



“From the GM’s Desk” 5th March 2015



Next Wednesday will see the Western District Area Health Service conduct their community consultation in relation to the re-establishment of birthing facilities at Bourke Multipurpose Centre.

The meeting is scheduled for 10.30am to 1.00pm at the Bourke Bowling Club and will be attended by a number of Senior Executives from the Western Area Health including Scott McLaughlin, the Chief Executive Officer, Clayton Spencer, the Director of Medical Services and Joy Adams, Director Nursing and Midwifery.

It is important from a local perspective that we have a strong presence as we need to demonstrate the community’s desire to see the re-establishment of birth services and equally important to make it clear to the Western Area Health that the residents of Bourke and District want continued access to a full range of medical services.

The Village Tours and Community Consultation will continue today with Fords Bridge in the morning and Enngonia at lunchtime.

The meetings at Wanaaring and Louth were held on Tuesday and yesterday at lunchtime it was Byrock with Bourke in the evening.

At both the Wanaaring and Louth meetings two (2) of the major areas of concern were roads and telecommunication issues and in particular the lack of mobile phone service.

The meetings were very constructive and were of value to both Council representatives and the various communities.

The construction of the Mertin Street Sewer Pump Station started last week with the contractor being Lucas Constructions.

The first steps in the project will be the installation of a by-pass system which will be followed by the removal of the old buildings. The job will take approximately twenty six weeks.

The reconstruction of the Mertin Street Well follows the work done on the Warraweena Street pump Station in 2012.

The Emergency Water supply for Bourke via Walkden's Bore will get a step closer to finalisation with the installation of an additional 8 kilometres of pipeline added to the existing 6 kilometres which will see the pipeline reach North Bourke Oval. Work will then be undertaken on getting the pipeline to the Water Treatment Plant. The project has been made possible via a \$2.5 million dollar grant from the State Government.

The Member for Barwon, the Hon. Kevin Humphries, MP made a visit to Bourke yesterday and met with the Mayor, Cr Andrew Lewis on a number of issues relevant to Bourke.

The March Council Meeting is scheduled for Monday, 23rd March at 9.00am in the Council Chambers Mitchell Street Bourke and at this Meeting Council will consider the Operational Plan (Budget) for 2015/2016.

Work is well advanced on the preparation of the budget which will go to a Meeting of Council's Corporate Services Committee for an initial review on the 16th March 2015. This meeting will commence at 1.00pm.

The meeting will be preceded by a meeting of the Town and Village Committee with this meeting having been deferred from the 12th February due to the absence of a number of Councillors.

As in previous years the 2015/2016 Budget is extremely **tight** with the increase in costs in many instances outstripping the level of allowable rate increase and other sources of income.

Every effort will be made to ensure that the level of service that is currently provided will be maintained and the management team are constantly looking at methods of improving productivity and reducing costs.

The new valuations will mean some adjustment to the rating depending on the level of increases in the various areas across the Shire.

Council has taken delivery of the new Street Sweeper that was put into action this week. The Street Sweeper has played a very important role in ensuring that the presentation of Bourke is to a high standard with the gutters free from rubbish and leaves etc. Council will be looking to dispose of the existing Street sweeper by the most advantageous method and have looked at the sale by auction or perhaps the sale to another Council.

The Welcome to Bourke night is scheduled for the 11th March and all newcomers to Bourke are invited to come along and meet with Council and community representatives. Members of the various sporting and social clubs will be on hand to provide information about their clubs and will no doubt be keen to recruit new members. If you are intending to attend, it would be appreciated if you could contact Letitia Tiffen, Council's Community & Governance Officer on 68308000 so that catering can be arranged.

Catering on the night will be by the Bourke Rotary Club and Council is grateful for the ongoing support that Rotary gives to the event.

I have been speaking to Jon Dee regarding the "One Tree per Child" initiative and he is keen to launch the concept in Bourke very shortly. Jon arrived back from Bristol in the United Kingdom where he launched the program, with Bristol Council looking to plant 36,000 trees.

The response in Bourke and the village schools has been extremely encouraging and I took the opportunity to detail the concept to some of the principals at the village schools during our visit earlier this week and will catch the balance over the next few days.

Annette and I travelled to Cootamundra on the weekend to attend the 60th birthday party of good friend Cathy Tolmie and it was great to join with her and husband Steve, children James, Sarah and Jock and family and friends for the occasion. It was amazing the number of people who were at the party who had some sort of connection with Bourke with a number of guests having friends here or went to school with someone from the Bourke District.

Well done to the **Roads and Maritime Services** for installing the flashing lights in the school zones in Bourke last week. This initiative will certainly improve the level of safety around our schools and hopefully reduced the incidence of unintended breaches of the speed limit.

Don't forget the "Fee Free Tip Days" to be held on both Saturday, 14th and Saturday, 28th March 2015 to assist residents who will take the opportunity to clean up their yards prior to the Back to Bourke Weekend over Easter. There are some exceptions to the items able to be dumped free of charge with a charge still applying to tyres, asbestos, chemicals, liquid waste, building and commercial waste.

Expressions of interest for the establishment of an air service to service Bourke and Walgett have been called and I am hopeful that these will result in the early appointment of an operator who is able to provide an air service to this part of the state.

Council is continuing its efforts to try and re-establish a recycling service to Bourke; however, it seems the cost of transport is a significant impediment. There have been a few possibilities identified that may provide some assistance and Council will continue to follow up on these leads.

Council staff, volunteers and a work crew from Murdi Paaki Regional Enterprise Corporation (MPREC) have undertaken a lot of work in and around the Renshaw Oval Complex in preparation firstly for the Back to Bourke Race Meeting and secondly the Bourke Show and with the availability of water the whole area is starting to look very good and should be well presented for both occasions.

The team from MRPEC have also doing some work at the Back O' Bourke Exhibition Centre and their assistance is very much appreciated.

There continues to be a good flow in the River and this should continue for some time yet which is great news.

To ensure that the flow reaches the Menindee Lakes and is then able to provide a guarantee of water for Broken Hill has meant that the irrigators are not able at this stage to access any water. The water level in Menindee Lakes has reduced to a critical level with only around six (6) months of water remaining for the city of Broken Hill should no further inflows be received.

Senior Citizens Week activities will commence on the 15th March and a full week of activities have been planned. I would suggest that anyone who would like to participate in any of the activities planned for the week have a look at the program which was in last weeks "Western Herald" and again repeated in todays paper.

Ross Earl
General Manager