



“From the GM’s Desk” 29th January 2015



Happy New Year to all residents of Bourke Shire Council and I trust 2015 is a good year for all.

2015 promises to be a very busy year with some significant changes being considered for Local Government in New South Wales. The changes being mooted are a result of the Final Report of the Independent Local Government Review Panel and the Local Government Acts Taskforce and the NSW Government’s response to those reports.

Bourke Shire Council are monitoring all the options that are being considered and have been active in attending all the seminars and information sessions that have been held in respect of the proposed changes.

All Councils with the exception of the eight (8) Councils earmarked to go into the Far Western Initiative (Balranald, Bourke, Brewarrina, Broken Hill, Central Darling, Cobar, Walgett and Wentworth) have been asked to prepare a “Fit for the Future “proposal which is due for submission by the 30th June 2015. Despite it being optional, Bourke Shire Council will be preparing a “Fit for the Future Proposal” to ensure it continues to keep all options open.

Everything is on track for the Back to Bourke celebrations to be held over the Easter long weekend and the organisers have put together an impressive programme. One of the marquee events planned is the Bourke Race meeting which is nearing final approval and it should be all systems go from this point as there is only ten (10) weeks before the event.

The Australia Day Ceremony and award Presentation was held on Monday and was well attended. The Australian Day Ambassador, Jon Dee was an excellent speaker and had some interesting things to communicate to the crowd. He has certainly received a great deal in an effort to enhance environmental sustainability.

The award winners were:-

Young Sportsperson of the Year - Jaxson Tiffen

Sportsperson of the Year - David Pickard

Community Service through Employment - Helen Keane

Emergency Services Volunteer - Karen Keuning

Citizen of the Year - Margo Grimes

Once again there was a high standard of nominations for the various awards and each of the recipients was a very worthy winner.

Water Restrictions for the townships of Bourke and North Bourke were lifted on Monday due to the current flow in the Darling River which has been boosted from the good flows in the Culgoa River. Additionally there have been some good flows in the upper reaches of the Barwon River and this should reach Bourke in around 10 days and hopefully keep the water flowing over the weir for a while yet.

Council will be conducting a tour of the village areas within the shire to give the residents of these areas the opportunity to meet Councillors and Senior Staff to discuss issues impacting on the residents of the villages and surrounding areas.

The timetable for the village tours appears in an advertisement in today's edition of the Western Herald.

At the meeting the opportunity will also be taken to further explain the current Local Government Reform Process and Bourke Shire Council's stance in relation to the process and in particular the options for Bourke.

Also on the agenda will be the preparation of the Operational Plan (Budget) for 2015/2016 and attendees will be able to have the opportunity to suggest items for inclusion, expansion or deletion from the Budget.

The Western Division Conference for 2015 will be held in Condobolin on the 22nd, 23rd and 24th February 2015 and at this stage will be attended by Mayor, Cr Andrew Lewis, Deputy Mayor, Cr Barry Hollman, Cr Cecil Dorrington and myself.

The civil works required as part of the development of the residential blocks at North Bourke is progressing well with the roads quickly taking shape. The works are being undertaken utilising Council staff and plant.

The removal of the fig trees has been part of an ongoing programme of Council for some time now and follows extensive discussion at Council on a number of occasions over the years.

Numerous requests for removal of the trees are received when the root system has infiltrated the sewer lines of properties and caused the sewer to block.

Whilst the trees provide good shade they in turn cause some significant problems in relation to infrastructure damage and impacts on the drainage around town not to mention the material dropped on a daily basis from the trees and the work involved in cleaning up that material.

The State Election will be held on the 21st March 2015 and whilst Bourke will remain in the Barwon Electorate, the electorate will see some major changes with the deletion of Moree and addition of Broken Hill among the most significant changes. At this stage there are three (3) candidates who have nominated for the seat including the current Member The Hon. Kevin Humphries, MP.

No doubt as the election campaign gains momentum we will have an opportunity to meet with each of the candidates locally.

There will be a meeting of the Local Emergency Management Meeting (LEMC) on the 3rd of February 2015 and one of the items on the agenda is the detailing of emergency evacuation centres for the Shire and providing a listing of the facilities which are available within each centre.

There are a number of plans that are reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure that the town and district is adequately prepared for any emergency situation that should arise. The LEMC brings together all the emergency services with the town and district.

Council has resolved to name the bridge over the Bogan River the Wayne O'Mally Bridge and in accordance with the protocol of the Roads and Maritime Services is required to advertise its intention to name the bridge. Residents who wish to provide any feedback on the proposal are invited to do so via a letter addressed to General Manager Bourke Shire Council PO Box 21 Bourke by Friday, 13th February 2015.

The annual welcome to Bourke Evening will be held at the Bourke Swimming Pool Complex on Wednesday the 11th March and a barbeque meal will be provided.

The evening is hosted by Bourke Shire Council in conjunction with Bourke Rotary Club.

All residents who have arrived in Bourke over the past few months are invited to attend and meet representatives from the various community and social groups from within Bourke.

Employers are encouraged to make any new employees aware of the function.

The community, sporting and social groups from within Bourke are invited to send a representative on the night so they can meet the new residents and outline the function of the various clubs.

New Residents and local groups are asked to contact Council's Community & Governance Officer, Letitia Tiffen by calling on 68308000 of their intention to attend so that catering can be finalised.

I have previously mentioned that the Back to Bourke Weekend will be an opportunity to showcase the town to ex-residents who may not have been back to Bourke for some time and Council will be making an effort to ensure that it's facilities are presented at their best.

I am asking ALL residents to assist by ensuring that their nature strips are mown and free from rubbish. Council will be holding two (2) "Tip Fee Free Days" prior to the weekend so that the unwanted material can be disposed of.

There are some items that a fee will still apply and the waiving of fees does not apply to commercial activities.

Work on the Mertin Street Sewer Well should start next week with the contractors already having some material onsite. The work will involve a major reconstruction of the current facility and the work will cost in excess of 1.2 million dollars and is expected to take around six months.

Work on the new Pre-School in Gorrell Avenue will commence in around two (2) weeks and again the construction period will be around six (6) months.

Work on the Cuttaburra Bridge is progressing well will the contractor undertaking work "off-site" and should be transporting the components to Bourke in a few weeks.

Council is still waiting advice from Western Area Health regarding proposed visits to Bourke by that organisation to discuss the current status and alternatives being proposed in relation to birthing facilities in Bourke.

The process has seen some inordinate delays and resulted in the loss of medical practitioners from our town and hopefully we see a suitable resolution early this year.

Ross Earl
General Manager