

Balonne Bulletin

THE NEWSLETTER OF BALONNE SHIRE COUNCIL

ISSUE 30 | 4 NOV 2022



Balonne Shire Leading The Way

As one of the smallest councils in Queensland, our team is proving that size doesn't matter when it comes to creating ingenious solutions that improve living standards.

Since the last edition of the Bulletin, the Balonne Shire Council has received four prestigious awards for initiatives aimed at further improving liveability in our iconic area of Southwest Queensland.

The recent awards include:

- The Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia, Queensland's Excellence Award for Projects \$5M to \$10M for 'The Hub' at St George.
- The Local Government Association of Queensland's 'Butch Lenton Memorial Bush Council Innovation Award' for the development of 'The Hub' and collaboration with Country University Centres in Balonne to improve educational opportunities for regional students.
- The Open Minds Annual Queensland Mental Health Week Achievement Awards - Workplace Award (1-200 Staff) for our Mental Health Strategy and associated community programs.
- The Local Government Association of Queensland's 'Time to Shine' competition for our St George Region "You'll Be Hooked" marketing campaign, which was aimed at retaining, growing and broadening the tourist base to our area.

Balonne Shire Mayor, Samantha O'Toole, said that Council takes a strong approach to community sustainability to ensure the future of our region is strong and vibrant.

"I am so proud of our team's efforts to embrace our vision of being a welcoming, connected and innovative council with a strong economy and an abundance of opportunities," Mayor O'Toole said.

"That's why Council values innovation in our strategic planning and why we become involved in issues that aren't traditionally local government areas, such as education and mental health."

Two of the awards were in recognition of Council's highly successful collaboration with the Country Universities Centre (CUC) for the development of 'The Hub' to advance access to higher learning opportunities from within the region.

"The success of 'The Hub' is clearly evident with student figures in the first year alone surpassing our targets for the entire three-year pilot," Mayor O'Toole said.

"CUC Balonne is becoming the poster child for regional educational goals and we are particularly proud that our intensive community consultation and partnerships have helped make The Hub such a success story."

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What's On

PODCASTING 101 WORKSHOP

Free and fun 1 hour podcasting workshop, presented by Signal Creative, covering basic sound recording techniques using free apps, interview preparation, presenting styles, creative ways to use and share sound. To register, or for more information, email CDO@balonne.qld.gov.au.

WHEN: 15 Nov 2022 9.00am

WHERE: The Hub, St George

NINDIGULLY PIG RACES

Nindigully Pub's world-famous Pig Races are held annually and feature live music, raffles, auctions, food, drinks, fireworks, camping and, of course, pig races! Funds raised are donated to the Royal Flying Doctor Service. Adult tickets are \$50 and can be purchased at the gate from 10am. Entry is free for children under 15. More information can be found on the Nindigully Pub website: www.nindigullypub.com

WHEN: 26 Nov 2022

WHERE: Nindigully Pub, Thallon

FIRST 5 FOREVER

Did you know that in the first five years of life, your child's brain forms more than one million new neural connections? Things like talking, reading, singing and playing with children from birth have been proven to have positive impacts in language and literacy that last a lifetime. First 5 Forever activities take place every week with stories, games, rhymes, singing and craft fun for your little ones.

WHEN: Every Fri 9.30am & 10.30am

WHERE: St George Library, The Hub

FRIENDS OF THE HUB

Friends of the Hub (incorporating the St George Library, the Cultural Centre and the Country University Centres Balonne) meet socially every Monday at the St George Library from 9:45am to 12pm. Pop in to say hello and find out more about the group's activities.

WHEN: Every Mon 9.45am to 12pm

WHERE: St George Library, The Hub

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

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A message from the Mayor

Castlereagh Highway has been high on my agenda for quite some time and I continue to advocate for improvements to this important piece of road infrastructure for our region.

Council has commitment from both TMR (Transport and Main Roads) and QRA (Queensland Reconstruction Authority) to prioritise improvements to the Castlereagh Highway, with design works completed and approved for these critical works.

