

NEW HUB FOR BALONNE SHIRE



The Hub – the Balonne Shire’s new library, business and education complex – is open to the public.

The modern building local residents have watched take shape since the construction project began in May last year came to fruition when the doors were thrown open to the public on February 5.

Along with the adjacent refurbished Cultural Centre, The Hub now provides a new focus for library and business services, tertiary education

and events in the Balonne Shire.

Inspecting the new complex recently, Balonne Shire Mayor Samantha O’Toole said the library hub will be a game-changer for the Balonne Shire.

“This new library incorporates contemporary library services, a business and learning hub, the new Country Universities Centre and a cultural centre.

“It also creates a vibrant precinct, improving both the functionality of

the spaces and creating street appeal in this central location in Victoria Street.”

The Hub includes:

- a “Maker’s Space” (innovation, creativity, 3D printing, agtech and robotics);
- spaces equipped with technology for virtual learning, training and connection;
- conference and workshop facilities

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What's On

Welcoming Clubs + Good Sports Forum

Attract more people to join your club or community group. Make your group safer, more welcoming and family-friendly. Give your organisation the upper hand when it comes to attracting funding. Further information: Balonne Shire Council, tel. 4620 8888.

WHERE: St George Bowls Club, Cnr Victoria and Roe Streets, St George.

WHEN: Saturday, 19 February. 3–5pm.

Barefoot Bowls Welcome Party

Whether you're brand new to the region, or a lifelong local, Council invites all Balonne Shire residents to attend our Barefoot Bowls Welcome Party. Book online now through Eventbrite! Places are limited to allow for social distancing. For more information, contact our Community Development Team at cdo@balonne.qld.gov.au or on 4620 8888.

WHERE: St George Bowls Club, Cnr Victoria and Roe Streets, St George.

WHEN: Saturday, 19 February. 5.30pm arrival for sign-in, and first roll of a bowl at 6pm.

399 Off Road Race

The St George 399 Off Road Race is held over three action-packed days. Following on from the success of the previous years' events, St George will again play host to another year of excitement! Come and be a part of this weekend full of racing.

WHERE: St George.

WHEN: 18-20 March 2022, 9am–5pm.

Battle on the Balonne

The Battle on the Balonne Triathlon consists of the following events: Olympic distance -1.5/40/10km (swim/cycle/run) individuals and teams; sprint distance -750/20/5 individuals; sprint distance teams 750/20/5; corporate / business, sporting clubs challenge -750/20/5; junior triathlon; and 5km Fun Run.

WHERE: Balonne River, St George.

WHEN: 26-27 March 2022.

Got a story, event or notice?

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

Phone: 07 4620 8888

Email: martin.bowerman@balonne.qld.gov.au

A message from the Mayor

These are exciting times for the Balonne Shire: the new \$6 million Hub in St George has been completed and is now open to the public.

The Hub houses an expanded library – with longer opening hours – as well as a range of other amenities and technology for education, business, functions and meetings.

Saturday, February 5 was the first day the Hub was open and more than 200 people took that opportunity to see what it has to offer.

I've had lots of feedback and everyone who has contacted me seems genuinely excited.

Everyone is really thrilled with the technology and opportunities available now. If you haven't been through the Hub yet, please make the time to go and take a look.

The Under Fives area is terrific and the Maker's Space is great, and I've already had people talking about a homework club in there and arts and crafts groups want to book it to have workshops and training, which I think is fantastic because it's exactly what that space was designed for.

Other comments show that people are really excited about access to the public computers and a huge electronic table that is great for local historical research, for example, or even to play 3D electronic games.

There are now technologies available to our community that we have never had access to before. It's mind-blowing.

Please go along and see what's in there. Our librarians will be happy to show you what's available.

The library has new opening hours. It opens six days a week – Monday to Saturday. It opens at 9am every day and closes at 5pm on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, at 6pm Thursday and Friday and at 2pm Saturday.

The Hub is now home to the St George campus of the Country Universities Centre, or CUC. You can drop in and discover what the CUC offers for tertiary studies right here in Balonne Shire.

