



Mayor Samantha O'Toole, the Federal Minister for Environment and Water Tanya Plibersek and Bruce Scott, former Member for Maranoa, laid wreaths in St George on Veterans Day.

Tanya Plibersek visits Balonne Shire

Federal Minister for the Environment and Water Tanya Plibersek visited St George last week to discuss the challenges of delivering the Murray-Darling Basin Plan.

Balonne Shire Mayor Samantha O'Toole recognised the significance and importance of the visit, as well as the Australian Government's commitment to work with our communities.

"I was really pleased that the Minister and her advisors were

able to visit Balonne so soon after the release of the latest State of the Environment Report."

"This has been a timely opportunity to discuss the importance of working together to meet our targets, without exacerbating the devastating economic and social impacts already endured by several communities within our Shire, under the Murray-Darling Basin Plan," said the Mayor.

"We've agreed to meet again

in Canberra in a couple of weeks, while the Minister and her advisors have confirmed that they will return to Balonne in the near future to continue to work together on tangible actions, delivering our targets and protecting our communities, industries and businesses."

Mayor O'Toole had the opportunity to highlight key findings from the Murray Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) Northern Basin Review on the socioeconomic effects of

To page 4

What's On

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

Hebel Campdraft

The 2022 Hebel Campdraft has changed dates due to wet weather. Now being held later in September, this will be a fun and action-packed couple of days in the great south west.

WHEN: 24 to 25 Sep 2022

WHERE: Hebel Showgrounds

St George Sheep Dog Trials

A Queensland Working Sheepdog Association event promoting the skills of working sheep dogs (Border Collies and Kelpies) through sheepdog trials, including 3 Sheep (arena), Utility, Yard and Short course trials.

WHEN: 30 Sep to 2 Oct 2022

WHERE: St George

Dragon Country Sandgreen Cup

St George Golf Course is considered to be one of the best sandgreen courses. The event is held the weekend prior to the Queensland Men's Sandgreen Championships. Golfers of all abilities are welcomed.

WHEN: 30 Sep to 2 Oct 2022

WHERE: St George

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

This week saw a visit to the Balonne by Federal Minister for the Environment and Water, Tanya Plibersek, to discuss the Murray-Darling Basin Plan and challenges involved in delivering it.

The visit came soon after the release of the latest State of the Environment report so the timing was good for the Shire. I was able to talk frankly with the Minister about the devastating economic and social impacts that some parts of our Shire have already experienced under the Plan. I'm hopeful that we can act as partners as we move through the next few months.

I will be meeting Minister Plibersek in Canberra in September and she and her advisors will be returning to Balonne so we can continue to work together on a strategy that will benefit our communities.

I'm delighted to say that the inaugural Mayoral Ball was a fantastic event, and anyone who attended would have to agree. The Australian Army Band Brisbane gave an amazing performance at the Ball and the following day in Dirranbandi.

Early indications are that the funds raised through this event will provide a very generous bursary for students of the CUC Balonne, and for that I would like to thank the community, whether sponsors, guests or volunteers, for its support.

Being able to further support local students in achieving their further education goals without having to leave their home town is a very worthwhile achievement, one I'm proud to say we are now doing.

Council recently commissioned a report into learning and education issues in the Shire. The report has been compiled through interviews with over 140 stakeholders across the Balonne, with ten action points being recommended.

In reading through the recommendations, I can see there are some positive ideas that have the potential to improve current edu-



cational opportunities and to create innovative learning programs that could have long term benefits for the community. The report will be considered at the September Council meeting.

Our community organisations have been hard at work again. The Thallon Progress Association's *Opportunities from Adversity* project will be officially opened on Saturday 17 September. Securing \$500K in funding from the Murray-Darling Basin Economic Development Program last year has resulted in a raft of improvements and innovations that will benefit both residents and visitors.

Further south, the Mungindi Sculpture Trail will be opened on Sunday 18 September. The sculptures of the late Tony "Nicko" McMillan follow a path that crosses the border between Queensland and New South Wales, and the celebration is a culmination of long planning on both sides of the border.

Finally, on behalf of Council, I'd like to extend thanks to Andrea Killen, who recently stood down from her position on the Dirranbandi Progress Association after five years. Like so many of our community volunteers, Andrea has been a champion for Dirran and her commitment and energy has been a driver for many successful events and projects in that town. Thank you Andrea.

Samantha O'Toole

Learning Opportunities Report released

A recommendation to develop a plan for a Learning Precinct – Centre of Agriculture, Water and Environment in the Balonne Shire is among a ten-point plan to achieve improved learning opportunities for the region.

Balonne Shire Council initiated a review of educational issues after multiple concerns about the impacts of those issues on the community were raised.