We are confident of the support of both state and federal governments and have submitted an application under QRA's Betterment Fund to upgrade the highway. The Assistant Minister for Main Roads, Bruce Saunders, will be visiting the Shire in November, and we have invited the Federal Minister for Emergency Management, Senator the Hon Murray Watt, to visit us to see our issues first hand.

The ongoing wet conditions are certainly hampering our efforts however we are looking forward to a time in the near future when we will be able to start work on improvements to this stretch of vital road network.

In other news about Council facilities and activities, I'm delighted that Balonne Shire Council has picked up four awards in the past few weeks.

The Institute of Public Works Queensland (IPWEAQ) announced that we had won the Projects \$5M to \$10M category for The Hub in their annual Excellence Awards, which celebrate the achievements of councils, engineering firms and suppliers in the delivery of exceptional outcomes for Queensland communities.

Barely two weeks later, we learned that The Hub and our CUC Balonne education pilot had taken out the Butch Lenton Memorial Bush Council Innovation Award at the 2022 Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) annual conference held in Cairns.



The CUC Balonne came about as a result of finding a solution to the exodus of young people from the region to study, and the related difficulty for employers in attracting and retaining experienced staff.

The concept of "growing our own" led to extensive community consultation and ultimately a partnership with Country Universities Centre in Cooma. With student figures in the first year surpassing our targets for the entire three-year pilot, CUC Balonne is becoming the poster child for regional educational goals.

In the same week, our Workplace Mental Health Strategy took out the Open Minds Queensland Mental Health Week Achievement Awards - Workplace Award (1-200 Staff) for our Mental Health Strategy. What began as a workplace program has extended into the community through the MATES in Construction sessions and the Fly High Billie B Kinder Program in schools across the region. This is just the beginning of an extended program of mental health initiatives for both Council staff and the wider community.

And finally, our St George Region You'll be Hooked marketing campaign won the LGAQ Time to Shine competition. This quirky program caught the judge's eye and has earned our tourism team an additional \$10,000 to attract visitors to the Balonne region.

Samantha O'Toole

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The Balonne Shire was also recognised for its Workplace Mental Health Strategy with the Open Minds Queensland Mental Health Week Achievement Awards - Workplace Award (1-200 Staff).

“What began as a workplace program has, to date, extended to the community through the MATES in Construction sessions and the Fly High Billie Program in schools across the region,” Mayor O’Toole said.

To round out our list of well-deserved accolades, Council’s Tourism team sought to capitalise on the unique natural assets of our region with the development of the “St George Region: You’ll be Hooked” Campaign, which was aimed at retaining and growing our Adventure Seeking High Value travellers’ to our area.

“We want to continue to expand our reach into the tourism market, particularly the Adventure Seeking Families, and have them so familiar with our brand that we become a destination of choice,” Mayor O’Toole said.

“We believe the “St George Region: You’ll be Hooked” campaign will capture the imagination of Adventure Seeking tourists and help us reel them in to achieve our Marketing Goals and further create economic benefits for our region.”



Nominate a local hero for Australia Day Award

Nominations are now open for Balonne Shire’s annual Australia Day Awards for 2023.

Is there someone in your community who goes above and beyond every day? Or perhaps you know of a young sportsperson kicking goals in their chosen sports? The Balonne Region hosts many exciting events throughout the year – is there one you believe deserves recognition for the benefits it brings to your community?

The annual Australia Day Awards allow our residents to recognise the invaluable work being done by the many local community groups and individuals by nominating them for one of the award categories shown below:

- Citizen of the Year
- Young Citizen of the Year (under 26 years of age)
- Cultural Award
- Senior Sportsperson
- Junior Sportsperson (under 17 years of age)
- Sports Administrator / Coach / Official Award (over 17 years of age)
- Volunteer of the Year
- Community Organisation of the Year
- Community Event of the Year

Nominations may be made online using the survey monkey link below, or nomination forms can be collected from Council’s Administration Centre in St George, or from libraries across the shire.