Also, the annexe is available for functions once again, so if you want



to know more about booking an event there, please give the Council a call on 4620 8888.

As I mentioned, the Hub is a \$6 million investment in the Balonne Shire and \$5 million of that came from the Federal Government.

I want to say a very sincere thank-you to the Federal Government for this funding, and in particular our local Member for Maranoa, David Littleproud.

I look forward to Mr Littleproud performing the official opening of this wonderful new complex in coming weeks.

Watch the Balonne Shire Council Facebook for details of this event.

Australia Day

“Thank you” to everyone who came along to our Australia Day ceremony and events in St George.

It was a wonderful day and it really did honour the theme for this year's Australia Day to reflect, respect and celebrate.

As I said in my speech, when we gather together on Australia Day, it is important that we hear and acknowledge the meaning and message of those words and ensure that we act on them, not only on Australia Day, but every day.

It was a reminder that we need to always practice those principles.

Mayor Samantha O'Toole

in association with the Cultural Centre auditorium;

- training and workshops via virtual connection;
- a quiet study/reading room and work areas;
- teen and junior feature areas;
- a dedicated area for the celebration of local history and cultural representation; and
- a mix of meeting rooms and a kitchenette.

“This wonderful new hub will have the effect of shrinking distance and boosting services for students, business operators and the broader Balonne community over extended hours.

“It will provide resources and services that students and business people might once have had to travel away from the region to find or simply go without.

“This new complex will help us further reduce the differences between living in regional Queensland versus living in the city.”

The \$6 million project was supported by a \$5 million grant from the Federal Government, secured by Maranoa MP David Littleproud, and he is expected to officially open The Hub in coming weeks. Watch the Balonne Shire Council Facebook page for further details.



The library has relocated to The Hub, with extended hours.



Claire (left), Lauren and Samuel Brumpton have found plenty to read in the children's section of the new library.



Balonne Shire Mayor Samantha O'Toole (right) chatting in the main section of the new library with librarian Sheree Ryan.

BALONNE MARKS AUSTRALIA DAY WITH COMMUNITY AWARDS

Balonne Shire Council has marked Australia Day with a series of events in St George, including presentation of community awards.

Mayor Samantha O'Toole told a crowd of 250 people attending the Australia Day ceremony on January 26 that the nation has a human history dating back tens of thousands of years.

"Australia is known as a country having one of the oldest cultures in the world," Mayor O'Toole said.

"We are known as a country that is rich in cultural diversity. We are known as the lucky country. We are known as a nation of legends: heroic, larrikin and every type in between. We are known as a country full of opportunities and all of these statements can also be said for our Shire. "The theme for Australia Day 2022 is 'Reflect, Respect and Celebrate'. As we come together on this day, it is important that we hear and acknowledge the meaning and message of those words and ensure that we not only act on them today, but every day.

"Today should be a reminder that we need to always practice those principles."

Mayor O'Toole also announced the winners of Australia Day awards for the Balonne Shire.

They are:

- Citizen of the Year, Ben Gardiner;
- Young Citizen of the Year, Yasmin Sullivan;
- Volunteer of the Year, Andrea Killen;
- Community Group of the Year, the Thallon Progress Association;
- Community Event of the Year, the Thallon Team Truck Pull, conducted by the Thallon State School P & C Committee;
- Cultural Award, the Balonne Fijian Community Group;
- Senior Sports Award, Tom McDonnell;
- Junior Sports Award, Lilian Stenhouse; and
- Sports Administrator Award, SueAnne Bardsley.

Australia Day award winners

- **Junior Sports Achievement Award**
– Lilian Stenhouse



Our Junior Sports Achievement Award winner for 2022 has a list of incredible sporting achievements that someone twice her age would be proud of, including the St George High School's Junior Sportswoman of the Year trophy.

Lillian is a true all around sports person, and has represented the south west region for swimming, netball and triathlon over the past 12 months. She is dedicated to her training, trialing and representative sports opportunities.