The review involved a broad community consultation focusing on the seven schools in the St George cluster, the drift of families from the region, and the social and economic impacts on the Balonne Shire.

Mayor Samantha O’Toole said that over 140 people representing all local schools and education centres were involved in the community consultation process, which was conducted by Hall Chadwick Qld and specialist education consultants, Howard Nielsen and Susie Ahern.

“It was important that we identified what the community saw as the problems in the educational sector locally, and what they felt would be a positive outcome for their children’s education and the towns they live in”, she said.

“The sustainability of our shire relies on many factors, but the ability to attract and retain families in the region is key to our future success. This review and its recommendations provide us with the direction to achieving this goal and Council will consider if this is the approach to take when the report is brought to the September meeting.”

The report noted five key factors to come out of the community consultation.

1. It is a great community and people love living in Balonne. There are many natural, community and



Above: Local high school students at the 2021 Youth Summit learning about educational pathways and career options. The Learning Opportunities Report makes recommendations for improvements and innovations in local education.

built attributes that make it an attractive place to live.

2. Most respondents expressed some frustration with the recent leadership of (in particular) the St George High School in terms of

- managing behavioural issues;
- listening to and responding to parents/families’ suggestions or issues;
- lack of implementation of positive initiatives;
- low morale;
- there is a level of disengagement between the school and the community.

3. There are plenty of opportunities for improvement in all levels of education in Balonne from pre-school/kindy, primary school, secondary school and technical training as well as tertiary education.

4. Balonne could be an “Education” precinct where people have access to many different forms of learning, as well as people coming from elsewhere to experience learning opportunities in Balonne.

5. The positive responses about the community and lifestyle may not be representative of a cohesive

community but may be representative of sections of different communities within Balonne that have strong connections. More could be done to create community integration and engagement between different elements, including, the agricultural community, the indigenous community, the town community, the smaller towns within Balonne.

Recommendations for future direction.

As a result of the community consultation and the review process, ten recommendations were presented to Council, and these will be considered at the September Council meeting. The recommendations are:

Recommendation 1:

Delegate or appoint a senior person at Balonne Shire BSC to drive the implementation of the Balonne Learning Opportunities project and the ongoing engagement between the BSC, Community and education providers including Education QLD.

To page 6

from page 1

water buybacks.

The report, released in October 2016, confirmed that water buybacks undertaken in the Balonne Shire, as part of the Murray Darling Basin Plan, had enormous and devastating effects on the agricultural industry, associated rural industries and employment.

To ensure the sustainability and viability of industries and communities within our Shire, Mayor O'Toole reiterated Council's commitment to work with the Australian Government on community-led solutions that are socially and economically neutral.

The Minister and Mayor O'Toole also lay wreaths for Vietnam War Veterans and attended a smoking ceremony at the Harmony Centre site in St George during the visit.

Right: Tanya Plibersek met one of the dancers at an informative and enjoyable smoking ceremony on the St George site where construction is about to begin on the long-planned-for Harmony Centre.

Below: The Federal Minister for the Environment and Water, Tanya Plibersek with Mayor Samantha O'Toole, Michael Wrathall, Minister Plibersek's Water Advisor, Cr Robyn Fuhrmiester and Council CEO Matthew Magin in St George on 19 August.



BOM warns of more rain and floods

The Bureau of Meteorology has declared a La Niña alert for early to mid-spring and has warned that Queenslanders should expect an increased chance of above average rainfall again this spring and summer.

A La Nina alert is the last step on the El Nino Southern Oscillation Index before an official La Nina, prompting Balonne Shire Mayor Samantha O'Toole to stress the importance of being prepared.

"With a wet winter almost behind us, we already have a lot of moisture and wet ground around our Shire," said Mayor O'Toole.

"While we don't want people to be unduly worried, we should all be taking any steps possible to be prepared for floods again."

Currently the EJ Beardmore Dam is sitting at 100.94% capacity, while

Bah Weirs were all at over 99% capacity (as of 23 August). This is in stark contrast to all being almost empty just a few years ago.

With local and upstream catchments inundated, it makes sense to ensure we are taking all necessary steps to be prepared for further flooding events in the coming months.

The Balonne Shire Council Emergency Dashboard has all the latest information regarding floods and emergencies in our area, including emergency news, road conditions, weather warnings and power outages. The Dashboard can be accessed via the Balonne Shire Council website, or you can use your search engine to search for 'Balonne Emergency Dashboard.'

For assistance with storm or flood damage, you should always call the SES on 13 25 00.

It also makes sense to always check road conditions before travelling.

"As everyone know, if it's flooded, forget it. We all know the message, but it is critically important to take care and not become complacent at times like these," said Mayor O'Toole.