Contact cdo@balonne.qld.gov.au for a fillable electronic form or to answer any queries you may have about the nomination process.

<https://www.w.com/r/GYWZC5N>

**NOMINATIONS CLOSE AT 4.00PM
ON FRIDAY 25 NOVEMBER 2022**

Disaster recovery financial assistance update

The Rural Landholder Recovery Grant Scheme is now open for applications from the Balonne Shire Council area.

The grant provides a rebate to rural landholders to help pay for the costs of clean-up and reinstatement of a primary production enterprise that has suffered direct damage as a result of an eligible disaster. Rural landholders in the Balonne region will receive notification via email or letter in the near future.

There are also a number of other financial assistance programs open to primary producers and businesses in the Balonne shire.

Rural Landholder Recovery Grants

Grants of up to \$10,000 are available to assist with clean up and reinstatement activities such as impacts to fencing. To be eligible for assistance the relevant property must be located within a local government area activated for a 2021-2022 storm-flooding event and have not already received other disaster grant or loan assistance from any of these events.

Applications close 11 April 2023 or earlier if funds have been exhausted.

Medium to Large Business Recovery Loans

Loans of up to \$250,000 to assist in the re-establishment of normal operation of your primary production enterprise by covering costs such as repairing or replacing damaged, plant, farm buildings, purchasing livestock or meeting carry-on requirements.

Applications close 31 December 2023

Extraordinary Disaster Assistance Recovery Grants - Southern Qld Flood (6-20 May 2022 flood event)

Primary producers: Grants of up to \$75,000 are available for af-



ected primary producers to hire or purchase equipment and materials, clean up, remove debris, replace fencing and other costs associated with the recovery process.

Small businesses: Grants of up to \$50,000 are available for affected small businesses to hire or purchase equipment and materials, clean up, remove debris, replace or repair damaged infrastructure and stock and other costs associated with the recovery process.

Non-profit organisations: Grants of up to \$50,000 are available for affected non-profit organisations to hire or purchase equipment and materials, clean up, remove debris, repair or replace damaged infrastructure or goods and other costs associated with the recovery process.

Photos of direct damage are required. Applications close 6 January 2023.

For more information and to understand how funding may be used, follow the link to the QRIDA website.

<https://www.qrida.qld.gov.au/program/extraordinary-disaster-assistance-recovery-grants-southern-queensland-flooding>

Community service recognised



Cr Fuhrmeister being presented with a certificate by LGAQ President, Mayor Mark Jamieson at the conference's Gala Dinner.

Congratulations to Cr Robyn Fuhrmeister for being recognised for her service to local government and the state of Queensland at the Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) Annual Conference this week.

Cr Fuhrmeister has an impressive tally of 27 years serving the Balonne Shire Council, however her commitment to the region as a whole has resulted in improved services and facilities for all of residents.

St George residents encouraged to self-monitor water use

An updated policy for the St George water supply has effectively removed the timed restrictions for residential users. This allows residents to self-monitor their usage within different restriction levels.

Mayor Samantha O'Toole said the move was to simplify the process and to encourage the community to be more conscious of their water usage.

"We've implemented small changes to the St George Water Supply Policy (previously the St George Water Restrictions Policy) that will give residents the opportunity to keep a closer eye on their own water use. The resource belongs to the community, and this gives them power to govern how they use it."

A key change is the removal of summer and winter season restrictions, meaning usage limits are based on water availability rather than season. Each rateable residential lot will receive an annual allocation of river water and users will need to monitor and use their allocation accordingly. The proposed change is very similar to how our current allocation for bore water operates in St George.

Mayor O'Toole said, "We've also added level 0 to the water restriction levels and have included figures for each level that clearly show the targeted limits for each household or connection. This means every



household can better understand their own usage of our water supply".

When water restriction levels for St George sit between levels three and six, Council will monitor the community's use on an ad hoc basis and infringements will be issued in the same way as has previously happened. Fines will remain at the same levels and for the same breaches.