Outside of school, Lillian won the sprint triathlon at the Maranoa Double Tri, won her age group at the infamous Hell of the West Enticer Triathlon, was selected in the DDRSA Development Training Camp (swimming) and proudly represented the St George Swim Club at numerous carnivals.

- **Senior Sports Achievement Award**
– Tom McDonnell

In 2021, Tom McDonnell had an outstanding year of rugby, taking him from captaining his local country rugby side to playing at high-level representative level.

After being picked to play in a City vs Country Game in Condamine, Tom was selected to play in the Downs Rugby Representative Team. From there, he travelled to Townsville to compete for selection in the Queens-



land Country team, and was later named in the Heelers (Queensland Country) Team.

Tom also played a few games in Brisbane against First Division teams that supply players to the Queensland Reds, and led the mighty Frillnecks to play in another grand final.

For Tom to make it all the way from the Frillnecks to being a part of the Heelers Team is a fantastic achievement and the community should be immensely proud of his ability and effort.

- **Sports Administrator Award** – SueAnne Bardsley



SueAnne Bardsley, or Susie as she is affectionately known to her athletes, has been an integral part of the St George Triathlon Club since its inception over 10 years ago.

SueAnne's passion for triathlon shines bright, and she has volunteered countless hours not only to train her beloved athletes, but also as



Balonne Shire Australia Day award winners (from left): Jenna Morris, Thallon State School P & C Committee, Community Event of the Year, the Thallon Team Truck Pull; Lilian Stenhouse, Junior Sports Award; Niko Belo, Cultural Award, the Balonne Fijian Community Group; Sue-Anne Bardsley, Sports Administrator Award; Ben Gardiner, Citizen of the Year; Yasmin Sullivan, Young Citizen of the Year; Tom McDonnell, Senior Sports Award; Andrea Killen, Volunteer of the Year; and Liz Hill, Thallon Progress Association, Community Group of the Year; with Balonne Shire Mayor Samantha O'Toole.

an executive member of the Club.

Currently serving as Secretary, SueAnne has also been instrumental to the development of the “Battle on the Balonne,” which after five years is becoming a “must attend” race for diehard triathletes.

The passion that Susie brings each and every day to support, organise and guide this amazing club and its athletes deserves this recognition.

• **Cultural Achievement Award – Balonne Fijian Community Group**



Over the past few years, a slice of Fijian culture, and all the joy, music, kindness and traditional food that comes with it, has lit up our Shire

thanks to members of the Balonne Fijian Community.

Their beautiful choir’s performances (and delicious food) have become extremely popular at local events. Many members also volunteer with other community organisations, like the CWA and Thallon Progress Association, further demonstrating their contribution to the cultural life of the Balonne.

Their quiet and consistent presence in our Shire is a remarkable testament to the positives of migration for rural communities, and we thank the Balonne Fijian Community for bringing their culture, caring natures and good work ethic to our region.

• **Community Event of the Year – Thallon Truck Pull**

We are pleased to present this year’s Community Event of the Year award to the team behind the Thallon Truck Pull, who identified that the Thallon State School was in dire need of support and stepped in to create this original new fund-raising event.

It was a huge success and over 300 people flocked to Thallon on August 28 to see eight teams try to pull a nine-tonne prime mover over 25 metres in the fastest time. The day included lots of free child-friendly activities, health



checks, a visit from the bush barber, live music and catering by local clubs.

The event raised \$16,000 to upgrade the school’s playground equipment, with the Thallon Fishing Club raising \$3,000 from their catering. Congratulations on bringing this one-of-a-kind event to our region, and good luck for all future editions of the Thallon Truck Pull.

• **Community Group of the Year – Thallon Progress Association**

After 50 years of service, we are excited to recognise the Thallon Progress Association as the Community Group of the Year.

The group have been advocates and champions for Thallon, not only iden-



tifying problems that face the community but also working actively to fix them. They have been the driving force behind many major projects, including:

- the Watering Hole Mural on the Grain Corp silos;
- the William the Wombat sculpture;
- establishment of the War Memorial and the Anzac Day service;
- employing eight locals in community engagement and business development roles; and
- organising the Grazing at the Watering Hole event.

