

# Balonne Bulletin

THE NEWSLETTER OF BALONNE SHIRE COUNCIL

ISSUE 57 | 11 FEBRUARY 2026



## BALONNE CELEBRATES AUSTRALIA DAY AWARD RECIPIENTS

On Australia Day, Balonne came together to welcome three new citizens and celebrate our Award recipients at the Australia Day Ceremony.

Local residents supported the event and were treated to a ceremony, which included a very Aussie bacon-and-egg roll barbeque breakfast, speeches from our Mayor and from our Australia Day Ambassador, Ross Abraham who is founder of the Beautiful Crazy charity, as well as an Acknowledgement of Country from Jason Troutman.

Mayor Samantha O'Toole said the ceremony was a great celebration of life in Balonne.

"As our country's larger capital cities grapple with the challenges of social cohesion, our Shire was an example of unity and of just how fortunate we are in Balonne.

"We welcomed three new citizens and handed out seven Australia Day awards to very worthy recipients.

"The community panel did such a great job at selecting the award recipients who represented all of the reasons we have to be thankful for our community in Balonne.

"There were award nominees who have brought communities together, changed institutions, excelled on the sporting fields, delighted crowds with their talents and also those selfless individuals who time-and-time again step-up to volunteer for our local community activities.

"I'd like to congratulate all of the nominees and award recipients for the great work you do in our Shire."

You can read more detail on our Australia Day Award recipients on page 10 & 11.

# A message from the Mayor



## What's On

### WELCOME TO BALONNE BAREFOOT BOWLS

New residents of Balonne are invited to barefoot bowls to welcome you into the community!

FREE EVENT with green fees paid and a BBQ dinner.

**When:** Thursday 26 February from 5pm

**Where:** St George Bowls Club

### THALLON RAIL CENTRE GRAND OPENING

Join with the Thallon Progress Association to launch the next exciting attraction in Thallon to honour the town's proud rail heritage.

**When:** Saturday 28 March from 10.30am

**Where:** Thallon Rail Centre, Pine St, Thallon

### DIRRANBANDI ANNUAL EASTER FISHING COMPETITION

Courtesy of the legendary Dirranbandi Fishing & Restocking Club. Raffles, prizes and giveaways!

**When:** 9am Saturday 4 April

**Where:** Jack Dwyer Park, Dirranbandi

### RIVERSANDS EASTER IN THE VINES

Live music, cook your own BBQ, jumping castle, Easter egg hunt and much more!

**When:** Saturday 4 April

**Where:** Riversands Wines, 66 Whytes Road, St George

As a Council, we are the closest level of government to our community and often need to advocate to other levels of government on matters that impact our community, but don't directly relate to our everyday business of rates, roads and rubbish.

The topic of home insurance premiums being raised to astronomical levels is one such issue that is not directly in our wheelhouse but does impact housing affordability and many other facets of our community.

The last thing we want to see is members of our community choosing to not insure their homes due to insurance premiums in excess of \$20,000 and we are not the only Council that feels this way.

For years now, together with other Councils from the South West Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils, we have been meeting with the Insurance Council and other levels of government to have this matter addressed.

The insurance companies claim that these excessive premium hikes are due to the flood risk in the Shire, yet they are not taking into consideration the fact that six of our seven townships are behind flood levees that mitigate that flood risk.

As a side note, and as part of an ongoing assessment that all Councils do, we are about to undertake further flood studies throughout the Shire to ensure that our flood modelling continues to be up-to-date and relevant.

Given we do not have a newspaper in our Shire, many residents may have missed

the extensive national media coverage we received on this topic over the past month.

In this coverage, it was raised that the South West Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils are progressing a feasibility study into the viability of potentially setting up an insurance mutual that residents of our six Shire's could access.

Such a mutual may be one solution to address these ridiculously high insurance premiums, but at this stage, I should stress, it is at a very preliminary stage with the assessment being carried out by a reputable and experienced consultancy firm.

Over the coming months, we will get the results of this feasibility study and be able to assess whether such a mutual insurance program would be feasible for our residents.

Once we have more information at hand, all Councils would engage with all of their communities with further details if we were to progress such an initiative, but only if it is a viable solution.

In the interim, we will continue to advocate on your behalf to the Insurance Council and other levels of government to ensure they are aware that these excessive insurance premiums are causing unacceptable impacts to our local community.

Kind Regards

*Mayor Samantha O'Toole*

**WHAT'S ON**

See what's happening in the Balonne Shire!

# Dirranbandi Master Plan Endorsed by Council

Following an extensive community consultation, Council voted to endorse the final Dirranbandi Master Plan at their December 2025 meeting.

The Dirranbandi Master Plan will guide future development of the Dirranbandi precinct for years to come.

The Dirranbandi Master Plan outlines locations for open space and recreation, community infrastructure, maintaining community identity, culture and heritage as well as tourism development and economic opportunity.

The Master Plan was developed in collaboration with the local community with the first stage of consultation in February 2025 seeking community input into what they would like to see included in the Master Plan, which was then incorporated into a Draft Master Plan.

The Draft Master Plan was then presented to the community in June 2025 for their feedback, with that feedback used to develop the final Dirranbandi Master Plan, which was adopted by Council.

Mayor Samantha O’Toole praised the community for getting involved in the development of the Dirranbandi Master Plan.



“Thanks to an extensive amount of community consultation, this master plan has captured the desires of the Dirranbandi community regarding what they’d like to see occur in their town for years to come”, said Mayor O’Toole.

“We now have master plans in place for six of the seven townships in the Shire, which helps considerably in terms of securing grant funding for initiatives outlined in the master plans.

“As a Council, we are looking forward to incorporating works outlined in the Dirranbandi Master Plan into future capital works programs and seeking grant funding that aligns with the community’s needs and desires.”

This Dirranbandi Master Plan was developed with support of funding from the Queensland Government.

To view the Dirranbandi Master Plan, scan this QR Code or go to [www.balonne.qld.gov.au](http://www.balonne.qld.gov.au)



## Calls for Expressions of Interest – Retro Bike Hire Service

Council is inviting local community groups in our regional towns of Bollon, Dirranbandi, Hebel, Nindigully, Mungindi and Thallon to run the Retro Bike Hire service for tourists in their town.

