



## Mat Rogers wins new fans in Balonne

Dual international footballer Mat Rogers has won a new legion of fans – in fact, a new *generation* of fans – in a two-day visit to the Balonne Shire.

Mat played both Rugby League and Rugby Union for Australia, ended his career playing Rugby League for the Gold Coast Titans (retiring in 2011), established a children's charity, 4AS-DKids, and also works as an inspirational speaker.

The main purpose of his visit to Balonne Shire was to take part in a Youth Summit for school students from across the south-western region. He also attended a series of community events.

Mat's itinerary included:

- a presentation to primary school students in St George;
- training with the St George Rugby League team;
- an open community session and fund-raising barbecue with the junior Rugby League girls team;
- training with the St George Frill-necks and Frillies Fillies Rugby Union teams'
- an "Evening with Mat Rogers" dinner function and meet-and-greet at The Australian Hotel. Followed by meet & greet;

- a presentation to St George State High School; and
- meeting children from Thallon State School.

The Youth Summit was designed to provide opportunities to students from across the south-west region that would normally require a trip to Toowoomba or Brisbane, inspire them to consider new and different career options, and encourage ambition and leadership.

It was attended by more than 80 students from as far away as Cunnamulla.

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# What's On

## St George Quick Shears

Join the Australian Hotel as they yet again host the annual Quick Shears, raising money for Royal Flying Doctors with \$20,000 worth of cash and prizes. Live music, food and drinks late into the afternoon. Contact the Australian Hotel to nominate: 4625 5000

**WHERE:** Australian Hotel

**WHEN:** Saturday, 30 April 2022, from 11am.

## St George Show

The St George Agricultural Show highlights the diversity of the Balonne Shire all in one place. Come and see the best that the Shire has to offer in livestock, handicrafts and horticulture along with the entertainment of rodeo, fireworks and motorbike gymkhana.

**WHEN:** Sunday, 1 May 2022

**WHERE:** St George Showgrounds

## Bollon Polocrosse

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

**WHEN:** 11-12 June 2022

**WHERE:** Bollon Showground

## Yellowbelly Country Music Festival

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

**WHEN:** 27 June – 3 July 2022

**WHERE:** St George Showgrounds

## Mungindi Races

The Mungindi Cup is country racing at its best. First held in 1872, Live entertainment and a fully licensed bar. Fashions on the Field. Bookmakers and a TAB are also available for punters on the day.

**WHEN:** Saturday, 2 July 2022

**WHERE:** Mungindi Racecourse

## Got a story, event or notice?

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

Phone: 07 4620 8888

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

[balonne.qld.gov.au](mailto:balonne.qld.gov.au)

# A message from the Mayor

Autumn has arrived and that's obvious not only from the cooler temperatures but also from the vehicles beginning to roll through Balonne Shire.

And it's very good news for our economy.

The 2022 cotton harvesting season has begun on farms around the Shire and the first trucks carrying cotton for processing have been out on the highways.

Every one of those trucks is carrying tens of thousands of dollars' worth of cotton. The harvest will mean millions of dollars for our economy and the money will flow directly and indirectly into all sorts of businesses around the Shire.

I understand cotton farms in the Balonne Shire can produce around 2,600 kg per hectare, and that's one of the highest average yields anywhere in Australia, in fact in the world, so our farmers are doing a great job.

The other vehicles rolling through town at present are recreational vehicles, like caravans, motor homes and camper-trailers.

This is the time of year southerners follow the sun north through Balonne Shire and many Queenslanders from the coast head west to explore our region as well.

They make an important contribution to our local economy, so please say "G'day" and make them welcome.

Council's hard-working tourism staff recently launched this year's tourism campaign.



Two of the major events occurring in the Balonne Shire right now captured in one photograph: cotton being trucked for processing and floodwaters pouring down-stream (through Jack Taylor Weir).



Our new "Welcome to Our Place" tourism campaign encourages all our residents to be Welcome Ambassadors for our Shire by inviting their families and friends to visit.

For more information, please drop into the Visitor Information Centre in St George and our staff can give you all the details – plus some postcards to send to family and friends.

Flooding around the Shire is easing but, at the time of writing this, some important roads are still cut by water.

When planning trips, please check for all the latest information about road closures on the Balonne Shire Council's website by clicking on the Emergency Dashboard panel.

And, please, if you're driving and see water over the road, remember those wise words: "If it's flooded, forget it."

Employment is a big issue in Balonne Shire at the moment.

Like all local councils in south-west Queensland – in fact like most local councils throughout regional Australia – right now we have more positions at Council than we have applicants.

Unemployment levels are very low throughout Australia and that makes it harder to recruit staff, whether you are in private enterprise or in government.

