



Balonne Shire Councillors stood in support of sufferers on domestic and family violence: (from left) Rod Avery, Scott Scriven, (CEO Matthew Magin), Deputy Mayor Richard Lomman, Mayor Samantha O'Toole, Bill Winks, Ian Todd and Robyn Fuhrmeister.

Councillors honour victims of domestic violence

Balonne Shire Councillors have remembered the victims of domestic and family violence at a special ceremony at their May meeting.

Councillors and senior staff observed a minute's silence and burned a candle on the table for the duration of the meeting on May 19.

Mayor Samantha O'Toole said it was important to remember the victims of domestic and family violence throughout Australia.

"The month of May is Domestic and Family Violence Awareness Month," Mayor O'Toole said. "It is a time for all of us to speak up about domestic vio-

lence, raise awareness of the issue and support survivors.

"Domestic violence occurs in all parts of Australia and in all parts of society, from the city to the country, from rich to poor.

"As a Council – on behalf of Balonne residents – we acknowledge the fact that domestic and family violence has no boundary lines. It affects all ages, all sexes and all races.

"In communities such as ours, the impact is felt not just by the individuals and their families, but across the community. Together, we stand as one voice to send a clear message

that domestic and family violence of any kind will not be tolerated in our community.

"We stand as a united and strong voice to show that the issue of domestic and family violence does not sit in the lap of one person, one organisation or one level or side of government. It is an issue for all levels of government and our whole community.

"Council lit a candle in acknowledgement of the bravery of victims and survivors of domestic and family violence, and Councillors and senior staff attending the meeting

To page 3

What's On

Bollon Polocrosse

The Polocrosse Multi-horse Carnival held at the Bollon Showgrounds will be a great day out. Offering local entertainment everyone will enjoy. Camping is available with showers and toilets available.

WHEN: 11-12 June 2022

WHERE: Bollon Showground

Nibbles & Networking

Nibbles & Networking After Dark is a special event open to everyone, but particularly businesses and educators, raising funds for Youth Summit 2023. A three-course meal with music and networking is available for \$50 per ticket. Tickets can be purchased at Council reception or online: Nibbles & Networking After Dark Tickets | EventBookings

WHEN: 15 June 2022 from 6pm

WHERE: The Farmhouse, Victoria Street, St George

Career Expo

High school students and their parents, come along and learn about work and training and education all in the one place from industry organisations, individual employers, universities and providers of vocational education and training. See the options available when high school is over. This event is open to the entire community.

WHEN: Thursday, 16 June 2022, 9.30am-2pm.

WHERE: Cultural Centre, Victoria Street, St George

Yellowbelly Country Music Festival

A great week of country music, bush poetry, food, drink, camping, fishing, friends and country hospitality. There's always a great line up of country music performers, bush poets and lots of fun walk-ups held throughout the week. Camping is available: first-in, best-sited. Show and camping tickets are available at the gate.

WHEN: 27 June - 3 July 2022

WHERE: St George Showgrounds

Got a story, event or notice?

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

Phone: 07 4620 8888

Email: [martin.bowerman@](mailto:martin.bowerman@balonne.qld.gov.au)

[balonne.qld.gov.au](mailto:martin.bowerman@balonne.qld.gov.au)

A message from the Mayor

What an extraordinarily wet year we are having. This flooding rain began back before Christmas and now here we are, six months later, with rain and flooding continuing into May and suggestions from the Bureau of Meteorology that wetter-than-average conditions may carry on through winter.

I know road closures are causing delays and inconvenience for many of our residents, and I am sure there will be a big job of road repairs to be done too once the flood waters drain away. Council will work as quickly as possible on repairs.

Also, I know the rain is causing real problems for our primary producers: for example, disrupting the cotton harvest and preventing sowing of winter crops (and, in some cases, washing away seed already sown). We are working with Agforce and others to try to calculate how much damage has been done.

If you are a primary producer affected by the current rain and flooding events, please complete the Department of Agriculture & Fisheries Agricultural Natural Disaster Impact Survey detailed on page 5 of this *Balonne Bulletin*.

Completing the survey will potentially help trigger the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements assistance sooner. This survey is fully supported by Balonne Shire Council in recognition of the benefits it can have for our primary producers.

Please spare a few minutes to complete the form if you have been impacted by the current weather events.

If you are a non-agricultural business, you can complete a survey on the State Government's Business Queensland website. On the website landing page, go to the heading "South East Queensland rainfall and flooding" and click on "Take the survey". (This is in fact for all of Queensland, not just the south east.)