"We hope that these few changes to our policy for water supply in St George encourage a change in the way our community thinks about water use into the future," Mayor O'Toole said.

Council is proceeding to this change to residential and rural residential properties during the 2022-23 year with a view to further implement changes for commercial and industrial properties in the future.

Cancer Council Queensland

Apply today for the SunSmart Shade Creation Initiative!

SHADE GRANT NOW OPEN!
4 October - 21 November 2022

Help your organisation protect against UV by applying for the SunSmart Shade Creation Initiative today.

Eligible not-for-profit organisations in Central West and South West Queensland, who cater to children 0-18 years, can apply for up to 100 per cent funding up to \$25,000 to purchase fixed (hard roof) shade structures under this joint initiative by Cancer Council Queensland and the Queensland Government.

To apply or find out if your organisation is eligible, visit www.cancerqld.org.au/shade-initiative/
Contact Cancer Council Queensland via email at sunsmartapplications@cancerqld.org.au for further information.

Funded by
 Queensland Government

Opening hours over Christmas

Council's administration office in St George
CLOSED 5pm Friday 23 December **RE-OPENING** 8.45am Tuesday 3 January

St George Visitor Information Centre
CLOSED between 25 December and 1 January 2023
OPEN between 27 and 31 December between 9am and 1pm

St George Library
CLOSED 4pm Friday 23 December **RE-OPENING** 8.30am Tuesday 3 January

Dirranbandi Library
CLOSED 4pm Friday 23 December **RE-OPENING** 8.30am Tuesday 3 January

Thallon and Hebel Libraries
CLOSED 28 December **RE-OPENING**

Bollon Library
CLOSED Wednesday 28 December and 30 December **RE-OPENING**

For any emergency situation, call Council's after-hours service 24/7 on (07) 46208888. For any emergency event residents and visitors can stay up to date by subscribing to our emergency dashboard. The dashboard provides alerts and up to date information on road closures and weather conditions.

Visit <https://emergency.balonne.qld.gov.au> to opt into the alerts.

Trial run of flood barriers

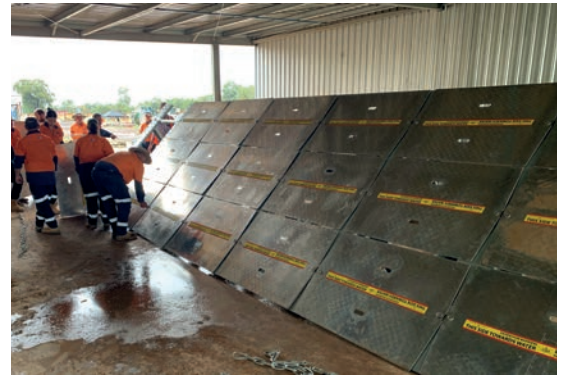
With continued wet weather being forecast for the coming months, Council staff recently conducted a trial run of one of the activities that form part of our natural disaster emergency response.

Setting up flood barriers is one aspect of the Flood Mitigation levee system for St George, with some of the other elements including levees, block fences, flood planks and penstocks.

The trial run was conducted by depot staff, using barriers that are purpose built for the protection of property and keeping floodwaters out of specific areas.

Comprised of several hundred pieces of varying size, the completed barrier measured nearly 40 metres in length.

Heavy chains secure the pieces together and a membrane is placed over the entire construction with the weight of the water plays a role in keeping it in place.






NOTICE OF MOBILE PHONE BASE STATION PROPOSAL

Location	185 Chelmer Road Thallon QLD 4497
Proposal	Installation of four sector antennas on an existing 45m high tower. Each antenna is 2.7m high x 0.5m wide.
Carrier	Field Solutions Group
Information	Email: support@fieldsolutions-group.com Web: www.rfnsa.com.au Phone: 1300 000 477
For details and how to make a submission	RFNSA site No 4497005
Submissions Close	COB 12 December 2022

Notice lodged under requirements of Communications Alliance Mobile Phone Base Station Deployment Code CS64:2020 R4.9 Sign on Site - new Site, no DA

ST GEORGE SWIMMING POOL

NOW OPEN FOR THE SUMMER SEASON!