CCTV upgrade project nearly complete

Council received Federal Government funding from the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program (LRCIP) for the implementation of new, and upgrade of existing, CCTV facilities across the Shire.

The townships of St George, Dirranbandi and Bollon are receiving a number of new cameras and upgrades of existing cameras. Thallon and Mungindi will for the first time have CCTV cameras installed.

Field Solutions Group [FSG] were engaged to complete the project and have been utilising the FSG Wi-Fi infrastructure and towers to support the CCTV network. Many of the cameras have been placed on Ergon Energy power poles or Council poles or infrastructure.

The footage will be available to Council via NXWitness and accessible to the Queensland Police Service (upon application) and to those with a legal right to access

under Right to Information Act 2009 or the Information Privacy Act 2009.

The coverage will increase visibility across all towns providing security for council and community assets. The cameras will also assist Council to view road conditions in and out of our smaller townships during times of flood events.

The project will assist in crime prevention and detection, increasing community safety.

- Bollon will see an increase from 3 to 5 camera locations
- Dirranbandi is going from 3 camera locations to 10 locations across the town
- Thallon will have 5 camera locations.
- Mungindi will have 2 cameras installed
- St George will increase to 37



Above: New CCTV cameras around the shire have night vision and long distance viewing range.

cameras from its existing 20, covering the length of our river foreshore and key assets and intersections across town

The final stage of the project will be the completion of CCTV along the St George Riverwalk and the two new cameras at Mungindi.

Register your child now

eKindy

Playing to learn

eKindy is a flexible **at home** kindergarten program designed for children unable to attend a local service due to **distance, travel or medical** reasons. eKindy is available to eligible families at **no cost**.

eKindy provides online support by a qualified early childhood teacher, based at a Queensland School of Distance Education.

eKindy helps build the foundation skills, understandings and positive approaches to learning needed for future success.

Close the miles ... grow the smiles!

Call us on (07) 3727 2860 or visit <https://brisbanesde.eq.edu.au/enrolments/ekindy>

The Wind in the Willows

BY DAVID GOODERSON

THURSDAY 15 SEPTEMBER

9.30am & 11.30am

ST GEORGE CULTURAL CENTRE

PLUS DRAMA/DANCE WORKSHOPS FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS

BOOKINGS ONLINE AT WWW.SCHOOLTICKETS.COM.AU

SCHOOL GROUPS EMAIL: RAVAPRODUCTIONS@BAGSHIRE.CM

PRODUCED BY RAVA PRODUCTIONS
ADAPTED FROM THE BOOK BY KENNETH GRAHAME

Balonne Shire Council
Queensland Government

The Wind in the Willows tour is supported by the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland and the Balonne Shire Council through the Regional Arts Development Fund.

Visual Arts

Recommendation 2:

Communicate outcomes of the Balonne Learning Opportunities project to the community.

Recommendation 3:

Address leadership concerns at SGSHS with Regional Education Executives, QLD Education, QLD Minister for Education and SGSHS P&C.

Recommendation 4:

Co-design and co-fund a proposed Centre of Excellence for Agriculture, Water and Environment (Centre of AWE) and the delivery of associated Excellence Programs and Immersion Programs. To include the establishment of a Foundation to fund the activity

Recommendation 5:

Create, promote and deliver deep parent and community engagement in all shire schools and communities. To include a focus on intercultural engagement. Appoint a Community Engagement person to drive this process.

Recommendation 6:

Continue to research and develop options for an on-line learning hub for high schooling, faith-based education and home schooling in Balonne schools.

Recommendation 7:

Review and develop behaviour management approaches in schools and support the implementation. Train all teachers in the Balonne Shire cluster and St Patricks in BSC – Learning Opportunities for Balonne “Restorative Practice”. Contract Margaret Thorsburne as a specialist consultant to deliver the training program.

Recommendation 8:

Develop a Balonne Education Precinct Co-ordinating Group to enable ongoing formal connection and collaboration between

Thallon turns adversity into opportunity - again

Barely five years after they turned the town around by painting stunning murals on the local silos, the Thallon Progress Association has secured nearly \$500K in government funding to make major improvements in the town.



Above: One of the new sculptures to be commissioned and installed in Thallon as part of the Opportunities from Adversity project.

from previous column

the CUC, Library, Schools, BSC, relevant community groups, Centre of AWE, industry and other educational and government agencies. The focus to also be on eco, sporting, First Nation and entertainment events.

Recommendation 9:

Provide additional Early Years Learning development through a school-based Playgroup and innovative Nature Play Bush Kindy.

Recommendation 10:

Collaborate with and support the SGSHS to utilise the existing school infrastructure and new buildings as a central component of the innovative activities proposed for Centre of AWE activity and related programs.

With a population of around 250, this small community has achieved some big goals in reinvigorating their town in recent years, beginning with the Grain-Corp silos murals five years ago.