As you will read in the article in this edition, Councillors recently carried out a short ceremony to remember the victims of domestic and family violence throughout Australia.

The month of May is Domestic and



Family Violence Awareness Month. It is a time for all of us to speak up about domestic violence, raise awareness of the issue and support survivors.

You can confide in your doctor or other trusted professionals, and there are a number of specialist counselling services you can telephone. One of these is White Ribbon Australia on 1800 RESPECT – or 1800 737 732 – a 24-hour counselling line for anyone who has experienced, or is at risk of, family and domestic violence and-or sexual assault.

Please, do not suffer in silence. Speak up. Help is available.

After a lengthy campaign, the federal election is now behind us. There was an obvious mood for change in Australia – certainly in some city metropolitan areas in particular.

After nine years of Coalition Government, a new Labor Government has now been sworn in, with Anthony Albanese as our new Prime Minister. Federal Government policies obviously have a major impact on rural and regional Australia – for example, the policy settings and decisions about use of Murray-Darling water – and I look forward to working with the new Federal Government Ministers on issues vital to Balonne Shire.

Also, I would like to congratulate Federal Member for Maranoa, David Littleproud, on his re-election and also look forward to continue working with him on federal matters affecting our region.

Samantha O'Toole

From page 1

were proud to stand and observe the minute's silence to remember those lost."

Mayor O'Toole said domestic and family violence was not always physical.

"It can also be financial, emotional or even technology abuse. There are many different forms – however, they are all used to control a person and their actions.

"And, while the most common form of family and domestic violence is perpetrated by men against women, that is not always the case.

"According to figures I have seen, 68 cases out of every hundred are perpetrated by men against women but almost 16 cases out of every hundred involve women committing violence against men.

"The remaining 16 cases out of every hundred involve – in almost equal numbers – female against female or male against male domestic violence.

"In Queensland this calendar year, just in the four months to April 30, a total of more than 23,000 domestic violence orders have been taken out – 80 per cent of them taken out by police on behalf of victims.

"Of those 23,000 DVOs, 17,000 were for females and 6,000 were for males – highlighting again that this issue is not exclusively affecting just one gender."

Students can plan out career paths

If you are a high school student – or parent of a high school student – make sure Thursday, June 16 is marked in your diary.

That's the day a "Career Expo" will be held in St George.

This will be an opportunity to learn more about work and training and education all in the one place.

It is expected industry organisations, individual employers, universities and providers of vocational education and training will all be in attendance.

There will be information booths, stalls and interactive displays, plus experts who can guide students and their parents through the options available when high school is over.

The Career Expo will be open to the entire community.

Mayor O'Toole said if someone was impacted by domestic or family violence, it is important to speak and not simply suffer in silence.

"If you are affected by domestic or family violence, please, speak up. There are people ready to listen and ready to help.

"You can confide in your doctor or other trusted professionals, and there



The venue is the Cultural Centre, next door to the Balonne Shire Council building in Victoria Street, and the opening times are 9.30 am till 2 pm.

For more information about this event, please contact Alix at CUC Balonne on 1800 OUR CUC or email alix.greenhill@cucbalonne.edu.au

PS: Potential stall-holders are very welcome to apply for a spot.

are a number of specialist counselling services you can telephone.

"One of these is White Ribbon Australia on 1800 RESPECT – or 1800 737 732 – a 24-hour counselling line for anyone who has experienced, or is at risk of, family and domestic violence and-or sexual assault.

"Please, do not suffer in silence. Speak up. Help is available."



Councillors also observed a minute's silence – and burned a candle for the duration of their May 19 meeting – to remember those lost to domestic and family violence.



Funding a “game changer” for critically endangered wombat

Commonwealth Government funding of \$248,000 has been announced to aid recovery of the critically-endangered northern hairy-nosed wombat.

The funding was announced on May 11, which is officially “Hairy-Nosed Day”, a day celebrated each year to raise awareness of the northern hairy-nosed wombat and the hard-working staff and volunteers who support its recovery.

Leanne Brosnan, Director of The Wombat Foundation, which received the grant from the Commonwealth’s Environment Restoration Fund, said the northern hairy-nosed wombat (NHW) is listed as Critically Endangered under both the Queensland Nature Conservation Act 1992 and the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 and is listed as one of the 100 priority threatened species under the Australian Government’s Threatened Species Strategy Action Plan 2021-2026.

