

Balonne Bulletin

THE NEWSLETTER OF BALONNE SHIRE COUNCIL

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Hub the centre of attention in St George

The newly-completed Hub — housing an expanded library, relocated Country Universities Centre, meeting rooms and business facilities — has been officially opened in St George.

The official opening was conducted by federal Member for Maranoa (and Minister for Agriculture and Northern Australia) David Littleproud on Monday, March 7.

The following day he opened a second new Country Universities Centre campus, this time in Dirranbandi.

Mr Littleproud said The Hub had received \$5 million in funding from the Australian Government's Building Better Regions Fund (BBRF) and a further \$1 million from the Balonne Shire Council.

“As well as a brand new library hub

that includes a state-of-the-art learning complex which will incorporate a regional university hub, the St George project has revitalised the nearby green space and courtyard, and upgraded the existing cultural centre to include an art gallery and annexe.

“To ensure education services are reaching further in the Balonne community, Dirranbandi's secondary university hub will also allow people who want to study higher education qualifications, direct access to services and support.

“The two intertwined projects have been rolled out simultaneously to bridge the education divide, ensuring students in regional and remote Australia can gain a tertiary qualification without leaving their local community and support networks.”

Mr Littleproud said the new library includes collection and general reading areas, a quiet reading room, a maker's space, a staff workroom with kitchenette, and two community meeting rooms. The refurbished Civic Centre now includes a foyer art gallery, two new large meeting rooms, green spaces, a courtyard between the new library and the centre, and a new façade.

“By improving these key community facilities and amenities, the project will bolster opportunities for locals to engage with each other and with the fantastic lifestyle the region has on offer.

“The new St George Library Hub precinct will also be used as a fun

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What's On

Battle on the Balonne

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

WHERE: Balonne River, St George

WHEN: 26-27 March 2022

Balonne Campdraft

The campdraft and show conducted by the Balonne Branch of the Australian Stock Horse Society aims to preserve and promote the bloodlines of the Australian Stock Horse.

WHERE: St George Showgrounds

WHEN: 15-17 April 2022

Dirranbandi Show & Campdraft

An action-packed weekend, with the campdraft kicking off early Friday morning in the main arena, Saturday showcasing sheep, wool, cattle and poultry alongside a full day of competitive yard dog trials, ring events and the second day of campdrafting

WHERE: Dirranbandi Showgrounds

WHEN: 22-23 April 2022

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

A message from the Mayor

I have just returned from a three-day meeting of western Queensland mayors, other councillors and senior staff, and been reminded once again how important it is that local government bodies work together to advance the shared needs and interests of our communities.

A record 204 delegates, including leaders from all 22 western Queensland Councils and senior State and Federal Government representatives, gathered at Charleville from March 9 to 11 for the Western Queensland Alliance of Councils (WQAC) Assembly.

Balonne Shire Council Deputy Mayor Richard Lomman and CEO Matthew Magin also attended the conference with me.

The 2022 Assembly is the biggest local government event in western Queensland in living memory.

The program — with the theme “Out West, Where the Stars are Brightest” — brought Federal Government Ministers and Senators and Opposition Shadow Ministers to Charleville ahead of the federal election (due by May).

They responded positively to the WQAC 2022 Federal Election Campaign document, “Invest in the West, It Pays Dividends”, that sets out the projects, policy and program priorities that support our communities. (You can read this document at: <https://wqac.com.au/assembly2022-publications>)

The Assembly was opened by Dep-

uty Premier and Minister of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government & Planning, Steven Miles.

The program delved into the big issues for western Queensland – housing, digital connectivity, disaster management and resilience, climate change, aged care, business attraction and investment, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 22 councils ranging from the Gulf of Carpentaria to the NSW border, generate \$9.35 billion of the State's Gross Product from 1.3 per cent of the Queensland's population.

This contribution, coming from the resources, agricultural, fishing and tourism sectors, is 2.2 times per capita above the Queensland average, demonstrating the value of the western Queensland regions to the State and national economies.

I will talk more in future about what was achieved but there is no doubt our western Councils have so much more influence with governments when we join together to advocate on our common concerns, and I am sure last week's conference will bear fruit.

I want to say thank-you to Murweh Shire Mayor Shaun Radnedge and the people of Charleville for their hospitality during the conference. We were all made to feel very welcome.

For more details, please go to the WQAC website at: www.wqac.com.au/assembly

Samantha O'Toole



Mayors at the Western Queensland Alliance of Councils conference in Charleville.

Applications open for Balonne Shire's Tourism Events Grant

Great news! The next round of the Balonne Shire Council's popular Tourism Events Grant is open now.