This is a fantastic opportunity to promote your town, attract visitors and play a key role in showcasing our region.

As part of this initiative, Council will



donate two fully branded St George Region bikes (previously held by the Explore Centre) to the successful group, complete with helmets, puncture kits, and a promotional number plate updated with your town’s name.

To find out more about this initiative, community groups can email [vic@balonne.qld.gov.au](mailto:vic@balonne.qld.gov.au)

Expressions of Interest are to be submitted by 5pm Friday 27 February 2026.

# Thallon Rail Centre Opening Soon!

All aboard the next exciting tourist attraction for our Shire, thanks to the diligent and tireless efforts of the Thallon Progress Association.

The Thallon Rail Centre is set to hold its Grand Opening on Saturday 28 March.

The Rail Centre is located in the heart of Thallon in the heritage Goods Shed, which was donated to the Thallon Progress Association by Queensland Rail back in the middle of 2025.

The Progress Association has been working with representatives from the Queensland Museum to deck-out the inside with memorabilia relating to the long lasting historical influence the rail industry has had on the town since its origins of Thallon as a rail siding, which opened in 1911.

Visitors to the Thallon Rail Centre can explore historic displays, learn the stories of those who built the line, and step inside a piece of Outback history brought back to life.

The Grand Opening will feature a visit to the town by the Downs Steam Rail Motor, cultural displays and presentations by Bill and Judith of Nullawokka Gallery, live music, guided bus tours to Old Bullamon Homestead, food and refreshments, the CWA stall and much, much more.

Mayor Samantha O'Toole said the Thallon Progress Association deserved all the praise it will get for this new facility.

"Congratulations to the Thallon Progress Association for bringing this vision to reality.

"Thallon Progress Association is continually pushing for progress in their town to attract more visitors, which is evident in their push for the Thallon silo murals, the Thallon Truck Pull, the Pub Choir and the Grazing at the Watering Hole.

"Their efforts are creating more and more reasons for people to visit our Shire and I commend their efforts."



## New Cross Border Commissioner Appointed

The Queensland Government has appointed Acting Victims' Commissioner and respected former Queensland Deputy Police Commissioner Mr Bob Gee APM as the new Queensland Cross-Border Commissioner, following the passing of Commissioner Ian Leavers in November last year.

Mr Gee will continue working with local communities and governments, regional agencies, industry and other key stakeholders to address the challenges facing communities and businesses along Queensland's borders.

Premier David Crisafulli said Mr Gee brought extensive experience to the role.

"Mr Gee has many years' experience working across government, as well as more than three decades serving the

community as a Queensland Police Officer," Premier Crisafulli said.

"He has a long, proven track record and hands-on experience that communities and businesses along our borders will benefit from."

Mr Gee said he was proud to take on the appointment and is committed to providing strong leadership for Queensland border communities.

"The Cross-Border Commissioner is central to improving and resolving issues that affect communities and industries operating across Queensland's borders," Mr Gee said.

"I am looking forward to working with those communities to achieve the best possible outcomes relating to the real issues that impact their daily lives, while respecting the great work of the late Ian Leavers."

Mayor Samantha O'Toole welcomed the appointment of Mr Bob Gee to the role.

"As a Council and as a community, we are looking forward to welcoming Mr Gee to the Shire and building on the strong foundation of work already commenced by the late Commissioner Ian Leavers," Mayor O'Toole said.



# Mungindi Water Supply Upgrades



As a local government body, providing safe and secure water is one of our most fundamental roles, which is governed by the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines.

There is quite a unique situation in the supply of water in Mungindi, with Moree Plains Shire Council providing water supply via their Mungindi Water Treatment Plant to residents on both sides of the border.

Recently, there had been some concerns raised regarding the water quality in Mungindi, and both Councils held a community meeting on 5 November 2025 to allow residents the opportunity to raise any concerns they may have.

It should be noted that Moree Plains Shire Council has been successful in obtaining NSW Government Advanced Operational Support funding to review local water treatment needs and infrastructure renewal requirements for the Water Treatment Plant.

This body of work will then enable the Council to apply for funding for further system upgrades.

Both Councils are holding a follow-up information session with the local Mungindi community at 10:00am on Thursday 26 February 2026 at the Mungindi Memorial Hall 99 George Street Mungindi.

## Notice of Future Council Meetings

At its Ordinary Meeting of Thursday, 20 November 2025, Council resolved to adopt the following schedule of ordinary meetings for the 2026 calendar year as follows:

- Thursday, 22 January 2026
- Thursday, 19 February 2026
- Thursday, 19 March 2026
- Thursday, 16 April 2026
- Thursday, 21 May 2026
- Thursday, 18 June 2026
- Thursday, 16 July 2026
- Thursday, 20 August 2026
- Thursday, 17 September 2026
- Thursday, 15 October 2026
- Thursday, 19 November 2026
- Thursday, 17 December 2026

Michelle Clarke  
Chief Executive Officer

## THE LIBRARY LENS



### Embrace the Social Media Ban by Guiding Your Child into Reading

As the national social media ban has come into effect, the organisation 'Australia Reads' has shared timely new research about how we can encourage children and teens to get back into reading.

There are a number of avenues that the organisation outlines to support and promote reading by our youth, which include:

- Helping them find their next great read;
- Letting children lead (and don't judge!);
- Building their confidence as a reader;
- Embracing all formats;
- Making reading a social activity;
- Showing them how it's done; and
- Encouraging through joy (not frustration!)

Research also shows that the following six key principles support young people as they engage with recreational reading:

- Provision/access
- Agency/choice
- Time/routines
- Reflection/connection
- Interaction/social
- Positive experiences/success

For more information on how to support your child to understand and embrace the benefits of reading, please scan this QR code or head to [www.australiareads.org.au](http://www.australiareads.org.au)



# Rolling Out the Granny Flat Red Carpet

Have you ever wanted to supplement your income with an additional Granny Flat or Tiny Home on your property?