The Thallon Progress Association embodies a “can do”, never-say-die community spirit and has achieved so much for such a small organisation of dedicated volunteers.

• Volunteer of the Year – Andrea Killen



Andrea has devoted herself for years to the community and she volunteers endlessly to benefit others. Her work to create opportunities for our youth, her advocacy, and support of economic development in our Shire demonstrate the leadership skills that make Andrea far more than

just a brilliant school principal.

Andrea’s volunteer involvement is extensive, including:

- Dirranbandi Progress Association – President (4 years);
- Dirranbandi Local Youth Agriculture Pathways Sub-Committee;
- Dirranbandi P&C;
- Country Universities Centre Board member; and
- Murray-Darling Advisory Group member.

Andrea has had a hand in most community events and activities over the past few years, from organising Jeff’s Christmas Run Charity to the Multi-purpose Sports Complex opening and the Dirranbandi Christmas lighting. No job is too big or too small, and Andrea is an inspiration to all.

• Young Citizen of the Year – Yasmin Sullivan



Yasmin Sullivan is a young adult who brings enthusiasm and energy to many different areas, and aims to make St George a better place through volunteering.

Yasmin’s achievements include being 2021 House Captain of St George High School, being selected in the inaugural Balonne Shire Youth Council, and being part of the UQ Young Scholars Program.

She is a valued member of the St George Pastoral and Agriculture Show, St George Netball Club, where she volunteers to coach, as well as play, and the St George Golf Club, where Yasmin regularly can be found volunteering for charity days and catering events.

Yasmin is a quiet leader in every-

thing she does, and an outstanding role model for her peers.

• Citizen of the Year – Ben Gardiner



Anyone who has had anything to do with our Citizen of the Year will know he is a man of many talents, who enthusiastically supports a variety of community organisations and committees. From the SES to the Rugby Club or the Show Society, Ben has volunteered his time, knowledge and passion for the betterment of our community over many, many years and is an extremely deserving winner of this award.

Ben has given 15 years of service to the St George Agricultural and Pastoral Association, including leading that committee to three successful St George Shows and supporting construction of the new Secretary’s Box at the Showgrounds. He is a mentor for new members, and his wealth of knowledge is valued and appreciated by all.

Ben has also played a huge part in supporting sport in our Shire, particularly through the St George Frill-necks Rugby Club, where he has been a member for over 20 years and led for the last eight. During his time as President, the Club has seriously improved its on-field performance, and off-field raised \$30,000 for the RFDS just last year.

Ben is also a member of Downs Rugby and throughout the year spends countless hours in meetings, travelling to games and functions and is always the first to put his hand up to drive the bus to ensure players and supporters can get to games.

Congratulations Ben. Well done and thank you.

Balonne Shire building on community priorities

Balonne Shire Council has launched a project to build on its corporate plan for the next five years, called Learning Opportunities for Balonne.

Mayor Samantha O'Toole said Council has engaged the accounting and business consulting firm Hall Chadwick to research and document learning opportunities for the Balonne Shire.

"Council's vision is: 'Welcoming, connected and innovated communities, where economies are strong and opportunities are abundant'," Mayor O'Toole said.

"Previously, consultation with the community identified five community priorities.

"These are:

- retention and attraction of people and new businesses and industries;
- increased base level services and needs;
- community liveability and wellbeing;
- Indigenous engagement; and
- digital connectivity.

"The next step is to develop a range of strategies for Council to advocate, monitor or deliver these priorities on behalf of our communities.

"Council has chosen to start with education and training opportunities, as all five community priorities have an element of education and training to be successful."

Mayor O'Toole said Council wants to document some of the work that has already been done by individuals, businesses, educational institutions and Council, and what more can be done to achieve our community priorities.

"Establishment of the Country Universities Centre, plus the new Hub in St George, with its expanded library, meeting rooms and advanced technology, are just some of the initiatives already well underway.