NEW KID'S SPLASH PARK!

SUMMER OPENING HOURS
MONDAY - FRIDAY 5.30AM - 10.30AM AND 3.00PM TO 6.00PM
WEEKENDS 1.00PM TO 6.00PM

BARBEQUES AND PRIVATE PARTIES MUST BE BOOKED IN ADVANCE ON 0400 633 519

NOTE THAT ALCOHOL IS NOT PERMITTED ANYWHERE ON THE GROUNDS AND THIS WILL BE ENFORCED FOR THE SAFETY AND ENJOYMENT OF ALL PATRONS.

ARTESIAN POOL - 50M LAP POOL
ASK ABOUT OUR INTENSIVE LEARN TO SCHOOL HOLIDAYSWIM CLASSES



ST GEORGE SWIMMING POOL
148 VICTORIA STREET, ST GEORGE
PHONE 0400 633 519



get ready

QUEENSLAND

BALONNE

QCWA MARKETS

Join us for a Family Fun Day!

Saturday 19 November 2022
9 am - 12pm
THE HUB - Outdoor Area



Emergency Services on site
Giant Games for Kids
Coffee Van Available
FREE Sausage Sizzle
Live Music

This event is proudly supported by Balonne Shire Council and funded by the Queensland Government programs:
Get Ready Queensland - helping all Queensland communities prepare for natural disasters





DAF survey collating data to improve future recovery response

The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) has recently added a permanent link to the Natural Disaster Impact Survey on its natural disaster ehub found at <https://daf.engagementhub.com.au/naturaldisasterecovery>

The Natural Disaster Impact Survey has been designed to help the Queensland Government and industry quickly assess a disaster impacted area. The data collected helps provide evidence for appropriate levels of assistance to support disaster recovery under jointly funded Commonwealth-State

Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.

We urge all primary producers who were impacted by the May 2022 floods to respond to the survey so that DAF has the most accurate information about the issues faced by producers in the Balonne Shire. It's your chance to help shape future assistance programs being offered when natural disasters happen.

You can find the survey at <https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/a65512900348401a812e57d743e4c104>

Flood-impacted roads update

As a council with a relatively small population that covers a relatively large area, we are acutely aware of the vital importance of a well-maintained road system.

With the unprecedented run of wet weather over recent months, our roads have been receiving a real battering, which is putting a great amount of pressure on both our budgetary constraints and the resources of our Infrastructure Services team.

Given our smaller population, most of our funding comes from grants that we've coordinated from State and Federal Govern-

ments, and we are constantly prioritising areas of greatest need in line with our Transport Management Plan.

Over recent months, we have submitted numerous applications for the roads in most need that have incurred damage, and we are working closely with State and Federal Governments to expedite funding so we can deliver longer-term solutions to any damage as soon as possible.

In the interim, our Infrastructure Services team will be working diligently to address areas of concern as soon as possible.

Tourism initiative wins LGAQ award



The concept of the campaign includes a collectable key ring similar to the above pictured

An innovative way of marketing the strengths of our region has been recognised at this year's LGAQ Conference with Council taking out the "Let it Shine" award.

The St George Region is a welcoming oasis in Queensland's Southern Outback, with all seven towns throughout Balonne uniquely positioned on rivers. We are famous for our inland fishing, prolific birdlife, native Australian wildlife, rich history, and relaxed country lifestyle.

Council's Tourism team sought to capitalise on these natural local benefits with the development of the "St George Region: You'll be Hooked" Campaign, which was aimed at retaining and growing Adventure Seeking High Value travellers' to our area.

We want to continue to expand our reach into the tourism market, particularly the Adventure Seeking Families, and have them so familiar with our brand that we become a destination of choice.

We believe the "St George Region: You'll be Hooked" campaign will capture the imagination of Adventure Seeking tourists and help us reel them in to achieve our Marketing Goals and further create economic benefits for our region.