Well now you can, as Council has amended its Development Incentives Policy to allow for Granny Flats and Tiny Homes to be added to properties and sub-let.



In order to add a Granny Flat or Tiny Home to your property, there is an application and approval process, along with a number of requirements, which include:

- The Granny Flat needs to be subordinate to, and smaller than, your primary dwelling;

- Must have minimum setbacks from the side boundaries of 1.5 metres and 3 metres from the rear boundary;
- It must be connected to town water and sewerage;
- It must meet building requirements, such as 2.4 metre high ceilings and a step-free entry;
- It can be leased separately to the main dwelling;
- It can be detached or attached to the main dwelling.

For further information on undertaking such a development, you can contact Council's Planning & Development Manager, who can help guide you through this process. You can also access the Development Incentives Policy and Granny Flat Factsheet by scanning the QR code above or going to [www.balonne.qld.gov.au](http://www.balonne.qld.gov.au)



## Planning & Development Manager Bringing New Developments Online

Council's Planning & Development Manager Olivia Hoolihan is steaming ahead with bringing new land and housing developments into the Shire.

The Planning & Development Manager was created in late 2024 with the role reporting directly to the CEO and an express goal of working with existing and potential developers to increase housing stock in Balonne.

Previously, Council had not been in a position to offer a dedicated, face-to-face resource within the Planning and Development Department to help developers of all experience levels discuss proposals, navigate processes, and seek assistance with applications.

Now, with the Planning & Development Manager, supported by external townplanning expertise, Council is once again able to roll out the red carpet treatment to encourage and promote development throughout the Shire.

Our Chief Executive Officer, Michelle Clarke said the instigation of this role, which is dedicated to expediting development in Balonne, highlights a solid commitment from Council to address housing in the Shire.

"We know the rental market is very tight in Balonne at the moment and the work we've been undertaking with developers is



seeing a range of housing opportunities in the pipeline", said Mrs Clarke.

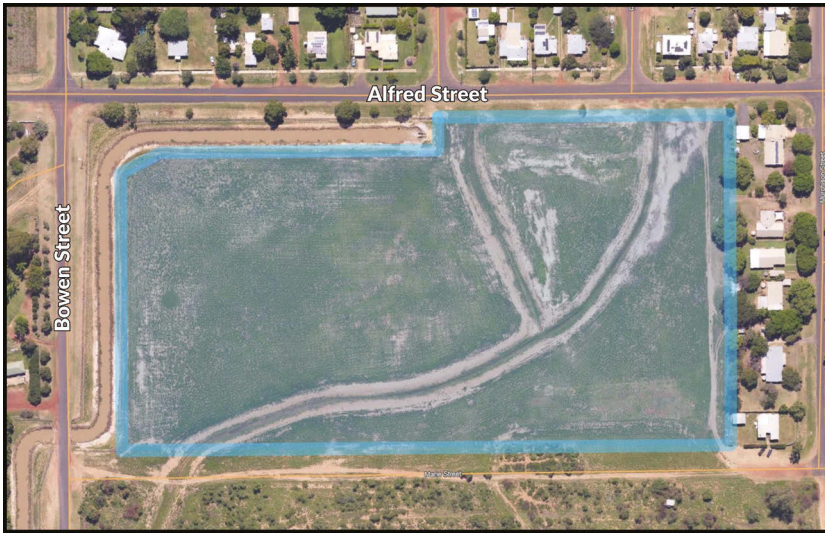
"Council has also amended the Development Incentive Policy to allow for Granny Flats to be incorporated in existing properties, which represents a great opportunity for homeowners to supplement their income while expanding housing stock with infill development.

"The Development Incentives Policy also includes several additional incentives designed to support new or expanding businesses and increase local housing supply, which include a 100% discount for dual occupancy or multiple dwelling

developments and a 100% discount where applicants meet at least two of the economic impact criteria.

"We understand that housing needs vary throughout the market from single occupancy to family needs and we are aiming to ensure housing stock in the Shire meets the needs of all those sectors.

"If anyone is looking to develop a property in Balonne, please feel free to contact our Planning and Development Manager, as she'll be more than happy to work with you on bringing your ideas to fruition."



## Proposed New Residential Development in St George

Council is seeking community input into a proposed new residential development in St George, which has the potential to contain an additional 44 home sites in the town with each block ranging from 1,000sqm to 1,900sqm.

The proposed site is on the corner Bowen and Alfred Streets, St George and Council has been working with the State Government, who currently owns the land, to finalise the acquisition of this land and convert it to freehold land for the development of residential allotments.

Thanks to funding from the State Government's Residential Activation Fund, Council has received \$230,000 for the planning and design of trunk infrastructure and services to progress development of the site.

Council has also received over \$700,000 to commence

implementation of some services such as stormwater, as well as pedestrian access to other recent residential subdivisions.

Council intends to acquire the land and progressively apply for funding to implement the services and infrastructure required to ensure the market is not flooded, and private land sales are not impacted.

This is purely a strategic purchase to ensure future growth of the town can be accommodated.

Council will be holding a community information session from 5:30pm-7:30pm on Tuesday 17 February 2026 at the Cultural Centre.

Residents and interested parties are welcome to attend this information session, which will be held in a drop-in style format.

## Shire-Wide Green Waste Collection

Each year, Council undertakes a kerbside collection of waste, which alternates each year between collecting Hard Rubbish and collecting Green Waste.

This year Council is undertaking a Shire-wide Green Waste Collection and will be collecting green waste from footpaths from 2-5 March 2026.

Residents can stack their piles of green waste neatly on their footpath from 21 February 2026, but it must

be stacked in a manner to allow pedestrian traffic to have continued access.

All green waste must be shorter than 2 metres in length and less than 300mm in diameter.

Lawn clippings, hard rubbish and household rubbish will not be collected during this clean-up.

For more information, please contact Council on 4620 8888.

## ENVIRO-COLUMN

### ILLEGAL DUMPING OF GREEN WASTE CAN COST US ALL



Green waste refers to general garden waste such as plants, palm fronds, tree and lawn clippings.

