



“From the GM’s Desk” 4th February 2016



The next meeting of the Far Western Initiative Advisory Committee (FWIAC) will be held in Wentworth on the 6th April 2016. The meeting was rescheduled from the allocated date of the 9th March with the major catalyst for the change being the fact the 9th March is a parliamentary sitting day and the Minister would be unable to attend.

The Minister has apparently expressed a strong interest in being able to attend the next meeting of the FWIAC.

As an indication on just how vast the area being considered for the Far West Initiative actually is the trip to Wentworth from Lightning Ridge for Walgett Mayor David Lane is 1191 kilometres each way and will take around 13 hours with no allowance for any significant stops. Bourke Shire Mayor Andrew Lewis it is only 980 kilometres or around ten (10) hours excluding stops.

There will also be a teleconference on the 11th March 2016 involving all members of the Far West Initiative Advisory Committee.

In the rate notices that have been posted out this week there is a brochure which has been produced by the Department of Premier and Cabinet that outlines their concept of the Far West Initiative. Copies of the brochure are also available from Council’s Offices and the Library.

It is my understanding that tenders for the provision of an air service to Bourke and Walgett from Dubbo closed on Tuesday, 2nd February. Four (4) companies who submitted expressions of interest were selected to submit tenders. While the determination of the successful tenderer will take some time, all being well it is hoped to have an air service operational by the middle of 2016 which would be a tremendous boost to the tourism industry and visiting service providers including health professionals.

Work has commenced on Council’s Operational Plan for 2016/2017, which is primarily the annual budget. To ensure Council gets input into the budget it will be undertaking a series of village and town meetings. The schedule for the meetings and times and venues is again contained within an advertisement in today’s edition of the “Western Herald”.

Should any individual or organisation wish to submit a proposal for funding or suggestions in relation to projects for inclusion in the budget or an amendment to the current service levels they are encouraged to do so by 19th February 2016.

Councillors and staff are often asked questions in relation to the progress of the construction of the proposed abattoir and the likely time for it to open. There are a number of steps in the approval

process and one of those is the completion of an Environmental Impact Statement and this is currently underway. Plans are still on track for the completion of the approvals process by May this year with construction proposed to commence shortly thereafter.

The proponents CAPRA have previously indicated their desire to be operational in 2017 and this remains their target.

The flow in the Darling has meant that water restrictions for Bourke and North Bourke were able to be lifted.

There are reports of good flows upstream so hopefully there will be no need for water restrictions for the rest of the summer. Council staff will continue to monitor the water situation and will ensure that everyone is aware of any change of circumstances.

While restrictions have been lifted residents are still reminded of the need to be “water wise” and use water efficiently.

On Tuesday, 9th February there will be a meeting of the Local Emergency Management Committee (LEMC) at the Rural Fire Service Building at the Airport. The meeting provides the opportunity for all the local emergency agencies to get together to share information, provide updates to available resources and also hear from the Regional Coordinator. The meetings form a critical component to the preparedness and ability of the agencies to respond to emergencies that may occur.

Council would like to advise the Office, Depot, Library, Back O’ Bourke Exhibition Centre, Waste Management Facility and Roads and Maritime Services will be **closed** until **10.30am, TOMORROW** (Friday, 5th February) to allow staff to attend an important component of a Staff Training and Health and Well-Being Day.

I apologise for the minor inconvenience that may be incurred.

The conduct of the Local Government Elections scheduled for September 16 this year although this is still to be confirmed.

There are number of options being considered, however, the Government has indicated that at this stage Councils not subject to merger proposals going to the polls a planned in September 2016 for a full four (4) year term, with any merging Councils going to the polls in March 2017 for a three and a half (3½) year term.

At the meeting of the Town and Village Committee of Council held on Tuesday, 2nd February 2016 the Following recommendations were made by the Committee for approval at the February Meeting of Council:-

1. That the repairs to the decking on the Bourke Wharf be included in the 2016/2017 Operational Plan
2. That the additional mooring location for the Jandra be included in the 2016/2017 Operational Plan

3. That the ongoing maintenance of the Enngonia Oval be discussed at the Enngonia Village Community Meeting
 4. That Council continues to lobby for funding to raise the height of the existing Bourke Weir.
 5. That Council seek funding to evaluate a proposal to build a new weir upstream of the existing weir.
 6. That whilst supportive in principle of the concept of the creation of “a Big Splashe” can by the painting a water tower Council is unable to commit an allocation of funds to the proposal but will continue to assisting in the facilitation of the project if required.
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Now the new school term has commenced we would no doubt see several new faces around our community and on behalf of Bourke Shire Council I would like to welcome each of the new residents to Bourke and trust your stay within the community is enjoyable.

Council in conjunction with Bourke Rotary Club will again be looking to host a “Welcome to Bourke Function in March”. The planned function last year was abandoned due to the lack of registrations.

Watch this space for details of the Welcome to Bourke events.

Ticket sales for the opening night of the Wonderland Theatre have gone on sale with a strong response already being received. The temporary re-opening has caused a lot of interest and nostalgia from both Bourke and beyond. I am sure that the re-opening will give a number of the younger generation their first theatre experience and for others it will be a reminder of the era during which the Saturday night pictures were a very important part of the weekly social calendar.

The Fred Hollows Foundation Board and Executive will be in Bourke next Thursday, 11th February to mark the 40th anniversary of the National Trachoma and Eye Health Program. Professor Fred Hollows pioneered much of the work in this field and did much of this early work in Western New South Wales. As well as holding a small memorial for Professor Hollows there will also be discussions with local health providers.

Bourke Rotary Club will later this month host a Group Study Exchange team from Taiwan. The tour will showcase the diversity of the Rotary district which goes from Newcastle to Bourke and Cobar including Dubbo and Mudgee. The visitors from Taiwan will experience urban, rural and remote life in Australia. The visitors will be hosted by Rotary members during their visit to Bourke.

Quote of the Week!

“If you have a positive attitude and constantly strive to give your best effort, eventually you will overcome your immediate problems and find you are ready for greater challenges”

Pat Riley

Ross Earl
General Manager