The Program provides a tiered range of grants to support event organisers to develop, promote and host events which make a positive and on-going contribution to the Shire.

Funding is available across four categories – Regional Events (up to \$3,000); Destination Events (up to \$4,000); Major Events (up to \$7,000); and Hallmark Events (up to \$10,000) – for pre-existing Shire events.

In addition, one-off funding of up to \$3,000 is available for the development of new tourism events.

Applications are open for events held between 1 July and 30 December 2022, with the deadline for submissions 1 April 2022.

Further information – including guidelines, criteria and application forms – can be found on the Council website: www.balonne.qld.gov.au/



Tourism Events Grant Open Now!

[tourism-events-grants](#)

If you need any help filling out an application or simply want to discuss

your event, please contact the Manager Tourism on 4620 8888 or email Kim.Wildman@balonne.qld.gov.au.

Ukrainian refugees welcome in Balonne

Ukrainian refugees are being invited to settle in the Balonne Shire.

Balonne Shire Mayor Samantha O'Toole said Councillors were enthusiastic about encouraging Ukrainian families to move to the region.

"This is a humanitarian gesture and an opportunity for displaced families to move to a community that is very welcoming to migrants," Mayor O'Toole said.

"Migration benefits our community enormously. We are a prosperous farming community that always needs people to help harvest our crops.

"There are plenty of permanent jobs in the Balonne Shire in farming and a wide range of other skills, from motor mechanics to computer experts.

"While our average temperatures may be a little higher than those in eastern Europe – and we certainly

We want to learn from you

Balonne Shire Council have engaged Hall Chadwick QLD (HCQ) to research and document learning opportunities for the Balonne Shire.

The Hall Chadwick team is currently seeking community feedback on current education and training opportunities and what more could be done.

The HCQ team have recently spent a week in the Balonne Shire Council talking to people in a face-to-face conversation style survey and now seeking further input in an on-line anonymous survey.

It is simple and quick to complete and we welcome any input which will help shape the future of the Balonne region.

More information can be found on

don't have snow – our landscapes of wheat fields and other crops wouldn't look unfamiliar to anyone who has farmed in the Ukraine."

the Balonne Shire Council website or by contacting Lizzy Squire at Hall Chadwick Queensland on 0422 179 258.

<https://fs29.formsite.com/LizzyS/t5p4eoljbq/index.html>



Mayor O'Toole said the Council was contacting the Ukrainian Embassy in Canberra and Immigration Minister Alex Hawke to discuss the opportunities for refugees to move to Balonne.

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space to deliver education programs and services for the community, bolstering opportunities for locals to learn and upskill here in their very own backyard.” He said this project complements other community projects the Federal Government has already delivered in the region.

“These include over \$226,000 for the St George Golf Club upgrade, \$70,000 for the Dirranbandi Show-

grounds revitalisation, \$140,000 for the Hebel Showgrounds, \$131,450 for the Balonne Aquatic Centre, \$160,000 for the Balonne Skate Park and \$480,000 for fibre and CCTV in all Balonne townships.

“The Australian Government will continue to invest in and deliver the community and infrastructure projects that matter to locals, tourists, and businesses.”

Balonne Shire Mayor Samantha O’Toole said the aim of building The

Hub was to create a dynamic complex in the centre of St George, integrating an expanded library, business facilities, better equipped campuses for the Country Universities Centres and a revamped cultural centre.

“The Hub provides resources and services that students and business people might once have had to travel away from the region to find or simply go without,” Mayor O’Toole said.

“It will help us further reduce the differences between living in regional Queensland versus living in the city.

“The project has also created a vibrant precinct, improving both the functionality of the spaces and creating street appeal in the current central location in Victoria Street.”

Mayor O’Toole said local residents appreciated the Commonwealth Government funding that had made the project possible.

“More than 80 per cent of the \$6 million funding for the construction of The Hub has come from the Commonwealth. Balonne Shire simply would not have had this marvellous new resource without the partnership with the Government and we appreciate them investing in our community.”

For more information on the Australian Government’s Building Better Regions Fund, visit www.infrastructure.gov.au/building-better-regions-fund-bbrf.

Deputy PM comments

In a related statement, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport & Regional Development Barnaby Joyce said the project is part of the Government’s nationwide \$1.38 billion Building Better Regions Fund.

“This fund is helping to deliver locally important infrastructure and community projects, while creating jobs and supporting our economic recovery,” Mr Joyce said.

“Construction has already delivered critical economic benefits at a time it was needed most, supporting 13 jobs and cash flow to the region.

“The project will also increase local retail and community services and support additional training and educational services in the town that will provide a long-term economic boost.”