The illegal dumping of green waste, organic waste such as food scraps, or soil in natural areas, waterways and other land can have devastating environmental impacts and cost millions of dollars to clean up.

It can also seriously threaten Queensland's primary industries, natural environment, livestock, human health and peoples' livelihoods.

Illegal dumping is an offence and penalties apply. The cost of taking green waste to the local waste facility is much less than the penalty.

#### **Fines for Illegal Dumping can be up to:**

- \$2,500 for an individual and up to \$161,300 in court
- \$8,000 for a corporation and up to \$806,500 in court.

#### **How To Dispose of Green Waste**

You can take your green waste to refuse facilities at St George, Dirranbandi, Bollon and Thallon.

Council is also holding a Shire-wide Green Waste Collection on 2-5 March 2026.

For more information, please go to [www.balonne.qld.gov.au](http://www.balonne.qld.gov.au) or contact Council on 4620 8888.



# Level 1 Water Restrictions Set To Come Into Effect In St George

Council's remaining water allocation in the St George Water Supply Scheme is about to drop below 2,500ML, St George will be moving to Level 1 Water Restrictions on Friday 13 February 2026.

These water restrictions pertain to river water supply (outdoor use) and aim to prolong our remaining allocation of river water for St George.

These restrictions do not pertain to St George's town (bore) water, which is for consumption and indoor household use.

Details of these water restrictions are outlined in the table.

It is important to note that at current usage levels and without further inflows into Beardmore Dam, Level 2 water restrictions may also be triggered if our allocation drops below 1,500 megalitres.

For more information on water restrictions in St George or on how to read your water meter, please go to [www.balonne.qld.gov.au](http://www.balonne.qld.gov.au) or scan this QR code or call Council on 4620 8888.



LEVEL 1 WATER RESTRICTIONS - ST GEORGE RIVER WATER	
Residential properties	Water any time, any day considering advised target levels of 3,000 litres (3 kilolitres) per day and 90,000 litres (90 kilolitres) per month per connection.
All Schools and Caravan Parks	9am-12pm and 3pm-6pm Monday to Thursday.
Other Businesses	Odd Property Numbers – 7am-11am and 2pm-6pm on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays Even Property Numbers – 7am-11am and 2pm-6pm on Wednesdays, Fridays, and Sundays
Council Parks & Facilities	In accordance with parks and gardens program
Handheld Hoses – All Consumers	Any time
Other and variations to the above	Subject to individual Council approval.
<b>Open-ended, unattended hoses must not be used at any location at any time.</b>	

## Protocols for Flying the Australian Flag

After the Australia Day Awards ceremony, some people raised concerns with the order of the flags when they were raised and thus, we thought it appropriate to outline National Flag Protocols.

The placement and order of the flags is quite a formal protocol, which is prescribed by the Australian Government.

The protocol stipulates that when flying multiple flags on flagpoles that are the same height, the Australian National Flag must be on the left, the Australian Aboriginal Flag in the centre and the Torres Strait Islander Flag on the right.

If the centre flagpole is higher, then the Australian Flag is to be placed in the centre.

It should also be noted that on Australia Day, Council's regular flag raising occurs at the Awards Ceremony, as opposed to the Council administration office, which is obviously unmanned on that public holiday.

For more information on flying the Australian Flag, please go to the



Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet webpage at [www.pmc.gov.au](http://www.pmc.gov.au) or scan this QR Code.



# Free Welcome Packs for our Newest Residents



Moving to a new area can sometimes be a little challenging, so at Council we've pulled together free Welcome Packs for new residents to help them settle into the Shire.

The Welcome Packs contain a list of local business and community contacts, the 2026 Major Events calendar, a Balonne Shire Council wall calendar, info brochures about the Shire's townships, an Emergency Dashboard brochure to help in times of disaster, as well as a range of other relevant information and goodies.

So, if you're new to the Shire, or your business or community group has a new employee or member from outside of the Shire, feel free grab a Welcome Pack to help them settle in.

Welcome Packs are available for pick-up at Council's main office at 112 Victoria St, St George or by calling Council on 4620 8888.

To all of our newest residents, please feel free to drop in and pick up a Welcome Pack and welcome to the Shire.

## DRAFT - ST GEORGE WALKING NETWORK PLAN

*Have Your Say*



LET'S SHAPE THE FUTURE OF BALONNE SHIRE TOGETHER



## RATES DISCOUNT PERIOD

A 10% DISCOUNT IS OFFERED TO THOSE WHO PAY WITHIN 30 DAYS OF THE DATE OF ISSUE.

Rates notices will be issued mid-February. If you do not receive your rates notice by the end of February 2026, please contact Council to avoid missing discount and/or being charged interest on unpaid rates.



To update your details, or to discuss interest free payment plans, contact Council on:

(07) 4620 8888

rates@balonne.qld.gov.au



## RATES POP-UP OFFICE

### DIRRANBANDI RTC

FRI 27 FEB | 1PM - 3PM  
WED 11 MAR | 9AM - 11AM

### BOLLON LIBRARY

FRI 27 FEB | 9AM - 11AM  
WED 11 MAR | 1PM - 3PM

RATE PAYMENTS | GENERAL ENQUIRIES  
NEW DOG REGISTRATIONS\*

\*Register new dogs between January & June for a 50% discount. All dog registrations are due 1st July each year

Cheque & EFTPOS Only

Contact Council on:

(07) 4620 8888

council@balonne.qld.gov.au



NO CASH PAYMENTS



# 2026 Australia Day Award Recipients



## CITIZEN OF THE YEAR – THOMAS MCKENNA

Principal of the St George State High School, Thomas McKenna has been awarded the 2026 Balonne Citizen of the Year.

Thomas has been the Principal at the St George State High School since January 2023 and has delivered transformational leadership for the school and the community.

Thomas has re-energised St George State High School, setting a clear vision of 'every student succeeding' and delivering it in a regional setting where challenges of remoteness, limited resources and other external factors are substantial.

In the words of Thomas' nominator for this award, "he has been a welcome breath of fresh air" and ensures success at SGSHS is measured not only in academic outcomes, but in how students feel supported, included and able to succeed.