Over the past 30 years, the NHW Recovery Program, led by the Queensland Department of Environment & Science (DES) and supported by key stakeholders, including The Wombat Foundation, has seen great success. During this time, NHW populations have increased from 35 individuals in the 1980s to over 300 today.

The essential components of this

success have been the increased understanding of the species’ requirements, protection of habitat, exclusion of predators, securing of food and water resources, and establishing a second population.

Although the species’ current trajectory is promising, it remains arguably the most critically threatened mammal in Australia.

The risk of extinction is high due to more than 95 per cent of NHWs located at a single location on Epping Forest National Park (near Clermont in Central Queensland) and the remaining 15 individuals protected in

a small, translocated population at Richard Underwood Nature Refuge (north of St George).

The project will deliver a number of crucial on-ground actions identified as priorities, including:

- improvements to the existing dog-proof fence at Epping Forest National Park;
- improved genetic health and size of the Richard Underwood Nature Reserve population; and
- improved habitat, and informed predator and competitor management strategies.



The Council’s Thallon Library supported National Hairy-Nosed Day.



Asked by The Wombat Foundation to “wear whiskers” on National Hairy-Nosed Day, a number of Balonne Shire Council staff got into the spirit of the occasion.



Flooding continues across Balonne in wet autumn

Flooding has continued in the Balonne Shire in recent weeks as remarkably wet summer weather continues into autumn.

The Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) – which includes Balonne Shire Council councillors and staff and a wide range of other local, state and federal government authorities and emergency services – is meeting regularly to prepare for any contingencies.

Regular flood alerts have been issued for affected communities, and road conditions and warnings updated on the Emergency Dashboard on the Council website.

Balonne Shire Council has staff and equipment in place to respond, and is monitoring the situation in partnership with Moree Plains Regional Council, Queensland SES and NSW SES.

The best way to stay up to date on flood news – with all the latest road conditions, weather warnings and power outages – is to subscribe to Council's Emergency Dashboard: <https://emergency.balonne.qld.gov.au/>

Also, for more information, listen to ABC local radio, for weather forecasts visit www.bom.qld.gov.au, and for road closures visit <https://qldtraffic.qld.gov.au/> or phone 13 19 40. For power outages, call the Ergon Energy faults line on 13 10 46.

For flood assistance, call the State Emergency Service on 13 25 00. Dial 000 in an emergency.

Please, stay safe and stay away from flood waters. Remember, if it's flooded, forget it.

For more information, phone Balonne Shire Council on (07) 4620 8888. (This includes after-hours service.)

Impact survey

Are you a primary producer affected by the current rain and flooding events in the Balonne Shire?

Well, please fill in the very short survey form available on the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) website here: <https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/a65512900348401a812e57d743e4c104>

This is the DAF Agricultural Natural Disaster Impact Survey.

Completing this survey will potentially help trigger the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements funding sooner.

It will only take a few minutes, can be anonymous if you wish but can have major benefits for primary producers throughout Balonne Shire.

The form is a survey. It is not in itself an application for assistance.

The purpose of this survey is to gain a better understanding of the extent of the recent natural disaster affecting your area. Participation is voluntary, and you can stop the survey anytime.



A Council crew at work pumping out water at Thallon.

Sip Under the Stars a show-stopper

The St George Show expanded their 2022 event by hosting a wine tasting on the Friday night prior to the show, and 100 guests attended, with wine experience ranging from rookies to enthusiasts.

It was a fantastic opportunity for guests who considered themselves non-wine drinkers to find a drop they enjoyed.

As for the wine enthusiasts, this was a wonderful event to enjoy their drink of choice with a range of Wynns Coonawarra Estate Chardonnay, Riesling, Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon, Black Cabernet Sauvignon, V&A Lane & Shiraz; Georg Jensen Cuvee; and Devil's Lair Cheeky Devil Sauvignon Blanc.

The night kicked off at 6pm and live music set the atmosphere. Soloist Luke Melhop started the evening with gentle acoustic to complement the tastings and relaxed vibe of the night, then served upbeat bangers when guests announced they were ready to dance.

The Showgrounds provided a wonderful venue, with the grassed area by the "Coonan Nixon" being utilised, a wall of hessian and fairy lights enclosing the area and fantastic clear weather providing the roof of stars for guests to sip under.

Big prizes were on offer, with the major prize an accommodation package at Ocean View Estates Winery (two nights' accommodation and a chef's banquet for two), a wine hamper including all the wines of the night and two Louenhide travel bags (raffled separately).