As a Council, we always prefer to recruit our staff from within our own communities, whenever possible.

Please have a look on our website for current vacancies.

*Samantha O'Toole*

## From page 1

Balonne Shire schools involved included St George State High School, Mungindi Central School and Dirranbandi State School.

The Youth Summit included Karen Browning from University of Southern Queensland (USQ) discussing “Careers now and into the future”, Mat Rogers’ keynote speech; a “Pathways Panel” and an ABC “Heywire” workshop.

Karen Browning is an Outreach Career Development Practitioner with USQ’s Making Career Choices Program. Her session aimed to broaden students’ career horizons, and included topics such as: finding something you like and making a career out of it; what jobs and skills will look like into the future (think space, drones and more); looking at career paths as journeys and not just a linear process; and considering who influences our career decisions.

The Pathways Panel and was facilitated by Balonne Country Universities Centre Manager Alix Greenhill and comprised: Will Devine, stock and station agent with Elders St George, talking about the rural / agriculture pathway; Paige Houlahan from the CUC and St George Library the vocational pathway; and Amber Stewart, a teacher from Dirranbandi State School the tertiary pathway.

The ABC’s “Heywire” is described as putting young Australians (and especially rural young people) at the centre of conversations that shape their communities. The ABC has run an annual regional youth project in partnership with the Australian Government since 1998. (More information: [www.abc.net.au/heywire/](http://www.abc.net.au/heywire/))

This was the inaugural Youth Summit but the Balonne Shire Council hopes to make it an annual event.

Note: Balonne Shire Council received \$23,500 in Community Drought Support Funding from the Queensland Government to support the Youth Summit and a related dinner to be held in mid-June. Part of Mat’s visit is also funded by Localised Mental Health funding from Queensland Health.



Mat Rogers speaking at the Youth Summit ...



... with prize-winners at the Australian Hotel ...



... with junior Rugby League girls at a BBQ fundraiser ... and (front page) with schoolkids at Thallon.

# Be a tourism ambassador for Balonne

A new “Welcome to our Place” tourism campaign for Balonne Shire launched this month is encouraging residents to be tourism ambassadors.

Mayor Samantha O’Toole said residents were being invited to act as Welcome Ambassadors for the Balonne Shire by inviting their families and friends to visit for the holiday of a lifetime.

“As part of this campaign, we have created a series of free postcard invitations – one for each of our seven towns – which are being distributed to residents and businesses throughout the Shire.

“We have also created ‘Welcome Mate’ stickers to go on all take-away coffees from all our coffee shops around the Shire and larger ‘Welcome Mate’ decal stickers for local businesses to put on their front doors as a sign they are happy to welcome visitors.

“This all came together for the official kickoff of our tourist season at the Visitor Information Centre (VIC) in St George earlier this month, when VIC staff handed out postcards and provided free coffee – courtesy of the St George Bakery – for the first 60 people through the doors.



Kyra Passman from the VIC helped launch the new postcards.

“Tourism is a very significant industry for the Balonne Shire and this is a

great new campaign to encourage an even larger number of visitors to visit us, stay longer, and see more of our iconic towns and other attractions.”



Samples of the new postcards promoting all seven Balonne Shire towns.

# Flood recovery coordinator visits Balonne

Major-General Jake Ellwood – the Queensland recovery coordinator appointed by the State Government – has visited Balonne Shire to hear first-hand about flood damage here.

General Ellwood recently sat down with Balonne Shire Councillors and senior staff in St George to discuss local recovery needs.

They were joined by Ann Leahy, State Member for Warrego, whose electorate stretches east-west from Dalby to the South Australian border and north-south from north of Injune-Augathella to the New South Wales border.

When Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk appointed General Ellwood to the role last month, she described him as one of the Australian Defence Force's (ADF's) most respected leaders.

He has served as Deputy Chief of Army and was recently appointed as Commander of the 1st Division, based in Brisbane. He was national co-or-



ordinator for the Australian Defence Force's response to the Black Summer bushfires in 2019-20.

General Ellwood is coordinating one of the largest-scale recovery operations the State has ever seen, stretching across 22 local government areas and eight cities.

At the time of his appointment last month, General Ellwood said his job was to coordinate everyone's efforts

to ensure the job is done efficiently and people are back on their feet as fast as possible.

Balonne Shire Mayor Samantha O'Toole said the meeting with Major-General Ellwood was valuable and he took a keen interest in the scale of road and other infrastructure damage and in what was needed to help local property-owners and other residents recover from flooding impacts as quickly as possible.

## Protect your property from weed seeds

Foreign vehicle and new livestock movements present high risks of introducing new weeds onto your property.

