

ALL SYSTEMS GO: works begin on \$6M St George Library Hub

Work has commenced on a landmark new building for the Balonne Shire.

Construction of a \$6 million Library Hub complex in the heart of St George is expected to be completed in November.

Balonne Shire Mayor Samantha O'Toole said this is an exciting event for the region.

"This new Library will include a business and learning hub and provide a wonderful new facility for the people of the Balonne Shire.

"Council is very proud to see this project getting under way.

"This will be a wonderful resource for the whole of the Balonne Shire."

Mayor O'Toole said the aim of redeveloping the St George



DEMO DAY: Deputy Mayor Richard Lomman, Cr Robyn Fuhrmeister and Maranoa MP David Littleproud marked the start of demolition at the St George Library Hub.

Library – adjacent to the Council offices in Victoria St – is to create a vibrant hub, integrating the Library and Cultural Centre and offering a

greater breadth of programs and activities.

"This will incorporate contemporary library services,

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Western Councils unite to tackle the big issues

Balonne Shire representatives were among over 180 delegates to gather for the 2021 Western Queensland Alliance of Councils (WQAC) Assembly, focused on tackling common issues across the region – most notably funding for roads, digital connectivity and housing.

The 22 councils of Western Queensland made the historic step last year to formally unite as the WQAC and ramp up representation and recognition in pursuing common priorities.

The WQAC brings together their representative bodies: North West Queensland

Regional Organisation of Councils; Remote Area Planning and Development Board; and South West Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils.

The three-day program themed "Building Blocks for the Future" included a

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What's On

First 5 Forever

A weekly session for children aged 0-5 and their parents/guardians, aimed at building strong literacy foundations and neural pathways in kids.

WHERE: St George Library

WHEN: each Friday, 9.30am

AGM: St George and District Chamber of Commerce

Following a busy year packed with new initiatives, the Chamber will fill its executive positions for the upcoming financial year.

WHERE: Vanderfield, St George

WHEN: 16 June, 5pm

Drones 101 - Nindigully

A hands-on masterclass on using drones for your business. Presented by ConnectAg.

WHERE: Nindigully Sports Club

WHEN: 21 June, 8.15am

Drones 101 - Hebel

A hands-on masterclass on using drones for your business. Presented by ConnectAg.

WHERE: Hebel Hall

WHEN: 22 June, 8.15am

AgTech20 - Mungindi

A showcase of the latest innovations for farmers and agribusiness.

WHERE: Mungindi Showgrounds

WHEN: 28 July

Got a story, event or notice?

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

Phone: 07 4620 8888

Email: media@balonne.qld.gov.au

Please give your contact details and all relevant information.

A message from the Mayor

Hello, and welcome to the first edition of the *Balonne Bulletin*.

This is an exciting time to live in the Balonne Shire. There is lots happening here.

In fact, there always seems to be more happening than our limited local news media have the time or space to report.

Hence, the *Balonne Bulletin*. In this regular newsletter, we will be reporting on news and events from across the Shire.

And we will deliver it to every household via Australia Post.

We want to keep all our residents informed about issues important to the Balonne Shire and the *Balonne Bulletin* is one of the ways we intend to do this in the future.

Now, we would very much welcome your feedback on this newsletter, so, if you have suggestions on what you would like to see included in future editions, please let us know.

The big news at the moment is the commencement of work on the Balonne's new Library Hub, adjacent to the Council chambers in St George.

The old buildings have gone and in coming months an exciting new complex will take shape on the site. This will be



a wonderful resource for the Balonne Shire.

In recent weeks, I have been meeting with State and Federal Ministers and other politicians and senior public servants in Brisbane, Richmond and Canberra.

The Balonne Shire – like so many regional areas – is out of sight to most of our state and federal leaders, but we must never allow it to be out of mind.

We must constantly advocate for the Balonne Shire to ensure policy-makers are aware of the issues facing our productive, hard-working communities.

