



“From the GM’s Desk” 19th March 2015



The first of the “Fee Free Tip Days” was held last Saturday the 14th March 2015 and the next “Fee Free Tip Day “ is scheduled for the 28th March 2015 just prior to the Back to Bourke weekend.

There was a good response to the tip free day with a number of people taking advantage of the opportunity to get rid of their household rubbish free of charge.

Whilst there is generally no fees applicable on the day there are some minor exceptions, with a charge still applying to tyres, asbestos, chemicals, liquid waste, building and commercial waste.

Senior Citizens Week activities commenced last Sunday with a luncheon at the Back O’ Bourke Exhibition Centre hosted by members of the Local Lions Club in conjunction with the Bourke CWA.

A number of other activities have also been held and there are still plenty of activities remaining including the dinner at the Back O’ Bourke Centre next Sunday hosted by Bourke Rotary and Red Cross.

Together with the Mayor, Cr Andrew Lewis, Cs, Sarah Barton, Victor Bartley and Jack Bennett, Manager of Tourism and Development, Phil Johnston and Manager of Corporate Services, Leonie Brown and I attended the meeting convened by Western Area Health to discuss the future of the birthing Unit at Bourke Hospital. It was clear that a return to a Birthing Unit with a full range of procedural services will not occur with the most likely option being a mid-wife led service details of which are yet to be determined.

One of the concerns that now should be highlighted is the fact with the removal of the requirement for the organisations submitting tenders for the Visiting Medical Officers Services (VMO) to provide a full range of maternity services also means the removal of the need to have the services of an anaesthetist as is currently the case. Without the presence of a locally based doctor with anaesthetic skills it will certainly limit the scope and range of medical services in town particularly those of a surgical nature. We are indeed fortunate to have such skills currently available and it would advantageous for those skills to remain in the community and be able to be utilised on a regular basis.

Those at the meeting highlighted the cost of travel to Dubbo and elsewhere for treatment together with the cost of accommodation and whilst accepting that IPTAAS funding does provide some assistance towards those costs it falls well short of meeting the substantial cost of an extended stay away from home.

Health Services were one of the major concerns highlighted in the compilation of The Bourke Community Strategic Plan and Council will continue to advocate on behalf of the community to ensure that the highest level of care continues to remain available to the residents of the Shire.

It was good to see a good representation of mothers and mothers- to- be, attend the meeting and raise concerns with the Executive Team of Western Area Health.

The staff members at the Bourke Public Library are continuing to develop a display to mark the Centenary of Anzac Day which will be with us in a little over a month. They have received a number of contributions but would welcome others. If you have any old photographs or newspaper cuttings relating to the involvement of service personnel from Bourke that could be used in a display you might like to contact the Library Staff.

The staff at the library recognise that there may be sentimental value attached to a number of the items and as such will copy the article and immediately return the originals.

Work continues and is progressing well on the Mertin Street Pump Station and as mentioned previously the refurbishment will take approximately six months to complete.

The trenching works and laying of pipes from the existing pipes connecting Walden's Bore continues towards North Bourke. Work has been in progress for a little over a week and should take a total of around three (3) weeks to complete.

Work has also commenced and is on schedule on the new Pre- School building with work expected to be completed about the third term.

It is pleasing to note that the work on Poison Point Plain is completed which is news that would no doubt be welcomed by regular users of this part of the Shire Road network. Work is also well underway on the approaches to the Cuttaburra No.3 Bridge in preparation for the installation of the new bridge structure in a few weeks. The opportunity has been taken to slightly change the alignment of the road which will be welcomed by all users. The dry conditions meant that there has been plenty of work for the water carts.

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.

The Council will have the opportunity to review the documents prepared by staff and make any amendments required prior to authorising the public exhibition Draft Operational Plan. The draft document will then be on public exhibition until the 4th May 2015 and during that time all members of the public are able to make a submission in respect of the documents. Prior to adopting the Draft Operational Plan Council is required to take into consideration any submissions received.

Don't forget that the NSW State Election is on Saturday, 28th of March with Pre Poll voting available at the Bourke TAFE from the 21st of March. On Election Day polling will be held at the Bourke Public School in Green Street and at the Enngonia Public School. Polls are open on Election Day from 8am to 6pm.

As the election gets closer both the major parties have made some significant promises of funding and Council staff are monitoring all these promises to see which ones would provide opportunities for Bourke and the surrounding areas.

Day light saving will finish on the night of Sunday 5th April 2015 with all clocks to be moved back one hour at 3.00 am.

A reminder that Council has both residential and Commercial/Industrial blocks of land for sale and anyone interested in the purchase of same are invited to contact the Manager of Tourism and Development Phil Johnston. Over the past few weeks Phil has fielded a number of enquiries from persons looking to establish businesses in Bourke which is tremendous and indicative of the confidence shown in the future growth of Bourke and hopefully these preliminary discussions will result in a positive outcome.

To allow the conduct of the Wool Bale Rolling Competition in Oxley Street on Easter Saturday, Oxley Street will be closed to traffic and no vehicles are allowed to be parked in the Street on the Saturday morning. Whilst this may cause some minor inconvenience it will allow the safe conduct of the events and the cooperation of businesses in particular is sought.

Barwon Darling Water will conduct its Annual General Meeting on the 25th March at Diggers on the Darling in Bourke commencing at 10.30am.

The group have been strong advocates for all water users along the Barwon Darling River systems and provide an important conduit into the various Government Departments.

Water is to a large degree the life blood of this area and it is important that there is a strong voice at all levels to ensure we don't see a further erosion of this important resource.

I again ask all residents to try and ensure that their properties and land adjacent to their property is mowed and free from rubbish for the up- coming, Back to Bourke weekend.

As mentioned previously Council will be tidying up around town and has provided two (2) Fee Free Tip Days to assist residents in the clean- up effort.

Following the meetings of both the Corporate Planning Committee and the Town and Village Committee on Monday I met with Felicity Taylor- Edwards, Executive Officer from Regional Development Australia Orana to discuss the infrastructure audit being undertaken across the region and is being supported by the Orana Regional Organisation of Councils (OROC). RDA Orana have appointed Consulting firm ARUP to undertake a mapping study of the infrastructure needs of the area. Felicity indicated she is prepared to again visit Bourke to discuss the infrastructure plan with local business people.

On Tuesday I took part in a teleconference involving Alison Morgan the Regional Coordinator for the Department of Premier and Cabinet and Dan Simmons and Don Ramsland my counterparts from Brewarrina and Walgett Councils to determine the best method of operation for the Local Strategic Co-Ordination Groups in each of the towns. The concept behind the Strategic Coordination Groups is to build an increased level of understanding, cooperation and consultation amongst the agencies within the three (3) towns. It is intended that one (1) representative from the three (3) towns would be able to take concerns of a regional nature to meetings of the State Agency Leadership Group for their attention and required action.

Ross Earl
General Manager