Inspecting the new library facilities: (left to right) Librarians Sheree Ryan and Sabina Ryan, Library Co-ordinator Melanie Mills, Mayor Samantha O’Toole, Maranoa MP David Littleproud and Country Universities Centre Balonne Manager Alix Greenhill.



The Hub opening ceremony was well attended.

New CUC campuses are a “game changer”

The new Country Universities Centre (CUC) campuses in St George and Dirranbandi represent a “game-changer” for keeping our youth in our communities.

That is the view of CUC Balonne Chair Matthew Magin, who said the CUC campuses are designed to empower regional people by building highly-connected learning communities and opportunities for a vibrant and prosperous future.

“They provide a dynamic environment where tertiary students have space, technology and support to focus on and succeed in their studies.”

Mr Magin said the Australian Government has continued to invest in the Regional University Centres model.

“CUC Balonne is part of the second round of project funding. It received \$737,082 for establishment and operations, which will bring degrees closer to regional students pursuing their higher education studies in and around Balonne.

“CUC Balonne has been open for just two semesters and early in this semester has 39 already registered students. We want more people in and around Balonne to remain in their local area, study successfully and develop the skills and qualifications that will help them secure local jobs.”

Mr Magin expressed his appreciation to the Federal Government and

the Centre’s foundation sponsors – including the Balonne Shire Council and the Dirranbandi Rural Transition Centre – for their significant funding contributions.

“As CEO of the Balonne Shire Council, I have seen first-hand the importance of diversification and equity of access to education in rural, regional and remote Queensland, enabling people to have a real choice about where and how they study.

“CUC Balonne is a game-changer for keeping our youth in our communities, while also giving anyone, of any age, the opportunity to further their studies from the place they call home in a professional, purpose-built and technologically-advanced Country Universities Centre” Mr Magin said.

Government contributions

CUC CEO Duncan Taylor acknowledged the significant contributions towards the establishment and operations of CUC Balonne from government.

“We are very grateful for the support we’ve received. Without the Federal Government funding and Council support, we wouldn’t be opening the CUC Balonne today,” Mr Taylor said.

“CUC Balonne is community-driven. The people of Balonne want to ensure its students of today can succeed in the jobs of tomorrow. With-

out this community’s passion, drive and support, we wouldn’t be here today,” Mr Taylor said.

“We also recognise the Balonne Shire Council and acknowledge its significant contribution and commitment to helping foster lifelong learning.

“Without our community champions, the volunteer board members and our amazing Centre Manager, Ms Alix Greenhill, we wouldn’t be here celebrating today.”

Note: To find out more information about CUC Balonne, please visit: www.cucbalonne.edu.au

CUC Balonne Student Statistics - Semester 2, 2021

- CUC Balonne supported 44 students
- 36% are first in their family to study
 - Top areas of study includes:
 - 29% Health
 - 20% Business & Management
 - 17% Education
- 54% are over 25 years of age
- 10% are of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage
- 55% of students study full-time
- 45% of students study part-time
- 15 different Australian universities are represented



The Dirranbandi CUC campus was officially opened under a shady fig tree.

Wet western summer sees flooding return

Flooding has returned to the Balonne Shire in recent weeks in what continues to be a wet summer and autumn in south-western Queensland.

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 – has been meeting a number of times each week during late February and early March to monitor the situation and prepare for any contingencies.

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

A number of Balonne communities have been directly affected by flood waters, including Thallon, Hebel, Mungindi and Nindigully.

At Thallon, the levee was sealed off by Council staff as water closed the Carnarvon Highway. A State Emergency Service (SES) crew was stationed in Thallon as a precaution.

As flood water began to recede, the levee was re-opened, although even then parts of the Carnarvon Highway remained closed.

Hebel was cut off from the north as flood waters crossed the Castlereagh Highway to Dirranbandi. A few days' warning of steadily rising water along the road allowed local residents to prepare (and the road remained open south to Lightning Ridge).

At Mungindi, heavy rain upstream saw the Barwon River rise to a major flood level of 7.3 metres. Water closed the Carnarvon Highway north of town.

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

As well as the Carnarvon Highway being closed north of Mungindi, Gunningdaddy Road, Noondoo Mungindi Road and Barwon Street were also closed, and Collie Road at Mungindi was partially flooded. The Mungindi River Foreshore Park was closed due

to flooding,

In Nindigully, water from the Moonie River crossed the approaches to the bridge. The camping grounds were closed by water and required a clean-up by Council staff.

Dirranbandi saw high water too

but this time it did not exceed a moderate flood level and (at the time of writing) the Police Lagoon beside the Castlereagh Highway was not expected to break out over the road.

In the second week of March, the Balonne River at St George was continuing to receive outflows of up to



Balonne Shire Council staff closing the levee at Thallon.