Mayor Samantha O'Toole

Mayor advocates for Balonne at WQAC

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presentation on the first ever Western Queensland Housing Market Study commissioned by WQAC.

Mayor Samantha O'Toole, Chair of SWQROC said she hears the same story in many places across the west.

“We’re hearing lots of public debate about individuals, families and businesses wanting to relocate to our regions on the back of the

COVID-19 pandemic – which is something we very much welcome,” she said.

“Unfortunately, we can’t capitalise on this opportunity as the lack of adequate and affordable housing is creating a real barrier...

“The issues are complex and it’s going to require all levels of government and industry.

“If we can find real solutions, the potential will be huge.”

Goondir's new Wellbeing Centre

Goondir Health has marked the start of a new era for the service, as it unveiled the first stage of its new St George Community Wellbeing Centre.

At an opening celebration replete with visiting dignitaries, Goondir Chair Gary White and MP for Maranoa David Littleproud cut the ceremonial ribbon on the CWC's refurbished commercial kitchen and food storages.

Earmarked as stage one of the centre, the storage and kitchen will enable Goondir to ensure food security for Balonne residents and provide even more meals to those who might otherwise go hungry.

Speaking at the event, Minister Littleproud said the Centre was a step towards closing the gap in health and wellbeing.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT: Goondir Chair Gary White and Maranoa MP David Littleproud in the newly refurbished Goondir Health CWC kitchen.

"I have no greater faith in anyone else other than Goondir in closing the gap with real things, that make a difference to people's lives.

"This is about making lives of First Australians better."

Goondir Health has partnered with charity

organisations First Bite and FareShare to provide Balonne Shire residents with food security.

The St George Community Wellbeing Centre has been funded through the Murray-Darling Basin Economic Development Program.

Night of stars as opera serenades St George

It was a night of stars – on the stage and in the sky above – when Opera Queensland brought its touring show *Are You Lonesome Tonight?* to St George recently.

More than 200 locals packed into the St George Ampitheatre to enjoy a balmy night of magic music on the banks of the Balonne – and there was something for everyone.

Are You Lonesome Tonight? is a fusion of opera and country-and-western, featuring arias and songs by composers such as Giacomo Puccini, Giuseppe Verdi, Slim Dusty, Dolly Parton and Troy Cassar-Daley.

The cast of young Australian singers, including Irena Lysiuk, Marcus Corowa and Jonathan Hickey, performed Parton as enthusiastically as Puccini,

and, when it came to Cassar-Daley's *Walk in My Country*, sounded like they had gained a new appreciation about just how big and beautiful Troy's country really is.

Opera Queensland describes *Are You Lonesome Tonight?* as the most ambitious regional tour in their 40-year history.

It is visiting more than 30 communities and travelling some 7,000 kilometres during May and June, everywhere from Cairns to Cunnamulla.

Opera Queensland certainly gave the Balonne Shire a night to remember.

Council would like to thank St George Bakery and QCWA St George Branch for their support, and major sponsors Beef Australia and Arts Queensland.



South West Mayors unite for Parliament House delegation

The six Councils of South West Queensland have ramped up representation for the region – and they’re breaking down barriers and making some history along the way.

The newly formed South West Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils (SWQROC) led its first delegation to Queensland’s Parliament House in June with a full two-day agenda of meetings with Government, Opposition and departmental representatives.

The SWQROC was formed late last year, driven by a desire to strengthen local government advocacy capability, more proactively partner with government, and participate in key policy developments.



UNITED FRONT: The mayors of South West Queensland with Stirling Hinchliffe MP and Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk.

Chair of SWQROC, Balonne Shire Mayor Samantha O’Toole said the formation as a ROC was a historic first step for the South West and a move that has been welcomed by all levels of government.

“Coming together as a united group we have the ability to turn our advocacy up a notch, knock on more doors and

have our voices heard,” Mayor O’Toole said.

“Working as SWQROC also means we can leverage the outstanding experience and expertise in our leadership, councils, and communities.

“This first major delegation is a significant step and indicator of what we’ll be getting up to going forward.”