To manage the risks presented by foreign vehicles and new livestock introducing weeds onto your property, you can implement the following weed hygiene measures:

- request any foreign vehicles coming onto your property to be washed down and stick to formed property tracks;
- request visitors to park at your house and using your own vehicle around the property;
- request visitors to check in using the new Queensland Government's "Farm Check-In" system - Farm Check-In ([daf.qld.gov.au](http://daf.qld.gov.au));
- request a vendor declaration form from the supplier of any fodder being brought onto the property; and
- quarantine new stock to areas that



*An introduced weed, the Harrista cactus.*

can easily and regularly be monitored for a minimum of 10 days.

For help in identifying any suspicious weeds on your property, or for further information on additional measures that you can adopt to reduce your risk of introducing weeds onto your property, contact Balonne Shire Council's Rural Services and Compliance team on 4620 8888.

## Wild dog scalp bounty offered

Did you know that Balonne Shire Council offers a wild dog scalp bounty?

Eligible trappers and hunters can

claim the \$50 bounty if they:

- have a letter from the landowner or manager of the property confirming that the wild dogs were caught on a property within the Shire;
- have lodged a record through Council's Feral Scan App page with a respective GPS point and photo; and
- present full scalps that are dried or frozen, without decomposition and in a sealed bag or container, to Council's St George Customer Service Centre.

For more information on how you can claim the wild dog scalp bounty, please contact Council's Rural Services and Compliance team on 4620 8888.



# Airside allotments for lease at St George aerodrome

Balonne Shire Council has called for expressions of interest from individuals or companies interested in a long-term lease arrangement for airside land for commercial or private use at the St George aerodrome.

Balonne Shire Council CEO Matthew Magin said expressions of interest should include the allotment(s) sought and an outline of the proposed development and operations (including buildings and services required).

Mr Magin said the current development provides an access road, nine allotments, a taxiway, a hardstand apron and drainage.

A second stage to the development will be considered, depending on interest in commercial use and subject to funding. Stage 2 would see the provision of water, sewerage and power to service the allotments.

There are two options available for development.

Option 1 – Un-serviced allotments can include a hangar development for the storage of a lessee's private or commercial aircraft, including the aircraft's repair and maintenance as a permitted use on the allotments,

subject to building approval for any structures.

Option 2 – Serviced allotments will be considered for proposals for the commercial use and operation of a business on site. The provision of water, sewerage and electricity to the sites is yet to be costed and developed.

Commercial proposals may trigger development, building and/or environmentally relevant activity approvals.

The current development approval for the lots is limited to accommodating aircraft hangars - established with or without urban services installations as per RL 112 development approval on 18/11/2021.

The applicant must outline how they can comply with relevant legislative requirements to be airside.

The expression of interest documentation is available via Market Place in Vendor Panel and closes at 5pm on Friday, 29 April 2022.

Note: This project is funded by the Queensland Government's Building our Regions program.

# Traineeships with Council now on offer

Have you finished school and not sure what to do from here? Maybe you're re-entering the workforce after taking care of your children or are you looking to gain some extra skills?

Well, now you can earn while you learn in a traineeship with Balonne Shire Council.

Council is currently seeking applications from motivated individuals to complete a 12-month traineeship in either Business Administration based in St George or Horticulture based in Dirranbandi.

And, if you are curious about specific jobs available now, they include a position for a grant-writer.

If you are passionate about making your community an even greater place to live, and have exceptional research and technical writing skills, this might be just the job for you.

Council is currently looking for a proactive professional to investigate funding opportunities, write grant applications and project-manage grant-funded community projects.

For more information, check out Balonne Shire Council's current vacancies and traineeships at [www.balonne.qld.gov.au](http://www.balonne.qld.gov.au)



Balonne Shire Councillors inspecting the new allotments available for commercial use at St George Aerodrome.

# Council appeal: “Don’t damage wet roads”

The Balonne Shire Council has appealed to residents not to damage wet roads.

Mayor Samantha O’Toole said serious damage is being caused by vehicles, particularly trucks, being driven on unsealed roads while their surface is still saturated.

“I can understand the impatience of property-owners and contractors wanting to get onto these roads as soon as they can,” Mayor O’Toole said.

“However, in some cases, this is causing real safety risks for other road users.

“Also, there’s no guarantee we can get around to grade these roads again in the foreseeable future, so this is potentially causing longer-term issues.

“We have four crews working constantly but they simply can’t be everywhere at once.

“There are 3,000 kilometres of roads in the Balonne Shire to maintain with a limited budget.

“We are a relatively small rural council and have to operate a carefully-budgeted asset management plan, so, even in good weather, some roads aren’t scheduled to see a grader more than once a year or even longer.

