



“From the GM’s Desk” 14th May 2015



At the Extraordinary Meeting of Council held on Wednesday, 6th May, Council considered the tenders received in relation to the Management of the Bourke War Memorial Swimming Pool Complex for the next three (3) years.

Following the consideration each of the four (4) tenders and accompanying report and assessment Council resolved to award the tender to LOWMAC Enterprises.

The Federal Minister for Agriculture Hon Barnaby Joyce MP together with our Local Member for Parkes, Mark Coulton and other MPs whose electorates are drought impacted have been working on a stimulus package for those communities in North West New South Wales and South West Queensland who have experienced extended periods of drought and have seen the loss of employment opportunities and down turn retail activity.

Bourke Shire Council is one of the Councils to whom the proposal relates, with others including Walgett, Brewarrina and Coonamble.

The concept involves the ability to provide work for those in the rural and related industries who lost employment or experience reduced employment to gain work and undertake much needed infrastructure projects within their communities in conjunction with local Councils so that they are able to remain in the area and that a skilled workforce is able to be retained. Part of the package involves the local purchase of materials required to undertake the projects which in turn will assist local retailers.

On Saturday the Prime Minister, the Hon. Tony Abbott, MP visited Longreach and launched a range of new drought relief measures. A total \$61 million dollars was included in the announcement, \$35 million dollars for “shovel ready” local infrastructure and employment projects with \$26 million to be utilised on feral animals and weeds.

Bourke Shire Council has received an initial allocation of up to \$1.5 million dollars for identified local infrastructure projects that engage employment. Guideline around the funding are currently been developed.

Bourke Shire Staff have identified a number of projects and these have been previously submitted. All the Communities and Councils involved are indebted to Minister Joyce and his parliamentary colleagues for highlighting the plight of the many farmers and communities who have experienced considerable hardship as a result of the prolonged drought.

With the amalgamation of the NSW Local Government Association and the Shires Association of NSW to form Local Government New South Wales there was a feeling that some of the relevant issues to Regional and Rural NSW had not been adequately provided for at the Annual Conferences to date. The conferences cover a wide range of topics and to cover the number of

areas of responsibility for Local Government would be impossible and it was felt that some of the areas with greater relevance and/or importance to Rural Regional Councils needed the allocation of additional time to be debated and discussed.

Taking on board those comments LGNSW sought feedback from Regional and Rural Councils in New South Wales as to their support of a regional and rural issues workshop to be held in a Sydney location and following the feedback it has been decided to hold a workshop on the 4th June 2015.

LGNSW are asked Councils to nominate their top three or four issues that they would like to see discussed at the workshop allowing them to then develop an agenda which reflects the issues of most interest. Bourke Shire Council submitted the following.

1. Road Funding
2. Service Delivery- and the ongoing erosion of services
3. Cost shifting and community expectations and impact on sustainability.

Council has resolved that the Mayor and General Manager or their nominees attend the workshop.

The Western Division Councils of New South Wales will be holding their Mid – year meeting at Cobar on the 1st June and representatives from Bourke Shire will be in attendance. The formation of the Far Western Initiative will obviously be a major point of discussion and Councils will be keen to get an update in relation to the engagement of the State and Federal agencies in the discussions relating to the formation of the Far Western Initiative as well as the involvement of the various Non- Government Agencies (NGOs) who provide services in the area.

The good flow of water in the Darling River continues to flow past Bourke and the flow has passed Tilpa and heading through Wilcannia down to Menindee.

The flow in the river and the lifting of restrictions coupled with the little bit of rain and warm weather has seen the parks and gardens around town given a lift and certainly beneficial to the presentation of the Renshaw Oval Complex during the recent show.

The fourth rate instalment is due on 29th May 2015 as are the charges for the usage of filtered water.

If you are experiencing difficulty in paying these accounts and wish to make arrangements for the payment of these accounts please contact Councils Rates and Water Billing Officer.

The Ordinary Meeting of Council to be held on Monday, 25th May 2015 will commence at 9.00am in the Council Chambers. All meetings of Council and Committees of Council where members of that Committee are Councillors are open to the Public.

On the agenda will be the consideration of any submissions received in relation to the 2013/2017 Delivery Plan and the 2015/2016 Operational Plan.

A Public Forum is scheduled at each Council Meeting at 10.00am. It would be appreciated if you wish to attend the Public Forum if you would please contact Kai Howard-Oakman on 68308000 or by email at khoward@bourke.nsw.gov.au so that your items can be placed on the agenda and if necessary any back ground information can be obtained.

Council has invited Ken Harrison the Local Engagement Officer of the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder for the Namoi, Peel, Barwon Darling and Macquarie River Systems to address Council at the next meeting of Council to detail the operation of the Environment Water Holders Office and its functions.

Ken is well known to the area as he was previously the Manager of the Western Catchment Management Authority prior to the incorporation of that organisation into the Western Local Land Services.

The Bi-annual Hungerford Field Day will be held on the 5th June 2015 and will certainly be worth attending. I had the opportunity to attend two years ago and despite some concerns about the weather a good crowd attended and there were a number of exhibitors who had their products and services on display.

The tourist season is certainly with us with the number of caravans and motor homes around town are increasing it seems on a daily basis. The value of tourists to the Bourke economy is very significant and it is important that we provide the tourist with a "destination" and not just a stopover point. The Back O' Bourke Centre continues to receive excellent reviews and along with the Jandra Paddleboat the National Parks and the Crossley Engine underpins our attractions which are of course complemented by a number of other activities each of which combines to provide that "destination".

The Back to Bourke weekend is a great example of the impact of tourism and related activities can have on the town.

The amount of rubbish that is just thrown on the ground rather than deposited in the bins provided around the CDB and parks in a continued source of frustration and results in additional and unnecessary expense for Council and the resources could certainly be better allocated to the beautification of our town and the improvement of facilities.

I like the Keep Australia Beautiful Slogans "Don't be a Tosser" and "Do the right thing put it in the bin".

A reminder that if you intend to utilise one on Council's Parks or Ovals for an event or function you should make a booking through Council's Engineering Section which will enable Council staff to ensure that the facilities area adequately prepared and sufficient bins etc. provided.

Thought for the week!

"I always wondered why somebody didn't do something about that; then I realised that I am somebody" - unknown

Ross Earl
General Manager