DRONES 101

DRONE FUNDAMENTALS - a PILOT'S A-Z

How can a drone help my business?

Can I get more out of my drone?

Learn from experienced drone pilot

FIONA LAKE

NINDIGULLY

21 June

8.15am - 3.30pm

Nindigully Sports Club

HEBEL

22 June

8.15am - 3.30pm

Hebel Hall



Registration is essential: bit.ly/ConnectAg_



SCAN ME



This event is supported by Balonne Shire Council and the Queensland Government's Tackling Regional Adversity Through Integrated Care program.

Connecting Balonne to learning

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a business hub, the new Country Universities Centre and the Cultural Centre.

“This project will also create a vibrant precinct, improving both the functionality of the spaces and creating street appeal on Victoria St.

“Extensive research and consultation has provided valuable public and stakeholder input into the development of the design brief behind this new complex.”

Maranoa MP David Littleproud said the new library hub in St George will raise the bar for the Balonne community in what people can hope to achieve locally, without having to move away.

“I’m a strong believer that regional Australians should have the same educational opportunities as those in the cities – that’s why I’m proud to have secured \$5 million in federal funding for the St George Library Hub and Country Universities Centre,” Mr Littleproud said.



TAKING SHAPE: Artist's impression of the new St George Library Hub complex to be built in St George.

“Country Universities Centre Balonne will give our young and mature-age students – and those looking to build on their skills – a chance to study locally, close to the support of their family and community.

“This is going to change the lives of many people in the bush and, by increasing the number of skilled professionals in the Balonne region, it will pave the way for

more business opportunities in the future.”

The new St George Library Hub will include:

- a new 650m² library building with forecourt;
- an integrated green space;
- a refurbished Cultural Centre facade with a foyer art gallery; and
- a staged refurbished annexe with meeting areas equipped with modern technology.

“This wonderful new hub will have the effect of shrinking distance and boosting services for students, business operators and the broader Balonne Shire community,” Mayor O’Toole said.

The St George Library Hub is a \$6 million project.

\$5 million in funding has been successfully secured from the Australian Government through the Building Better Regions Fund. Council is contributing a further \$1 million to the project.



Site of the future St George Library Hub, where demolition of the previous buildings is now complete.

Ministers drop in to Dirranbandi during South West tour

High ranking Ministers Peter Dutton and David Littleproud have paid a visit to Dirranbandi, meeting with Councillors to discuss exciting projects happening across the Balonne.

Mayor Samantha O'Toole and Councillor Scott Scriven sat down with Mr Dutton and Mr Littleproud recently, while the pair were on a tour of the wider South West region.

During the meeting, the Councillors and Ministers discussed the impacts of major projects, including the St George Library Hub, the Balonne Digital Connectivity Project, the Dirranbandi Thermal Baths, Balonne Shire's Business Mentoring Program, and the Dirranbandi Business Improvement Scheme – among others made possible through Australian Government funding.

Mayor O'Toole said the catch up enabled Council to show the tangible ways that federal investment is helping people in the Balonne.

"Myself and Cr Scriven were so glad to sit down with the Ministers and update them on the improvements being made in our communities.

"We were able to put individual faces on big issues like digital connectivity and drought impact, which makes a huge difference to a minister with a national portfolio."



Mayor advocating for Shire on delegation to Capital

ISSUES important to Balonne Shire ratepayers have been aired in Canberra through meetings between Mayor Samantha O'Toole and Federal Government politicians.

Meetings were held with: Michael McCormack, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development; Mark Coulton, Minister for Regional Health, Regional Communications and Local Government; Member for Maranoa and Agriculture Minister David Littleproud; Minister for Resources, Water and Northern Australia Keith Pitt; Assistant Minister for Road Safety and Freight Transport Scott Buchholz; Assistant Minister for Regional Development, Nola Marino; Senator James McGrath; and Senator Susan McDonald, who has a special interest in regional Queensland.