Under his guidance, he has linked the school to the local agricultural industry in developing the Agriculture, Water and Environment Partnership, which is connecting students with local ag-industries to explore careers in agriculture with its

flagship Ag-Careers Immersion Camps attracting students from across the country to better understand the career opportunities that exist in agriculture.

Through other initiatives such as the in-school GP service, improved communications and increased pathways for students, Thomas has contributed materially to the wellbeing, learning and future prospects of Balonne Shire's young people.

His leadership extends beyond the school gates: engaging parents, local industry, community groups, and ensuring the school is a centre of aspiration and opportunity for the broader Balonne Shire.

Such leadership contributes to the social fabric of the community, as an improved school lifts not only students, but lifts the town's confidence by building community pride, improves future talent retention in the local workforce pipeline supporting growth in the local economy.

Thomas stands out as a leader who has turned around a key community institution in Balonne Shire, thereby strengthening



education, wellbeing and opportunity for students, families and the region making him a very worthy recipient for the 2026 Balonne Citizen of the Year Award.

## YOUNG CITIZEN OF THE YEAR – TOMAS KUNDE

Tomas Kunde has been awarded the 2026 Balonne Young Citizen of the Year.

Through his music prowess and with a heartening degree of community spirit, Tomas has delighted countless community events and ceremonies throughout the Shire.

Tomas has been a member of the Instrumental Music Program at the St George State School and the St George State High School for many years, and as a senior member of the High School Instrumental Band he mentored a number of younger players in the Shire.

He has used his musical skillset on his trusty clarinet to deliver performances at school fetes, eisteddfods and commemorations, at community events such as Storyfest, the ICPA Conference, ANZAC Days, Remembrance Days, the Vietnam Veteran's Days, along with many others.

Tomas's commitment to brightening our community events in the Shire make him a very worthy recipient of the 2026 Balonne Young Citizen of the Year Award.



## VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR – TERRY SALMON

Terry Salmon has been awarded the 2026 Balonne Volunteer of the Year.

Terry's extensive volunteering throughout the Shire has been on display for decades, as it is difficult to imagine a community event without the sight of Terry cooking over a bbq or chipping in to help, come rain, hail or shine.

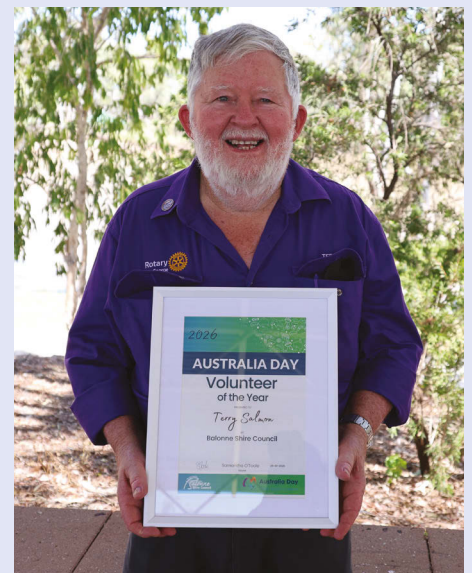
But Terry's volunteering extends well beyond his culinary skills, with 50 years with the State Emergency Service, 30 years with the Rotary Club of St George, 50 years with the St George RSL Sub-Branch, as well as time spent on the school P&C.

During his time with the SES, he has participated in flood rescues, accident rescues, providing boat transport in times of flooding.

In Rotary he has held various executive positions including President and has assisted in organising BBQs, working at working bees and organising projects over the years.

With the St George RSL Sub-Branch he has been Secretary Treasurer for over 10 years and has coordinated grant applications and organised commemoration events for ANZAC Day, Remembrance Day and Vietnam Veterans Day and travelled to regional conferences representing the St George Sub-Branch.

Our Shire has benefitted greatly from the tireless efforts of Terry to make our Shire a better place to live, and his efforts are very deserving of the 2026 Balonne Volunteer of the Year Award.



## SPORTSPERSON OF THE YEAR – CONNOR TAYLOR-LANGTON

Connor Taylor-Langton has been awarded the 2026 Balonne Sportsperson of the Year.

Excelling across multiple sports including Rugby League, Netball, Touch Football, Soccer and Athletics, Connor has consistently demonstrated exceptional skill and commitment.

His achievements not only highlight individual excellence but also strengthen community spirit and showcase the sporting opportunities available for young people within our region.

As the St George State School Nixon House Captain, Connor has shown maturity beyond his years, leading by example and embodying the values of fair play, teamwork and respect.

Recognition through awards such as Most Valuable Player, Best and Fairest and the Sportsmanship award further reflect his integrity and the high regard in which he is held by coaches and peers alike.

Connor's positive influence extends beyond his own performances. Through his attitude, sportsmanship and commitment, he inspires other young people to participate in sport, remain active and represent Balonne Shire with pride at district, regional and state levels.

His contribution to local sports has had a lasting positive impact on both his sporting community and the broader Balonne Shire and is very deserving of his 2026 Balonne Sportsperson of the Year Award.



## COMMUNITY EVENT OF THE YEAR – BOLLON POLOCROSSE CARNIVAL

The Bollon Polocrosse Carnival has been awarded the 2026 Balonne Community Event of the Year.

Regional communities are renowned for their community spirit and good will, but what the Bollon Polocrosse Club achieved with their event last year was in its very essence the best of regional community spirit.

Last year's floods that devastated western Queensland had far reaching impacts beyond livestock and properties, it also impacted the Thargomindah Polocrosse Club and its facilities.

In a heartening display of community spirit, the Bollon Polocrosse Club pledged that money raised from

the Bollon Charty Carnival would be donated to their Thargomindah counterparts.

The Bollon Club was overwhelmed by the generous support from more than forty sponsors, along with countless individuals who contributed to the success of the event, which raised over \$30,000 for the flood affected community.

Beyond all the regular excitement and entertainment that the Bollon Polocrosse Club & Carnival brings to our Shire, this kind act of support for another region-in-need makes it very deserving of the 2026 Balonne Community Event of the Year.