The selection of wines were sourced through the Australian Hotel Motel. Their rep from Treasury Wine Estates travelled out and ran the wine tasting and was able to offer his great knowledge and advise to those wanting to try something new to suit their taste. This ensured all guests enjoyed what they were served.

By 9pm, some wines had completely run out! Guests were able to buy bot-

les of wine to take home. These ran out quickly too – even the most premium bottle, retailing at \$70.

It is safe to say that the Sip Under the Stars guests had a wonderful night and thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to try a selection of premium wines.

A can bar was available to those who preferred not to drink wine but wanted to come along and enjoy the night. Mocktails were complimentary throughout the night, sourced from Shea Beauty and their "Mr Consistent" range.

The wines were sourced locally to ensure guests would be able to purchase their favourites in St George in future.

After receiving such positive feedback, it has been decided that Sip Under the Stars will be an annual event – and it's one not to miss!

Georgia Hoolihan



Frillies players past and present: Alice Rathie, Bridget Nicol, Lilly Jarret, Tess Worboys, Claire Armstrong, Claudia Murray, April McLaren, Olivia Hoolihan and Georgia Hoolihan.



Dylan Sherriff and fiancé Laura Pittman, winners of the Ocean View Estates accommodation package.



Annabelle Albeck, Anna Browning and Louise Winks.



Chloe Turvey, Kimberly Wilson and Kelly Dunlop.

Telecommunications boost for south-west

Residents across Bollon, Cunnamulla and Quilpie will soon be better connected following successful funding applications to improve mobile coverage and broadband services under Round 2 of the Regional Connectivity Program.

Federal Member for Maranoa David Littleproud announced on May 12 the projects formed part of the then Coalition Federal Government's continuing roll-out of the \$257 million Regional Connectivity Program (RCP).

"These Round 2 projects for Cunnamulla, Quilpie and Bollon will build upon the Government's past investments through Round 1 of the Regional Connectivity Program and also through the Mobile Black Spot Program," Mr Littleproud said.

"Cunnamulla will receive \$3,735,411 and Quilpie \$4,755,957 to upgrade the nbn™ technology from nbn™ Sky Muster Satellite to nbn™ Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) technology.

"The Bollon project will receive \$615,000 to upgrade the Telstra macro cell mobile site, providing improved handheld coverage to the Bollon area."

Mr Littleproud said he was "incredibly pleased" residents and businesses across this stretch of Queensland will soon be able to enjoy the benefits and opportunities that these projects will bring in terms of digital connectivity.

"Digital connectivity is an essential part of how we work, learn, stay safe and remain in contact with loved ones."

Volunteer Week

May 16-22 was National Volunteer Week, an opportunity for all of us to celebrate and recognise the vital work of volunteers.

Everyone in Balonne Shire certainly appreciates the terrific contribution of volunteers in our community, especially at times of flooding such as we are experiencing now.

Our volunteers do wonderful work, despite the hardship and sometimes personal risk, and on behalf of the residents of Balonne Shire, Council wants to say "Thank you" to them all.

Charlotte's web weaves its magic



Toowoomba-based RAVA Productions put on two morning stage shows of *Charlotte's Web* at The Hub Cultural Centre in St George on Monday, May 16 – enjoyed by Balonne school children.

And, for students from Dirranbandi, there was time as well to check

out the new library with a story and snack before the show.

And a special event open to everyone, but particularly businesses and educators, is *Nibbles & Networking After Dark*, which will be held on Wednesday, 15 June at the Farmhouse

in St George to fundraise for Youth Summit 2023.

A three-course meal with music and networking is available for \$50 per ticket. Tickets can be purchased at Council reception or online: Nibbles & Networking After Dark Tickets | EventBookings

FREE ENTRY!

GREAT AUSTRALIAN BITES

SATURDAY 28 MAY 2022
3PM TO 7PM | ST GEORGE HUB

JOIN US FOR AN AFTERNOON OF HOME GROWN ENTERTAINMENT AND A FEAST OF LOCAL FOODS

Presented by **Balonne Shire Council** In partnership with **Queensland Government**

YOU'RE INVITED TO

Nibbles & Networking After Dark

A FUNDRAISING EVENT FOR

YOUTH SUMMIT 2023

WEDNESDAY, 15 JUNE 2022 AT 6 PM

HOSTED BY FARMHOUSE
 103 VICTORIA STREET, ST GEORGE

MUSIC - 3 COURSE MEAL - CASH BAR

Buy online or at Council Office

Tickets - \$50 scan for tickets!

Funded by **Country Universities Centre**, **Queensland Government**, **Balonne Shire Council**, **Farmhouse**