Issues discussed included: funding applications that Balonne currently has submitted in the Building Better Regions program, the Murray Darling Economic Diversification Program; the Remote Aerodrome Safety

program; the financial sustainability of rural and remote councils; Federal Assistance Grants, especially the current Queensland study into changes to the Federal Assistance Grants methodology; the Hebel-Goodooga Road; exclusion fencing along the New South Wales border; staffing shortages for small business; Telstra; housing; digital connectivity; drought; road funding; and issues with the Civil Aviation Safety Authority.

"Of course, it was also a chance to brief politicians about the Balonne Shire and raise a wide range of other issues directly relevant to us," the Mayor said.

"All these meetings were very useful in promoting issues important to our communities in the Balonne Shire and well worth spending a few days in Canberra's chilly weather."

The Mayor added that Mr Coulton is currently planning a visit to the Balonne Shire.

"I look forward to showing the Minister around and having him meet some of our primary producers and business people."

HALLS OF POWER:

Assistant Minister for Road Safety and Transport Scott Buchholz, Mayor Samantha O'Toole, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development Michael McCormack and Balonne Shire Council CEO Matthew Magin meeting in Canberra.



ST GEORGE BATHS

open



WEEKDAYS

5.30am - 7.30am | 10am - 12pm
3pm - 6pm

WEEKENDS

10am - 12pm | 3pm - 6pm



Youth Council

Applications are open!

What's Youth Council?

An opportunity for people aged 12-25 to have their voice heard and make a change.

Want a new park?

A new arts or dance group?

This is how you can do it!

You can be active in your community.

Get your application from:

- School Office
- Aboriginal Housing
- Lifeline
- Balonne Shire Council
- Big Buddy
- Goondir Health

Want to know more?

Call: 07 4620 8888

Email: council@balonne.qld.gov.au

Visit: Balonne Shire Council

You want change?
You make it happen!



Balonne Shire Church Services

Anglican/Lutheran, St George
8.30am, each Sunday.

Bush Disciples, St George
10am, 1st - 4th Sunday.

Church of Christ, Dirranbandi
6pm, 1st and 3rd Sunday.
10am, 2nd and 4th Sunday

Hebel Catholic Church
10am, 1st Sunday.

**Immaculate Heart of Mary,
Bollon**
11am, 4th Sunday.

Riverlife Church, St George
9.30am, each Sunday.

Riverlife Church, Warrawee
10am, 2nd Wednesday.

St Patrick's, St George
6pm, 1st and 3rd Saturday.
8.30am, 2nd, 4th and 5th
Sunday.

St Andrew's, St George
9am, each Sunday.

St George Uniting Church
9am, each Sunday.

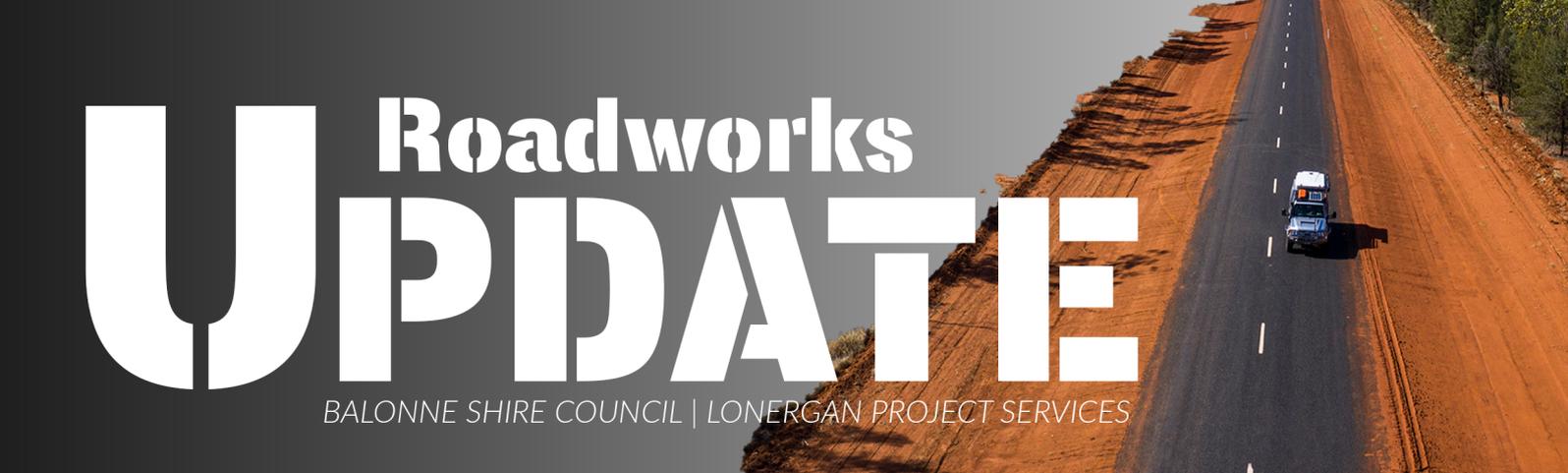
St Therese's, Dirranbandi
8am, 1st and 3rd Sunday.