“Flooding and other water damage to major roads throughout the Shire has just added to our crews’ already-heavy workload.”

Mayor O’Toole said significant damage had been done to roads during the current wet spell.

“I understand that there has been exceptional rainfall in this continuing La Nina cycle and that not being able to use wet or flooded roads is costing property-owners time and money.

“But I am appealing to everyone to be patient and not damage our roads. Just let them dry out.

“In one case, it appears two tractors have been used to tow a truck 20 km over a saturated road, causing terrible damage to the surface.

“Side tracks have been cut through fresh ground parallel with existing roads but many of these are very dangerous – for example, because the surface is uneven, slippery and/or runs

very close to trees – and can be especially risky for visitors or other inexperienced country drivers who might be tempted to use them

“In at least one other case, someone has taken their own bulldozer and cut the surface off the road till they got down to harder material. That causes even worse problems in the long run and costs an enormous amount of money to repair and rebuild.

“Normal maintenance costs up to \$2,000 per kilometre but re-sheeting – which is what’s required after the surface material has been bulldozed away – can cost \$60,000 per kilometre.

“In serious cases like that, Council will consider taking legal action against offenders and seeking com-

ensation for the cost of repairs.”

Mayor O’Toole said Council was also asking landholders to be “good neighbours”.

“We are not asking people to do in their neighbours but we are asking property-owners to talk to their neighbours if they see them doing the wrong thing on wet roads because a damaged road will affect everyone along that road who has to use it later, including family-members and visitors.

“On the other side, please be a good neighbour yourself and don’t cause damage to a road that other people in the district have to use.

“It is a simple message but so important: please, do not damage wet roads. Be patient. Let them dry out.”



Two separate roads showing damage caused by trucks driven over a saturated surface.

# UPDATE

## Roadworks

BALONNE SHIRE COUNCIL | LONERGAN PROJECT SERVICES

## Local Roads

### St George Crew 1

- Noondoo Thallon intersection upgrade - 20 days
- 36A truck pad / 36A widening TMR - 60 days

### St George Crew 2

- Ballangarry Road maintenance - 5 days
- Dunkerry Road maintenance - 4 days

All this work has been affected by heavy rain and flooding at the time of printing this edition of the *Balonne Bulletin*, so no starting dates have been included here.

## Disaster Recovery

### Noondoo Mungindi Rd

- Expected completion: early – May
- Works are ongoing.
- Expected traffic delays less than 5 minutes.

### Upcoming Unsealed Works

- Nulky: early – May

## Completed Roads

- |                          |                              |                      |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|
| • Crescent Vale Rd       | • Gunnindaddy Rd             | • Dalkeith Rd        |
| • Rutherglen Rd          | • Corack Rd                  | • Runnymede Rd       |
| • Cubbie Rd              | • Honeymah Lane              | • Castlereagh Hwy    |
| • Unity Rd               | • Diamond Tank Rd            | • Ula Ula Rd         |
| • Middle Rd              | • Littleton Rd               | • Thompsons Rd       |
| • Whyenbah Rd            | • Jakelwar Goodooga Rd South | • Koomalah Rd        |
| • Thomby Rd              | • Cashel Vale Rd             | • Tamingey Rd        |
| • Wagoo Rd               | • Narline Rd                 | • Nulky Rd           |
| • Cardiff Rd             | • Jakelwar Goodooga Rd North | • Thungaby Rd        |
| • Powrunna Rd            | • Davirton Rd                | • Warrie Rd          |
| • Mourilyan Rd           | • Eumerella South Rd         | • Wonolga Rd         |
| • Lower Plains Rd        | • Ramalis Rd                 | • Beltana Rd         |
| • Narine Rd              | • Kilcummin Rd               | • Mitchell-Bollon Rd |
| • Commissioners Point Rd | • Habnary Rd                 | • Woolerina Rd       |
| • Thuraggi Rd            | • Dingadee Rd                | • Knights Rd         |
| • Johnston Rd            | • Mulga Downs Rd             | • Euraba Rd          |
| • Cambo Rd               | • Woolerbilla Rd             | • Teelba Rd          |
| • Mundalee Rd            |                              | • Bimbil Rd          |
|                          |                              | • Fernlee Rd         |

- Kooroon Road re sheeting - 2 days
- Kooroon Road maintenance - 10 days

### Bollon Crew

- Byra Road maintenance - 3 days
- Mitchell-Bollon Road re sheeting - 10 days
- Fernlee Road maintenance - 22 days

### Dirranbandi Crew

- Jakelwar-Goodooga south maintenance - 10 days

### Upcoming Sealed Works

- Nulky: late – April
- Bollon Town Streets: late – April

### 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.