## COMMUNITY GROUP OF THE YEAR – ST GEORGE FISHING & RESTOCKING CLUB

The St George Fishing & Restocking Club has been awarded the 2026 Balonne Community Group of the Year.

It's not every day that a club can boast 30 years of ongoing efforts to support and protect the sustainability of local aquatic ecosystems and biodiversity in our river systems, but that is just what the St George Fishing & Restocking Club has done.

From humble beginnings in 1986, the Club has set about turning the tide on overfishing, habitat destruction and pollution to protect our river systems and its inhabitants.

Over the years, the club has grown in both size and influence, attracting members from all walks of life who share a common love for fishing and a commitment to conservation.

Through partnerships with local authorities, conservation organisations and businesses, the club has been able to secure funding and resources to support its various initiatives.

One of the main activities of the club is the annual restocking program, where thousands of fingerlings are released into the Balonne and Moonie Rivers to replenish the population.

By working closely with fisheries experts, the club ensures the species chosen for restocking are native the region and have the best chance of survival and reproduction in their new environment.

Also running the fishing competition on the long weekend each October brings

visitors as well as locals to try their luck at removing the dreaded carp from our river system, with thousands removed thanks to the Club's efforts.

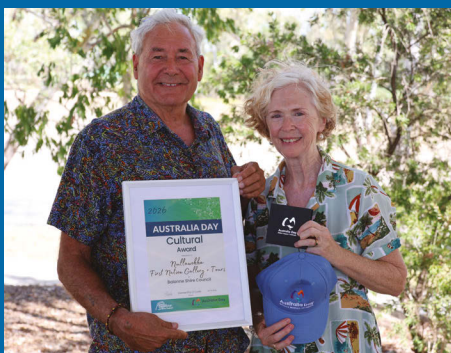
The Club's commitment to protecting our river's ecosystems is very deserving of the 2026 Balonne Community Group of the Year.



## CULTURAL AWARD – NULLAWOKKA FIRST NATIONS GALLERY AND TOURS

The Nullawokka First Nations Gallery has received the 2026 Balonne Cultural Award.

Australia Day is about celebrating all cultural facets of our great country and way of life and the Nullawokka First Nations Gallery and Tours embodies this celebration every day.



Bill Speedy and Judith Russell, the dynamic duo behind Nullawokka First Nations Gallery and Tours have fundamentally transformed the cultural landscape of Bollon.

As a Gwamu/Kooma Elder, Bill Speedy ensures the preservation and respectful transmission of local Indigenous history, stories, and traditions through his tours and mentoring.

They offer an invaluable resource for cultural education, giving the community and visitors an opportunity to engage directly with First Nations culture, history (including scar trees), and knowledge like bush medicine and bush tucker in a fun, gentle, and engaging manner.

By showcasing the talent of First Nations artists and highlighting the deep history

of the Kooma people, Nullawokka fosters a sense of pride and identity among local residents, positioning Bollon's unique cultural heritage as a strength.

Beyond these public offerings, their commitment extends to cultural mentoring, actively nurturing community ties and ensuring the intergenerational transfer of vital Indigenous knowledge.

Nullawokka acts as a powerful magnet for tourism, directly boosting the local economy of Bollon and the wider Balonne Shire.

Nullawokka's achievements represent a profound contribution to cultural preservation, community engagement, and regional distinction and are a very worthy recipient of the 2026 Balonne Cultural Award.

# Unauthorised Fires at the Dirranbandi Waste Facility

Recently, there has been a number of unauthorised fires at the Dirranbandi Waste Facility, which are putting at risk the sustainability of keeping the facility open in the same way it currently is.

In order for Council to operate a waste facility it must adhere to a broad range of very strict regulatory obligations under its Environmental Authority, as prescribed by the Queensland Government.

These regular fires are impacting Council's ability to meet its obligations under this Environmental Authority and are creating increased costs to maintain this facility in Dirranbandi.

One of the recent fires also spread to neighbouring properties causing a very real threat to people and property.

Council has been advised by the Department of Environment that further unauthorised fires at the Dirranbandi Waste Facility could result in a fine of up to \$3.6 million for Council unless a comprehensive action plan is adopted and adhered to.

As part of our action plan to

maintain our Environmental Authority at the site, Council is installing a litter fence around the site and has installed CCTV cameras to monitor the facility (as pictured).

If unauthorised fires continue at this facility, Council will have no choice but to review options such as locking the Dirranbandi Waste Facility and only opening it at restricted times and days.

We would much prefer to keep this service open for the residents of Dirranbandi the way it currently

is, but we are hoping residents can appreciate from the above that Council cannot afford the financial consequences that these ongoing fires will create.

If anyone is aware of any information regarding the fires being lit at the Dirranbandi Waste Facility, please contact Crimestoppers on 1800 333 000.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the Dirranbandi Waste Facility, please do not hesitate to contact Council on (07) 4620 8888.



## Celebrating 100 Years Of The Cultural Centre

What a contrasting image this is of the Council leaders from the 1920's to today, out the front of our 100-year-old Cultural Centre.

Our Shire has changed so much over that period. We now have sealed highways and roads, sewerage

systems, water reticulation systems, drainage systems, electricity, telecommunications, footpaths, weekly kerbside rubbish collections, parklands and playgrounds, air-conditioners, hot water systems, the list goes on and on.

We have come so far, yet our grand old Cultural Centre has stood the test of time – a testament to years long gone.

Here's to the grand old girl staying in our Shire for another century or more.



# FUN AND FITNESS IN BALONNE

## ST GEORGE SQUASH

Social comps held 6pm every Monday and Tuesday, during the school term. Grading has already occurred this term, but you can contact the club on the below if you'd like to get involved.



Open to anyone. Beginners Welcome! Courts available to hire \$12.50/hour.

Email – stgeorgesquash@outlook.com or on Facebook @ stgeorgesquashclub

## BOXING

Sign up to be a member of In the Box Boxing Club! Work on your fitness or prepare for fights.