Thallon Catholic Church
10am, 3rd Sunday.

Want to include your Church service or Church group meeting?

Email: media@balonne.qld.gov.au with your Church name, plus the time and location of worship.

UPDATES



BALONNE SHIRE COUNCIL | LONERGAN PROJECT SERVICES

Disaster Recovery

Gunnindaddy Rd

- Completion: late July.

Narine Rd

- Completion: mid June.

Thuraggi Rd

- Completion: mid June.

Commissioners Point Rd

- Completion: early June.

Dingadee Rd

- Expected start: late June.

Noondoo-Mungindi Rd

- Expected start: late June.

Johnston Rd

- Expected start: mid June.

Council has engaged contractors to deliver these packages of works under the DRFA - Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.

Local Crews

During June, Council's crews are scheduled for work on:

Bollon Crew

- Fernlee Rd - 10 days.
- Cardiff Rd - 11 days.

St George Crew 1

- Bollon Western Levee project - 5 days.
- Hebel-Goodooga Rd - 30 days.

St George Crew 2

- Wagoo Rd - 3 days.
- Dingadee Rd gravel resheeting - 5 days.
- Teelba Rd - 20 days.
- Kooroon Rd - 6 days.

Dirranbandi Crew

- Honeymah Ln - 10 days.
- Openbah Rd - scheduled
- Whyenbah rd - scheduled.

Completed Roads

- Rutherglen Rd.
- Cashevale Rd.
- RMPC shoulder resheeting.
- Corack Rd.
- Kooroon Rd TIDS resheeting.
- Mitchell-Bollon Rd maintenance, TIDS resheeting.
- Runnymede Rd maintenance.
- Crescent Vale Rd.
- Cubbie Rd.
- Unity Rd.
- Middle Rd.
- Whyenbah Rd.
- Thomby Rd.
- Wagoo Rd.
- Cardiff Rd.
- Powrunna Rd.
- Mourilyan Rd.
- Lower Plains Rd.

What is Disaster Recovery

Disaster recovery roadworks include: surface correction, gravel re-sheeting, formation grading, concreting and more, to repair damage from the February 2020 severe weather event. These are proudly funded by the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments through the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA).

What is RMPC?

RMPC (Roads Maintenance Performance Contract) works are

routine maintenance on state-owned roads. They are managed by the Department of Transport and Main Roads, and the work in Balonne Shire is carried out by Council's Road Crews.

What is TIDS?

The Transport Industry Development Scheme is a state government funding program, which provides money to local governments for transport-related initiatives that support state government objectives.

Those objectives include: increasing works on the local government

transport network, promoting regional development and building a safe and sustainable transport system.

When will Council reach my road?

Crews' progress is governed by weather conditions, water availability, emergency repairs, and other factors outside of Council's control. Works can get delayed by rain or machinery breakdowns, or can be pushed to a later date if a site has no available water source.

This update is an approximate guide to Balonne Shire roadworks.