



“From the GM’s Desk” 14th April 2016



During the elections for the Board Members for Local Government NSW (LGNSW) held in conjunction with the Annual Conference in October last year an anomaly was detected with one Council incorrectly having its votes recoded in the Regional/ Rural Section instead of the Metropolitan/ Urban section. LGNSW asked the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) to conduct an inquiry immediately after the election and as a result of that enquiry the matter went to the Federal Court of Australia and the Federal Court made a determination as to the validity of the election results. It should be noted that positions of President and Treasurer were unaffected.

The Court has declared the election of 13 board members void and that a fresh vote is to be conducted by a secret postal ballot. The vacant positions are:

- Vice President Metropolitan/Urban
- Vice President Rural/Regional
- 11 directors (6 x Rural/Regional, 5 x Metropolitan/Urban)

The Federal Court has also determined that three (3) other directors would not be impacted by the irregularity because of the size of their respective primary votes.

As such, until the new election is conducted the Board of LGNSW comprises: President, Cr Keith Rhoades; Treasurer, Cr Scott Bennison, and directors: Cr Mazhar Hadid, Cr Leo Kelly, and Cr Ben Shields.

The Court has determined that the only candidates eligible for these positions in the postal ballot are those who stood for them in 2015.

LGNSW is now liaising with the AEC to determine the earliest possible date for the ballot and hope the whole process will be complete by the end of June.

The Local Government Election for those Councils not involved in the current merger proposals, including all those Councils who have been identified as being part of the Far West Initiative will be held on the 10th September 2016 as provided for in legislation.

The primary source of information for candidates and groups is www.votensw.info

All the relevant registration information and forms needed by candidates and groups are available on that website. On the website there will be a series of presentations candidates can view and listen to which outline all of the relevant information, requirements and key dates.

The NSWEC is not undertaking face-to-face candidate seminars. The online presentations replace the face-to-face seminars.

The Bourke Show is on this Saturday and I urge everyone to get down to Renshaw Oval and support this community based event. A quick review of the program reveals something for everyone, no matter what their age or interest.

Seniors Week concluded last Sunday with a luncheon hosted by Bourke Rotary and Far West.

From all reports the week long activities were well received by all those who had the opportunity to attend. The ability of Bourke to be able to host such events is testimony to the generosity of the business houses and organisations within the town.

There was a great spirit of cooperation shown amongst all agencies and organisations culminating in a very successful week.

Available Councillors and senior staff members had the opportunity to meet with Member for Barwon Kevin Humphries on Tuesday afternoon, Kevin is utilising the parliamentary recess to visit a wide section of his vast electorate.

A number of issues were raised with Kevin including the return of air services, health services, road funding and funding for village water supplies.

Council is fortunate that both our local members take the time to speak informally to Council representatives to update them on issues impacting on both Council and the residents.

Mr Humphries will be back in Bourke next Wednesday with former Assistant New South Wales Police Commissioner, Steve Bradshaw to meet with landowners affected by rural trespass. This meeting is one of several being conducted across the Barwon Electorate.

The Bourke Meeting will be held at the Bourke Council Chambers at 3.00pm and is scheduled to finish at 5.00pm.

I attended the meeting of the Far West Initiative Advisory Committee (FWIAC) held in Wentworth last Wednesday. The meeting was attended by all eight (8) Councils in the Far West Initiative, plus representatives from the State and Federal Governments and the NGO sector.

The Minister for Local Government was in attendance for the day-long meeting which was focused on a review of a number of models that had been suggested as potentially suitable for the Far West going forward.

There is still considerable amount of work to be done in the establishment of the Far West Initiative.

Level 1 Water restrictions for Bourke and North Bourke are now in place with the water having ceased flowing over the weir last Thursday.

Level 1 Water Restrictions means:-

- The use of fixed sprinklers is limited to two (2) hours per day either between the hours of 6.00am to 8.00am or 6.00pm to 8.00pm daily.
- Hand held sprinklers can still be used at other times.
- The washing of paved areas and filling of new swimming pools is prohibited

The cooperation of all residents in abiding by the restrictions would be very much appreciated.

Watering of Councils parks and Oval will also be restricted but will be undertaken outside the hours detailed to provide for maximum pressure for other users.

The next ordinary meeting of Council will be held on Monday, 18th April at 9.00am in the Council Chambers, 29 Mitchell Street Bourke.

All members of the public who wish to do so, can attend the public forum scheduled for 10.00am. While bookings are not necessary it does provide the opportunity for staff to be able to provide any background material or supporting documentation that may be required.

Work is progressing on the commissioning of the pipeline from Walkden's Bore to the water treatment plant. While the bore has been operational for a few years and the pipeline installed for a few months, work was still required on the infrastructure along the pipeline to ensure that the water is able to travel along the fourteen kilometres at the required flow of one (1) megalitre per day.

The contactors have been on site for around three (3) weeks now and anticipating a handover early in the next financial year. Funding for the project was made available by the State Government.

On Sunday, Renshaw Oval was a hive of activity with the Senior Citizen's Luncheon, the Bourke Show Committee Working Bee and Pony Club all having a number of people in attendance. It is good to see the complex being utilised as it is a very well equipped recreational precinct and with the increased patronage the opportunity exists for further improvement.

The area lends itself to a number of uses with good floodlighting already in place, bar facilities, toilets and ample grassed areas. The installation of the new kitchen awarded to the Bourke Show Committee will further enhance these facilities.

I will be involved in another teleconference tomorrow to try and finalise the procurement of video conferencing facilities for the eight (8) Councils involved in the Far West Initiative. At the Meeting of the Far West Initiative Advisory Committee (FWIAC) held in Wentworth the Minister for Local Government reinforced his commitment to make this project a reality as soon as possible. The working party are hopeful that the facilities will be installed before the end of the financial year.

Those from the North of the State who drove to Wentworth obtained an appreciation of the distances involved across the FWI area. The installation of the video conference facilities will not only reduced travelling for those involved in the FWIAC but also lends itself to a much more effective communication when dealing with Sydney based Departments and organisation.

Quote of the week!

*Great minds discuss ideas, average minds discuss events; small minds discuss people! –
Eleanor Roosevelt*

Ross Earl
General Manager