



“From the GM’s Desk” 11th February 2016



The Mayor, Cr Andrew Lewis accepted an invitation from Cr Denis Cook, Mayor of Murweh Shire Council based in Charleville, Queensland to meet with him to discuss the construction of the proposed abattoir in Bourke. The meeting was held in Cunnamulla and was also attended by the Mayor of Cunnamulla, Cr Lindsay Godfrey in his capacity as Chair of the South West Regional Economic Development Board.

The Manager of Tourism and Development, Phil Johnston and I both accompanied the Mayor to the meeting, whilst the General Managers of the other two Shires were also in attendance.

Charleville has an abattoir processing goats and indicated that there were some concerns that there may not be enough goats available to supply both facilities.

Mayor, Cr Lewis indicated that the export of goat meat was in a period of growth and if there was a consistency of demand and prices that there would be a greater emphasis by farmers on goat production to satisfy that increased demand. He indicated that Bourke Council and the Bourke community are extremely supportive of the proposal.

The recent rain has had a tremendous positive impact on the town with all the parks and gardens looking very fresh and green. The availability of water in the river should mean that the town is again well presented for the Easter weekend.

While Council staff will do their best to ensure the town is showcased to its best advantage it would be a great help if residents could mow their nature strips and ensure that their yards are neat and tidy.

The development of the Far West Initiative is progressing slowly and General Managers of each of the impacted Councils had the opportunity to receive an update from representatives from the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) last Friday.

Each of the Councils have been invited to submit details of existing models of the collaboration amongst Councils which may be factored in to a “discussion Paper” being prepared by DPC and will hopefully be released early in the new financial year.

There will be a teleconference held on the 11th March 2016 for all members of the Far West Initiative Advisory Committee (FWIAC) and this should provide all members of that Advisory Committee an indication of all current developments in relation to the work being undertaken in the formation of the FWI.

The Mayor, Cr Andrew Lewis, Manager of Corporate Services, Leonie Brown, Manager of Tourism and Development, Phil Johnston and I travelled to Dubbo on Monday to meet with representatives of CAPRA Pty Ltd, the proponents of the abattoir. They updated us in regard to the development of the Environmental Impact Statement and its various components and to review the schedule of works proposed. Council has received a grant for the provision of the enabling infrastructure and it is critical that all works are carried out in accordance with a pre-determined schedule.

The Council staff Health and Wellbeing day was very successful and I think was beneficial and appreciated by those staff in attendance. I would like to thank the team from Bourke Community Health who were up early to undertake basic health checks on the staff and if necessary referred them to follow up consultations. Speakers from Local Government Superannuation, The United Services Union, the Anti- Discrimination Board and AWI Consulting who spoke on depression awareness were well received. In addition we had a number of “in house presentations” on how Council is functioning and detail aspects of the development of the budget and some of the projects that will be undertaken in the next few months including the work on the airport and the completion the bridge replacement program.

Mayor, Cr Andrew Lewis and I updated the staff as best we could on the Local Government Reform Process and were also available for a Question and Answer session in relation to any queries staff members may have had.

As part of this year’s Back to Bourke Weekend there will again be a parade and the Wool Bale Rolling competition which was successful last year. Bourke Rotary Club will again be coordinating both events and details in relation to both events, including times, registration will be finalised shortly.

Organisations and businesses are encouraged to put in a float or other entry. Enquires can be directed to Phil Johnston at Council’s Offices.

The Fred Hollows Foundation Board and Executive are in Bourke today, 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.

Residents may have noticed that Council has had some works done on the wharf recently to ensure the ongoing structural integrity of wharf. The work has been undertaken by contractors and has been successfully completed.

Member for Parkes, Mark Coulton will be meeting with Council on the 16th February as part of his ongoing visitation to his vast electorate which will only get bigger following the recent confirmation of the Electoral Boundary Changes.

I will be travelling to Dubbo on Friday, 19th February to attend the meeting of the General Manager's Advisory Committee which serves as an advisory body to the Orana Regional Organisation of Councils (OROC). There is a reasonably full agenda and the ongoing Local Government Reform Process will be one of the topics to be discussed.

Council staff members are currently investigating opportunities for funding to improve the flood levee around Louth. There is a round of funding available at the moment and the eligibility criteria are currently being assessed.

Residents in the villages and rural areas are reminded of the village tours that will take place next week. Times dates and location are listed below:-

- 9.00am – 11.00am Tuesday, 16th February - Louth Village Meeting at the Louth Tennis Shed
 - 1.30pm – 3.30pm, Tuesday, 16th February - Wanaaring Village Meeting at the Wanaaring Hall
 - 6.00pm – 8.00pm, Wednesday, 17th February – Bourke Community Meeting at the Council Chambers
 - 9.00am – 11.00am, Thursday, 18th February - Enngonia Village Meeting at the Enngonia CWA Hall
 - 1.00pm – 3.00pm, Thursday, 18th February - Fords Bridge Village Meeting at the Warrego Hotel
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On the evening of the 17th February Council staff will be meeting with representatives from the team responsible for the coordination of the 2016 census. The Census will be held on the 9th August 2016.

The Census team will be traveling through the area looking to keep the communities informed on the process.

The 2016 Census will be Australia's first Census where more than two thirds of Australia's population (more than 15 million people) are expected to complete the Census online in August 2016.

New delivery and collection procedures will make it easier to complete the Census online. In the lead up to 9th August, households will receive a letter from the ABS, addressed 'To the Resident', including a unique login and instructions on how to complete the Census online.

Completing the Census online will be fast, easy, secure, environmentally friendly, and help to reduce the cost of the Census to the community.

Paper forms can be requested where needed and must be completed and returned in the Reply Paid envelope provided without delay.

The ABS needs the support of everyone in Australia on 9th August this year to make the Census a success. Everyone in Australia is encouraged to participate and take advantage of the fast, easy and secure online option.

Quote of the Week!

“The expert in anything was once a beginner”

Ross Earl
General Manager