"However, Council also wants ideas from residents. We very much want to hear from you, our Balonne community.

"Hall Chadwick will be holding



Council is looking for growth opportunities across the Balonne Shire.

interviews in the week commencing Monday, February 28 in St George, and we want to hear from as many people as possible.

"The interviews will be held in the Cultural Centre in St George, in Victoria Street, next door to the Council chambers.

"Interviews can be conducted face-to-face or over the phone. All information is confidential and can be provided anonymously.

"To make a booking for an interview time, please call the Council on 4620 8888 or email council@balonne.qld.gov.au

"Information will also be gathered in an online or paper-copy survey that everyone can complete. More details about this will go up on the Council Facebook and website."

Mayor O'Toole said that Hall Chadwick will gather all the information and present a report by 30 June 2022 for Council to take further action.

Save on rates

A half-yearly rates notice for landholders in the Balonne Shire was issued on February 16 but a 10 per cent discount is available if full payment is made within 30 days.

The discount period will expire at the close of business on March 18.

Landholders who have signed up to Round 1 of the Wild Dog Exclusion Fencing Special Rate Scheme will notice their first payment due on the February rates notice.

If you have changed your contact details, you can complete a change-of-address form available on the

Council's website at: [change-of-address-for-rates-notice \(balonne.qld.gov.au\)](http://change-of-address-for-rates-notice.balonne.qld.gov.au)

Council also offers electronic distribution of rates notices via email. Our customer administration centre can help property-owners locate the change of address form that must be completed and signed, with your rates assessment numbers to help us match email addresses to the correct property. Telephone Council on 4620 8888.

Also, people are able to enter into a payment plan with Council to pay their rates over a period of time. No interest charges are applied if the payment plan is adhered to.

Thuraggi Road being sealed

Thuraggi Road in St George will be sealed by the end of February.

Preparatory work has already been carried out and the final work is planned to be completed by February 25.

To protect the road surface and vehicles, Thuraggi Road is expected to be closed (except to residents living along the road) for the week commencing Monday, February 21, while the bitumen is laid.

The full 3.8km length of Thuraggi Road – joining the Buchan Bypass to Salmon Road – will be sealed.

As well as the road being sealed, the previous six-metre-wide pavement will be increased to eight metres.

The budget for these roadworks is approximately \$400,000 and is coming from the Federal Government's Roads to Recovery Program.

The Roads to Recovery Program is designed to support the maintenance of the nation's local road infrastruc-



Thuraggi Road is set to be sealed by the end of February.

ture assets, which facilitates greater accessibility and improves safety, economic and social outcomes for Australians.

The Program provides funding to all local councils and to States or Territories in areas where there are no councils (unincorporated areas). Lo-

cal councils are responsible for nominating road projects on which to spend their Roads to Recovery funding, based on their local priorities.

Further information: <https://investment.infrastructure.gov.au/about/local-initiatives/roads-to-recovery-program/index.aspx>



BALONNE SHIRE COUNCIL PRESENTS

WELCOMING CLUBS + GOOD SPORTS FORUM

FEBRUARY 19, 2022 - 3PM-5PM
ST GEORGE BOWLS CLUB

Learn How To:

- Attract more people to join your club or community group
- Make your group safer, more welcoming and family friendly
- Give your organisation the upper hand when it comes to attracting funding

Program:

3pm: Registration
3:10pm: Welcoming Clubs Workshop with Maia Tuadavidson
4:10pm: Afternoon Tea
4:30pm: Good Sports Presentation by Ashlee Adams-Smith and Dawn Amit
5pm: Questions & Networking

register online now! → 

Or call Council on (07) 4620 8888



Clean Up Day

ANNUAL KERBSIDE COLLECTION

- St George**
- Bollon**
- Dirranbandi**
- Thallon**

14 MARCH 2022

- Please separate your steel and green-waste piles
- Please keep green-waste to 250L and/or manageable lengths
- Watch your item weight - it will be lifted by just two people
- Got an oversized item? (e.g car bodies) call Council 4620 8888