Flood water crossing the Thallon-Noondoo Road at the Thallon Bridge.



At Mungindi, water rose into the riverside park.

45,000 megalitres from Beardmore Dam, with similar outflows at Jack Taylor Weir.

The Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) and Sunwater said the river was expected to reach moderate levels of up to 10 metres at St George but this was unlikely to breach the river banks.

Stay up to date

The best way to stay up to date – 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.

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

Balonne businesses to receive \$889,000

Balonne Shire Council has announced offers of 53 grants totalling almost \$900,000 for business enhancement and energy efficiency.

Mayor Samantha O’Toole said that 31 projects have been approved for funding for visual enhancement and 22 for energy efficiency.

The grants – approved at a special Council meeting late last month – span the Shire, with each of Balonne’s seven communities funded for at least one project, and total \$889,000.

“The visual enhancement projects cover things such as façade and building improvements and the energy efficiency projects relate to solar energy, battery storage, energy-efficient lighting, etcetera,” Mayor O’Toole said.

“The funding for this work comes from the Federal Government’s Murray-Darling Basin Economic Development Program, and is a terrific contribution to the Shire’s economy and liveability.

“We have all witnessed the positive effects that a program like this has had on Dirranbandi. This project builds on that success and complements other completed, current and proposed projects that Council and our communities are working together to deliver.

“We want to showcase our communities and help attract new business, investment and tourism opportunities. Even more importantly, we want to improve the lives of all of our Balonne Shire residents and the sustainability of our communities.

“These projects will generate jobs and opportunities right here in our local area and are the foundation for another new and exciting chapter for the Balonne Shire.”

Mayor O’Toole said that, while Balonne Shire Council has overall responsibility for selecting the projects and ensuring their completion, day-to-day management will be handled by project managers Complete Urban.

Council will be calling for tenders in coming weeks.



WE ARE HIRING!

ADMINISTRATION OFFICER - GOVERNANCE

GRANTS OFFICER

AND COMING SOON...

MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER



Visit www.balonne.qld.gov.au or scan the QR code to download the application forms

WWW.BALONNE.QLD.GOV.AU



COUNCIL'S EDUCATION SURVEY

Our team are seeking community feedback on current education and training opportunities and what more could be done.

Council have engaged Hall Chadwick QLD (HCQ) to research and document learning opportunities for our Shire.

The survey is confidential, simple and quick to complete and we welcome any input which will help shape the future of the Balonne region.

The survey closes
5 April 2022

For more information contact Lizzy Squire at Hall Chadwick QLD on 0422 179 258

Scan the QR code to take the survey, or visit our website

Thuraggi Road is a sealed deal

Thuraggi Road in St George has been sealed.

The full 3.8km length of Thuraggi Road – joining the Buchan Bypass to Salmon Road – has been tarred.

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

White lines will be applied in the near future.

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

The Roads to Recovery Program is designed to support the maintenance of the nation's local road infrastructure assets, which facilitates greater accessibility and improves safety, economic and social outcomes for Australians.

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



Thuraggi Road: before and after.

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

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

Fogging out mossies and biting midges

Fogging to control mosquitoes and biting midges is underway in the Balonne Shire.

The program is planned to cover all Balonne Shire towns with the exception of Bollon by Sunday, March 27. (See list of dates and places below.)

Please be aware there may be disturbance due to the flashing lights on the fogging vehicle.

Balonne Shire Council asks:

- residents with dogs, please keep your dogs in the rear of your property (the vector is suitable for animals but the lights on the vehicle will make them bark and cause a nuisance to others);
- bee keepers, please ensure bees are covered in the hive; and
- fish owners, please cover any outside fish ponds.

Should you require any further information, please call ring Council's Environmental Health Co-ordinator, Di Francisco, on 0429637439.

Date	Morning	Evening
Friday 11 March	-	Nindigully
Saturday 12 March	-	Nindigully
Sunday 13 March	Nindigully, Thallon, Mungindi (N,T,M)	N,T,M
Monday 14 March	N,T,M	St George (SG)
Tuesday 15 March	SG	SG
Wednesday 16 March	SG	SG
Thursday 17 March	SG	N,T,M
Friday 18 March	N,T,M	SG
Saturday 19 March	Dirranbandi (D)	D
Sunday 20 March	D	D
Monday 21 March	D	SG
Tuesday 22 March	SG	N,T,M
Wednesday 23 March	N,T,M	D
Thursday 24 March	D	D
Friday 25 March	Hebel (H)	H
Saturday 26 March	H	H
Sunday 27 March	H	H

Note: While "fogging" is the common term for this process, the machine is technically a "vector mister". It does not create a fog when spraying.