



“From the GM’s Desk” 7th April 2016



Councillors and staff send sincere condolences to Mayor Andrew Lewis and his family on the sad passing of his father, Donald Lewis who passed away in Gulgong on Tuesday, 5th April 2016.

The NSW Government has recently announced that from 1st July 2017 an Emergency Services Property Levy (ESPL) will be collected by Councils from ratepayers in addition to their normal rates. This levy will be used to fund the Rural Fire Service, NSW Fire and Rescue and NSW State Emergency Services (NSW SES).

There is considerable merit in aspects of this proposal, in particular getting rid of the current Emergency Services Levy (ESL) that applies to all insurance policies meaning even those who do not insure, will be making a contribution to the important Emergency Services functions provided in our communities via this new levy.

However, at this stage Councils will still have to pay their current 11.7% Emergency Services Levy plus will now have to pay the new Emergency Services Property Levy on all Council owned property. LGNSW is making representations to the NSW Treasurer and Minister for Police and Emergency Services to abolish the Emergency Services Levy on Councils who will already be contributing.

Bourke Shire Council moved a motion at the 2016 Annual Conference of the Western Division Shire seeking LGNSW to clarify with the State Government on exactly how the system will work and any financial impact on Councils with some of the suggestions being made by LGNSW including

- Councils being able to fully recover costs associated with the collection function;
- The Emergency Services Property Levy being shown separately from Councils rates, clearly itemised and identified as a NSW Government levy;
- Council rates having priority over the Emergency Services Property Levy in debt recovery; and
- Councils not having to bear the risk of non-payment (liability remaining with the property owner).

Councils across the state can see the equity of everyone contributing to the emergency levy but do not want to see local Government being faced with yet another administrative burden and “cost shift”.

The ongoing dry conditions has meant that there has been no substantive rainfalls in the catchment of the Byrock town storage facility and as a result the water level has dropped to a point where it is no longer able to be pumped and as such Council has once again commenced carting water to supply the Byrock Village.

Carting started last Saturday and will continue until such time that there is sufficient water in the storage to allow pumping from that source to re-commence.

Residents utilizing the Byrock village supply are reminded that the carted water is for internal use only and that water supply is non-potable. Enquiries in relation to the water supply should be directed to Council's Water and Waste Water Department.

Seniors Week kicked off last Sunday with a barbeque lunch being hosted by Bourke Shire Council and the CWA with other activities continuing throughout the week.

The activities for Senior's Week within the Shire are generously supported by a number of organisations within the Bourke community and it is great to see many of the seniors able to attend and enjoy the various functions held. There has again been a good attendance at the activities to date with activities continuing today at Bowling Club with a lunch and entertainment; Friday there is a mystery tour, with the final event being on Sunday, 10th with a BBQ lunch hosted by Bourke Rotary Club and Bourke Far West again at Renshaw Oval.

The emergency landing incident that occurred at the Bourke Airport last Thursday evening highlighted the benefit of having Emergency Procedures in place and able to be activated in cases of such emergencies. Fortunately, in this incident everything went relatively smoothly, with the pilot able to land despite the nose wheel not being able to be lowered and there was relatively minor damage to the plane itself. The activation of emergency procedures meant that all the required services were on site and properly equipped to handle the emergency situation. Thank you to all the members of the services who responded so quickly and also to Council's Acting Airport Manager, Matthew McCorkle who handled his role as if he had years of such experience. Incidents such as this also need to be notified to the relevant Authorities and procedures put in place to close the airport to all air traffic and the coordination of such procedures, particularly at night, can be both difficult and stressful.

A de-brief of the response to the incident will be held to ensure that all agencies are happy with the response and that the Airport Emergency Plan provided adequate guidance. The de-brief will enable any shortcomings to be identified and rectified.

The news that the Bourke Show Committee was successful in being awarded the kitchen used for cooking demonstrations at the Royal Easter Show was very well received and will benefit the whole Bourke Community. The kitchen and appliances are valued at over \$30,000.00 and will be a vast improvement over the current facilities. One of the strong points of the Bourke Show Committee's application was the support shown by the other users groups. This spirit of cooperation between the user groups is evident in the working bees conducted at the Renshaw Oval Complex and the readiness and willingness to share facilities. The complex has seen a tremendous "makeover" during the last eighteen (18) months and the ongoing improvements will lead to increased utilization of the complex and with that increased utilization should come increased revenue to the ongoing maintenance.

It was good to see the opening function for seniors week held at the lunch pavilion at Renshaw Oval.

From a Committee that was forced to go into recess only two (2) years ago due to lack of numbers the Bourke Show Committee has come back with renewed vigor and enthusiasm with a number of new committee members and additional attractions for the Annual Bourke Show. The Committee led by President Scott Mitchell has a great blend of experienced members and importantly a number of younger members who will be at the forefront of the ongoing success of the Bourke Show over the next few years. The Annual Show is one of the great community social events in most country towns and brings together people from all sections of our community and the various pavilions and displays provide an opportunity for our talented local handicraft enthusiasts, gardeners and other groups to showcase their talents.

The Bourke Show is on Saturday week, 16th April and I urge everyone to get down and support the Show Committee for all the hard work they put in, not just during the week prior to the Show itself but in the twelve (12) months leading up to the event.

~~Mayor, Cr Andrew Lewis and~~ I joined with representatives from the other members of the Far West Initiative Advisory Committee (FWIAC) and observers at a meeting in Wentworth on Wednesday, 6th April 2016 (yesterday). The meeting was also attended by the Minister for Local Government, the Hon. Paul Toole, MP.

During a meeting of the FWIAC held via teleconference on the 11th March 2016, Michelle Roberson, Associate Director, Institute for Public Policy and Governance, University of Technology, Sydney gave a presentation and provided an overview of the potential models for governance in Far West NSW.

UTS had been retained by the Department of Premier and Cabinet to development models for consideration of their possible suitability for implementation in the Far West and these models and other information pertaining to things like improved service delivery will be included in a "Discussion Paper" to be released in the second half of the year.

The Wentworth meeting focussed on an analysis of each of the models.

The next meeting of Council will be held on Monday, 18th April at 9.00am in the Council Chambers 29 Mitchell Street Bourke. The scheduled meeting date, the 25th April, being of course ANZAC Day.

Quote of the week!

"Spending today complaining about yesterday won't make tomorrow any better"

Ross Earl
General Manager