Training for Juniors - Mon & Wed 5:30pm - 6:00pm

Training for Seniors - Mon & Wed 6:00pm - 7:00pm

For more information, contact Lisa Anderson - 0418 154 104



## GROUP TRAINING SESSIONS

Optimal Training group provides training sessions to improve your health and fitness on Mondays at 5pm, Tuesdays at 5:30pm, and Thursdays at 5pm at the Amphitheatre, St George.



Dates & Times can be subject to change, so check Facebook for updates.

For more information, contact Deanne - 0407 720 327

## INSPIRED FITNESS WITH TJ

Inspired Fitness runs group training sessions. On Tuesdays at 6:15am, Pilates, then at 8:45am, Pilates with Mums & Bubs. On Thursdays at 6:15am, Tone Class, and on Fridays at 6:15am, Pilates Online at St Patrick's Church Hall on Balonne Street.



For PT inquiries and more information, contact Tori - 0447 080 872

## ST GEORGE AQUATIC CENTRE

Monday - Friday: 5:30am - 12noon & 3pm - 6pm

Saturday & Sunday: 1pm - 6pm

Party Bookings available Saturday & Sunday mornings, but must be booked in advance.



For more information or to book a party, call 0400 633 519

## PARKRUN

Do you love a social run to get in shape? Parkrun is free and held each Saturday morning at 7am along the St George foreshore, leaving from the boat ramp at the Western end of St George's Terrace.

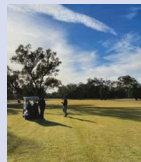


For more information, visit [www.parkrun.com.au/stgeorge](http://www.parkrun.com.au/stgeorge)

## ST GEORGE GOLF CLUB

Enjoy a swing of Golf anytime at the St George Golf Club.

Regarded as one of the best sand greens courses in SWQ - why wouldn't you spend a day there?



For more information, contact Tom (0427 730 984) or Penny (0427 250 072)

## ST GEORGE SWIMMING CLUB

Catering for beginner to competitive swimmers, with a focus on personal improvement, for those aged from 5 years to adult. Season runs Term 4 & Term 1 (when the pool is open). Mid-season is now.



To redeem a Come & Try membership valid for 4 weeks, visit [swimcentral.swimming.org.au](http://swimcentral.swimming.org.au)

All registrations are now done online by visiting the same link.

For more information, visit their Facebook Page @ stgeorgeswimmingclub

## ST GEORGE HASH HOUSE HARRIERS - SOCIAL RUNNING GROUP

Enjoy a social run or walk every Thursday evening! The group leaves from The Terrace in front of The Australian Hotel at 6:00pm on Thursdays for a 5km run or a 3km walk, this is not a timed event.



For more information, contact Peter - 0428 258 601

## LET'S DANCE - ST GEORGE COMMUNITY WELLBEING CENTRE

Every Friday night 6pm to 7:30pm at the Community Wellbeing Centre.



Free Entry - Gold coin donation for refreshments

Want to learn a few new dance moves? Come join us!

We are a group of people who want to learn various types of dances for fun! To find out what kind of dance we are currently teaching or for further information, visit our Facebook page at "Let's Dance St George"

## ST GEORGE CRICKET ASSOCIATION

Join the action at Rowden Park! Training runs every Wednesday from 5-7pm, and games kick off Saturdays at 9:30am - everyone's welcome to get involved!



If you have a **FITNESS PROGRAM** or **CLUB** in the Shire that you would like posted here, please send the details to: [media@balonne.qld.gov.au](mailto:media@balonne.qld.gov.au)



# Out and About in Balonne

2026 Australia Day Awards



# Roadworks UPDATE



**COMPLETED ROADS THROUGH DECEMBER/JANUARY:**

- Narkoola Road
- Sunset Valley Road
- Diamond tank Road
- Littleton Road
- Paltridge Road
- Link Road
- Teelba Road
- Bowhay Road
- Dingadee Road
- Noondoo-Mungindi Road
- Rutherglen Road
- Mourilyan Road
- Hollymount Road
- Ramalis Road
- East Goondulla Rd

**WORKS CURRENTLY UNDERWAY:**

**Rutherglen Rd**

- Expected completion: early-February.
- Construction is ongoing, one crew working.
- Expected traffic delays less than 5 minutes.

**Dingadee Rd**

- Expected completion: early-February.
- Construction is ongoing, one crew working.
- Expected traffic delays less than 5 minutes

**Hollymount Rd**

- Expected completion: early-February.
- Construction is ongoing, two crews working.
- Expected traffic delays less than 5 minutes.

**UPCOMING WORKS:**

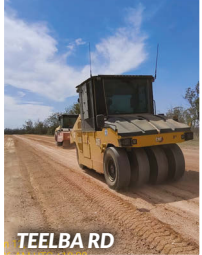
- Ramalis Rd: early-February
- Mourilyan Rd: early-February
- Runnymede Rd: mid-February
- Jakelwar-Goodooga Rd North: early-February
- Eumerella South Rd: late-February



LINK RD



RUTHERGLEN RD



TEELBA RD



BOWHAY RD



DINGADEE RD



**DO YOU WANT TO JOIN YOUTH COUNCIL**

Help young communities strive | Be a voice for local youth

Gain valuable CV experience | Enhance your leadership skills

**APPLY NOW**

Head to our website and search Youth Council

\*Applications open to under 25's  
cdo@balonne.qld.gov.au 4620 8888

Balonne Shire Council



**Welcome to Balonne**

**FREE Barefoot Bowls Event!**

26 February 2026  
St George Bowls Club (Corner of Victoria & Roe Street)  
5pm

**\$10 BURGERS & BAR**

**RSVP**  
cdo@balonne.qld.gov.au  
Before 16 February for catering

Meet new people, connect with locals & discover community groups over a relaxed and friendly game of bowls!

Proudly hosted by Balonne Shire Council



**WILD DOG BOUNTY**

**ALLOCATION EXHAUSTED THIS FINANCIAL YEAR**

Council's 'Wild Dog Bounty' incentive scheme aims to support landholders' pest management in the Shire.

The 2025/26 budget allocation for the Wild Dog Bounty is now exhausted and there will be no further reimbursements for scalps this financial year.

