

Working for Victoria Program



BULOKE
SHIRE COUNCIL



Introduction

- ▶ It was announced in May 2020 that Council would participate in the State Government's Working for Victoria initiative to employ up to 50 people for up to 6 months.
- ▶ The \$500 million Working for Victoria initiative was designed to support communities and contribute to the state's ability to respond to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic by helping jobseekers find work and employers find those workers.

Human Resources

- ▶ 53 staff passed through the program to fill the 51 positions including 32 Buloke Shire residents and a further 13 from neighboring shires.
- ▶ 3 internal staff were given official roles in delivery of the program as well as many staff supporting the program in addition to their regular duties.
- ▶ **14 staff have since found employment with Council following the completion of the program and several others with other Councils.**



Business Support Team

- ▶ **Objective:** Enable Council to contribute to the Economic Recovery throughout the Buloke Shire by providing support to business recovery and continued investment and economic attraction within Buloke communities.
- ▶ **Key Role:** To engage with Buloke Businesses throughout the COVID-19 pandemic to provide support, working collaboratively with business, community groups, other Council departments, State Government bodies and all other business stakeholders.

Work closely with Buloke Businesses during restrictions, recovery to provide tools, resources and referrals. This included wellbeing checks for owners and their businesses, financially assisting with grants/funding packages available as well as COVID Safe Plans.

Business Support Team

- ▶ Business Support Calling Program
- ▶ Food Handling Permits assistance
- ▶ Footpath Trading Permits assistance
- ▶ Outdoor Eating assistance
- ▶ Business Data Base development
- ▶ Social Media campaigns
- ▶ Buy Buloke website and campaign delivery
- ▶ Streetscapes project work
- ▶ Housing Survey Development



Community Wellbeing Team

- ▶ Assisted community with being COVID Safe.

This included face-to-face meetings, phone conversations and emails. The team assisted in the development of well over 60 COVID Safe Plans across the Shire and had many more informal conversations around the importance on being COVID safe and the key elements to consider when planning an event or holding a meeting.

- ▶ COVID -19 Support
- ▶ Buloke Shire Council Calendar
- ▶ Community Directory
- ▶ Relief and Recovery Plan
- ▶ Impact Discussion Paper
- ▶ Community Support Meetings
- ▶ Reusable Facemask Program
- ▶ COVID Safe Planning Support
- ▶ Mallee Family Care Service Directory Updates



Media Support

- ▶ A Media Support Officer was employed to support Manager Customer Engagement (who took a leading role in delivery of the program) in general communication during the pandemic as well as conducting some project work and provide back up support to the Business Support Team.
- ▶ Some highlights of this role included:
 - ▶ Photographic library of each town and local businesses
 - ▶ An active role in the preparation of the Annual Report 2019/20
 - ▶ Biographies on each member of the Working for Victoria Program supported (in most cases) with on the job photography.

Outdoor Team

► Training

Working for Victoria staff completing their White Card training as well as training in such things as chainsaw safety, felling of trees, working at heights, traffic management and elevated working platform chemical handling and infection control. This was in addition to induction training and operational training requirements like bobcats, loaders and excavators.

► Tree Trimming Crew

A dedicated tree trimming crew undertook trimming and removal of dangerous and unwanted trees in many locations with a wood chipper (training provided) to mulch the timber and foliage. They also cleaned up a lot of fallen limbs.



Outdoor Team

► Drainage Crew

A full time drainage crew running for much of the program with works being completed on the rural and urban drainage running excavators, bobcats and trucks.

► Towns Crews

There were crews operating from each of the five larger towns, undertaking their own program of works as well as assisting the workforce in each town. Extra cleaning shifts were undertaken for all the public toilets and lake amenities during this period.



Outdoor Team Tasks

- ▶ Treatment of wheel cactus
- ▶ Assisting in slashing program and
- ▶ New seats and gravel on path of Scilleys Island
- ▶ Windblown litter clean up at all Landfill's and transfer stations
- ▶ Soft fall replacements at playgrounds
- ▶ Garden bed reinvigoration
- ▶ Unused spaces turned to easy to maintain garden areas
- ▶ Pressure washing of pool buildings and furniture
- ▶ Birchip office flag poles painted



Outdoor Team Tasks (continued)

- ▶ Clearing table drains
- ▶ Painting of Golden Grain Museum
- ▶ Paving works
- ▶ Road line marking
- ▶ Grader team support (allowing all 6 graders to operate)
- ▶ Pool season opening assistance
- ▶ Building Maintenance
- ▶ Wycheproof Saleyards maintenance
- ▶ Cutting up mattresses for recycling



Program Support

- ▶ In addition to the 4 internal staff who were given official roles in delivery of the project, the impact on incumbent staff to ensure the success of the program and the experience of the staff employed was immense.
- ▶ Human Resources, Finance, Payroll, ICT and Management teams all absorbed the extra burden into their work plans in delivering a beneficial program for the betterment of others.
- ▶ From recruiting to onboarding to providing satisfying work for the staff, it was been significant heavy lifting from many staff across the program.
- ▶ **Administrative support**
 - ▶ During the program there were staff employed to directly help ease the burden on incumbent staff in catering for an extra fifty employees. Staff were employed in Human Resources, Payroll and ICT as well as extra team leaders being appointed within outdoor crews.