**



**Dirranbandi Campdraft
26 -28 Aug 2022**



**Thallon Truck Pull
27 August 2022**



**Balonne Cutting
Horse Futurity
27 Aug-4 Sep 2022**

www.stgeorgeregion.com.au

Out and about at Dirranbandi Polocrosse



Above: Brett Woodward (Inverell) on the field at Dirranbandi Polocrosse Carnival.



Above: James Bredhauer (Chinchilla) and Cameron Tickel (Charleville) enjoy some friendly competition at the polocrosse,



Above: Kyla Hill (Quirindi) scoops up the ball at Dirranbandi.



Above: Tom O'Sullivan (Dirranbandi) in full stride.



Above: Tom Perkins (Dirranbandi) and Hugh Armstrong (Warwick) have their eyes on the prize.



Above: Cody Woodward (Inverell) and Bree Thornton (Warwick) hit their straps at the recent Dirranbandi Polocrosse Carnival.

St George Race Day faces



Above: Belle and Ivy Vickers (centre) walk the Fashions of the Field Stage



Above: Lady of the Day Lauren Gracie takes to the catwalk.



Above: Gentleman of the Day Thomas Thompson with Fashions of the Field Judge Jane Cornish



Photo acknowledgments:

Thanks to Laura Rigney (race goer and photographer) for use of the Race Day photos, and Amanda Bredhauer (polocrosse widow and photographer) for the Dirranbandi Polocrosse Carnival photos.



Above: Laura Rigney and Georgina Speedy



Above: Cheryl and Barry Rhea enjoying a day out.



Above: Committee Member Jacob Thuijs and friends



Above: St George Rotary members keeping busy on race day



Above: Claire Armstrong, Georgie Wardle and Alice Rathie



Above: Wayne Ryan and Bryan Rhodes

WITH THE DIRRANBANDI PROGRESS ASSOCIATION
PRESENT

DAY OUT IN DIRRAN

Sunday 21 August 2022

11am - 3pm

Rail & River Precinct

ALL WELCOME

FREE ENTRY

THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY BAND BRISBANE

JESS HITCHCOCK & BAND

Market Stalls | Lucky Door Prizes

BYO CHAIR & PICNIC BLANKET