We apologise for any inconvenience this may cause, and Council will consider whether it will fund another round in its 2026/27 budget.

For more information, contact Council on 4620 8888.

Balonne Shire Council

# Balonne Shire Job Opportunities

January 2026

	<p><b>MARANOA MECHANICAL</b> Local business with 20 years of investing in young people, keen to employ enthusiastic, motivated young people with an excellent work ethic.</p>
Junior Casual St George	After school and school holiday work available to those young people willing to start with work experience. You will be helping out with cleaning, refilling containers and washing cars.
School-Based Apprentice / Apprentice St George	To start in February 2026 Maranoa Mechanical needs an apprentice who is willing to start with work experience and / or junior casual. School-based or if you are full time, ideally you have completed Year 12. Apply by email, E: emily@maranoamechanical.com.au, or call T: 07 4625 3663
Qualified Technician St George	<p><b>MARANOA MECHANICAL</b> Full Time Opportunity for an experienced Automotive Technician who has automotive mechanic experience, relevant trade qualifications, diagnostic experience, strong fault-finding skills and ability to work as part of a team. Manual driver's licence required, and other advantageous licences include Truck, Air Conditioning and Forklift. Apply via email, E: admin@maranoamechanical.com.au; call T: 07 4625 3663</p>
Administration St George	<p><b>INLAND LEGAL</b> Role requires integrity, attention to detail, excellent communication skills and computer literacy, and a willingness to work as part of a team. Experience in legal or professional environment advantageous. Apply via email, E: rebecca@inlandlegal.com.au</p>
Real Estate Sales Representative St George	<p><b>ELDERS RURAL SERVICES</b> Drive listing and selling opportunities to expand our real estate business. Requirements include an understanding of Real Estate Legislation, have industry experience within the local area, hold a Real Estate licence (essential) and a current driver's licence. Apply on Seek</p>
Mental Health Coordinator St George	<p><b>ST GEORGE MEDICAL CENTRE</b> Full Time Clinical mental health coordinator will work with general practitioners and/or psychiatrists to provide coordinated clinical care for people with severe and complex mental illness. Provide evidence-based intervention to people with severe mental illness, provide links to other services. Apply on Seek</p>
Relief School Support Staff St George	<p><b>ST PATRICK'S SCHOOL</b> Casual / On-call \$32.53 - \$35.62 / hr We are seeking compassionate and flexible individuals to join our Relief Support team. You will deliver high quality, faith-based education and support to students with diverse learning needs. Need to be available at short notice. Apply to James Wren, E: james.wren@twb.catholic.edu.au</p>
	<p><b>BALONNE SHIRE COUNCIL</b> Workshop Coordinator   Full Time   St George Town Labourer   Full Time   St George Water &amp; Sewerage Labourer   Full Time   St George Graduate Engineer   Full Time   St George Apply via Council's website at <a href="http://www.balonne.qld.gov.au">www.balonne.qld.gov.au</a></p>
Service Technician Field St George	<p><b>RDO</b> Full Time, 2 positions Work on a range of John Deere agricultural equipment from general service and repairs to major overhauls and new machine assembly. Deliver expert service and support to our customers and partners and contribute to a culture of safety, innovation, and continuous improvement. Working an construction, agriculture and turf products. Mechanical trade certificate and driver's licence. Apply on Seek</p>
Local Engagement Officers Balonne Shire	<p><b>ABS GOVERNMENT CENSUS 2026</b> On Tuesday 11 August 2026 everyone in Australia must be counted. Local Engagement officers who have experience working with Aboriginal &amp; Torres Strait Islanders, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, people experiencing homelessness or living with a disability and youth or older Australians are needed. Apply at: <a href="http://census.abs.gov.au/jobs">census.abs.gov.au/jobs</a></p>
Management Accountant Dirranbandi	<p><b>DIRRANBANDI BAKERY</b> Full Time \$80,000 - \$85,000 pa A crucial role in supporting the financial operations and strategic decision-making to grow the business. Detailed financial reports, budgets and forecasting, analysis of financial data, identifying drivers of profitability, advice on resource allocation. Bachelor's degree in accounting or finance, CPA / CA qualification desirable and minimum 1 year relevant experience. Apply on Seek</p>

Early Childhood Educators St George	<p><b>NCC EARLY LEARNERS</b> Part Time Full Time Supporting the room Lead Educator in the development and delivery of the learning program as per the Early Years Learning Framework and service philosophy. Flexible working hours and ongoing opportunities for professional development. Certificate 3 in Early Childhood or Diploma and a current Blue Card/Working With Children check. Apply on Seek</p>
Early Childhood Teachers St George	<p><b>NCC EARLY LEARNERS</b> Full Time Experience in play-based learning, ability to document and develop own programs. Critical you build and maintain meaningful relationships with young children and their families. Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education, Blue Card/Working with Children required. Apply on Seek</p>
Measure & Quote St George	<p><b>HALLS TILE &amp; CARPET</b> Casual 15 hrs with Full Time Potential Working in the shop and providing measure and quote services for our customers. Training is provided and involves some heavy lifting. Driver's licence required. Apply by dropping resume at the shop, 14 Grey Street</p>

**Job seekers – looking for a job?**

**Employers – do you have job opportunities that need local advertising or do your staff need extra micro-credentials?**

Balonne Shire Council's Workforce Development Officer can provide support. Job opportunities can be included on this page in the next Balonne Bulletin on 19 March.

Contact Robyn Cross  
M: 0456 644 203  
E: [robyn.cross@balonne.qld.gov.au](mailto:robyn.cross@balonne.qld.gov.au)

## BALONNE SHIRE JOB OPPORTUNITIES

In Balonne Shire we have a broad range of job opportunities.

Either scan the QR Code or visit:

<https://www.balonne.qld.gov.au/Live-and-Work/My-Employment>

SCAN HERE



For more information on local jobs

SCAN THIS QR CODE



If you have a position you would like placed in this section, please contact Balonne Shire Council's Workforce Development Officer: Robyn on 4620 8839 or 0456 644 203.

This Balonne Shire Council initiative is proudly supported by the Queensland Government through its Growing Workforce Participation Fund.