Following that success, Thallon Progress Association was successful in securing funding through the Murray Darling Basin Economic Development Program in July 2021 for a series of projects designed to provide the greatest ongoing economic and social returns for the community.

Extensive community consultation had taken place prior to the funding application, and the community had a clear vision of what it wanted to achieve.

With committee members and the volunteer workforce impacted by floods, the challenge was to complete the planned projects within budget and timeframes, utilising as much local talent and business as possible. The project included:

- transforming the former Rail Station into a vibrant Information Station;
- creating employment for eight locals;
- five sculptures and signage;
- streetscape improvements in Pine Street;
- campground fireplace, signage for the McGeever Recreation Grounds and Cemetery/Remembrance Garden;
- free campground wifi, publishing Thallon Times eNewsletter and local calendar;
- promotional videos for Thallon and additional lighting to showcase the silos.

Come along to Thallon Information Station at 3.00pm 17 September for the official Project Launch.

Mungindi Sculpture Trail set to open this month

The 2.5km Mungindi Sculpture Trail is an open-air art gallery that uniquely crosses the Queensland/New South Wales border in two spots.

Featuring ten raw and rustic sculptures by award-winning local artist Tony 'Nicko' McMillan, who tragically died at 54 years of age, the trail delivers a new perspective on art and nature with sculptures donated by the artist's family.

Working in collaboration with Nicko's family, the Mungindi community, the Mungindi Progress Association, the Moree Plains Shire Council, and the Balonne

Shire Council utilised funding from the Murray-Darling Basin Economic Development Program to pay tribute to Nicko and showcase the sculptures for everyone's enjoyment.

The opening will kick off at the Barwon River Parkland on the Queensland side of the border, followed by a guided tour of the trail led by Nicko's family, and end with a community celebration on the New South Wales side of the border in the Main Street Park in Mungindi.

The official event starts at 10.30am on Sunday 18 September at Barwon River Parkland.



Above: One of the new sculptures to be included on the Mungindi Sculpture Trail. The official opening is on Sunday 18 September.



Above: Another of Tony McMillan's unique sculptures that feature in the Mungindi Sculpture Trail, which crosses the Queensland / New South Wales border.

Welcome to
The Mungindi Sculpture Trail.

Official Opening

Please join us to celebrate the life and work of local artist Tony 'Nicko' McMillan at the opening of the Mungindi Sculpture Trail

Sunday 18 September

When: 10.30AM
Where: Barwon River Park, Mungindi, QLD
RSVP: Friday 9 September to
E: Kim.Wildman@balonne.qld.gov.au
P: 4620 8830

This project was funded by the Australian Government under the Murray-Darling Basin Economic Development Program.

Australian Government Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water

More Plains Shire Council

Rates Notices

Rates notices will be sent out this week.

Extended discount period: A 10% discount period is available for 60 days, closing at 5.00pm on Monday 17 October 2022.

Payment options available: Interest free payment arrangements can be agreed by contacting Council.

Visit www.balonne.qld.gov.au/rates-3 for more rates information

Child Protection Week Colour Run 2022

Saturday 10th September | 9.00am Registration
St George Amphitheatre

FREE REGISTRATION | FREE SAUSAGE SIZZLE

DOXING.COM.au Geoberry Westpac Act for kids Care Balonne QUEENSLAND CHILD PROTECTION RIVER Festival

SOUTH WEST 10000 STEPS CHALLENGE

Step 1: Sign up via www.10000steps.org.au
Step 2: Form a team!
Step 3: Email us to register your team!
SWHHS-HealthyCommunities@health.qld.gov.au

healthy COMMUNITIES

FMD

Foot & Mouth Disease

KEY MESSAGES

Know the biosecurity risks for your property

Have a biosecurity plan - work through the risks and actions to take to minimise the risk

Provide a visual reminder with Biosecurity signs at property entrances

QLD Biosecurity - FMD



Come clean, go clean - equipment, clothing, vehicles

Ensure visitors who have arrived from overseas do not have contact with Australian livestock for at least 7 days

Record and restrict movement of visitors on your farm - ask if visitors have travelled overseas in the past month

DAF - Animal Health Preparedness



Quarantine introduced livestock for 14 days to watch for signs and prevent other biosecurity risks such as weed seed spread

Animal Health Australia



Prevent contact between farmed and feral pigs and no swill feeding

Know the signs and symptoms of FMD and if you suspect presence of FMD report it immediately to the Emergency Animal Disease Hotline on 1800 675 888 or to Biosecurity Queensland 13 25 23

Farm Biosecurity



Ensure livestock movement records are up to date on the NLIS database and ensure all National Vendor Declarations are completed accurately and contain all required information