Works have been carried out on the Carnarvon Highway intersection with Noondoo Thallon in conjunction with TMR



Honeymah Lane Road Upgrade

As part of joint funding from the Federal Government under the Roads to Recovery Program 22/23, Honeymah Lane was nominated as one of the priority infrastructure locations. Following inspection by Council, six (6) priority areas located along Honeymah Lane were upgraded to gravel all weather access roads. Working with the community and local landholders, Council utilised local knowledge to ensure that concerns about locations where water always pools were accurately addressed. Scope of works included (but not limited to):

- batter degraded
- cut out diversion drains,
- moving surplus material from tree line to table drain and onto road
- apply appropriate moisture content, trim and compact material with 150mm of imported gravel

Noondoo Thallon Intersection Upgrade

- Council has recently recommenced works on the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) Project at the Carnarvon Highway / Noondoo-Thallon Intersection that included cement stabilisation, excavation, drainage shaping, installation of 1200x2440 Reinforced Concrete Box Culverts or RCBC units. The aim is to service the community and assist with the drainage issues. Sealing of Carnarvon Highway component was completed last week, with anticipated asphalt and line marking planned for mid next month, pending weather and resources.
- As part of the project, five (5) other crossings along Noondoo Thallon Road will be installed with RCBC units to ensure appropriate drainage that is able to assist the community and meet expectation of surround businesses and road users. Works are expected to commence following completion of the intersection.

November DRFA works

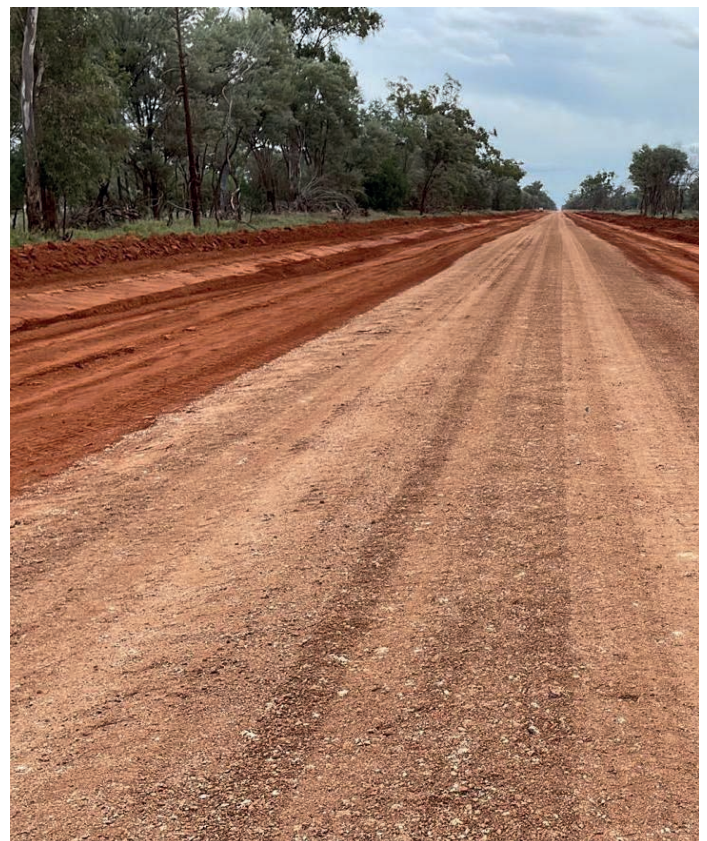
Works have been delayed due to wet weather.

Cubbie Road

- Expected completion: mid – January
- Road is currently flooded and expected to be for several weeks.
- Expected traffic delays less than 5 minutes.

Upcoming Works

- Bollon-Dirranbandi Road
Expected start: mid – January
- Minnum Road
Expected start: early – December



Works have been carried out under the Federal Government's 'Roads to Recovery' Funding on Honeymah Lane to upgrade the road.