



“From the GM’s Desk” 18th June 2015



The visit to Bourke and District by the Governor of New South Wales, His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC. DSC and Mrs Hurley was extremely well received and appreciated by all those who had the opportunity to meet with them. Both were extremely approachable and were very interested in finding out about the town and the people within the town.

The first function that The Governor and Mrs Hurley attended was the ceremony to mark the involvement of people from the Byrock village in the Australian Armed Forces in both World War I and World War 11 and the very distinguished service of the men from this area and the remarkable demonstrations of bravery that saw three Victoria Crosses awarded and a number of other high awards. Thanks to the President of the Local RSL Sub Branch, Victor Bartley for his role in the coordination of the ceremony. It was great to have Cecily Hampton to be able to provide a welcome to country as part of the ceremony with two (2) of her Uncles amongst those who enlisted from Byrock and are recognised on the wall of remembrance.

At the Vice Regal Reception hosted by Government House Mrs Hurley joined the Bourke Choir for a song and she obviously is a keen singer and her participation was very much appreciated by the members of the choir and those in attendance.

The Mayor hosted a small dinner at the Back O’ Bourke Centre on the Thursday Night for the Governor and Mrs Hurley which was catered for by the Bourke High School Year 11 Hospitality class and the meal presented was excellent. The students led by their teacher Kristie Hibbotson not only cooked the meal but also prepared the table settings, served the meal and cleaned up all of which they did in a very professional manner and they are certainly a credit to the school. The opportunity to cater for such a distinguished guest is something that they will remember and the Governor and Mrs Hurley assisted in the preservation of that memory by having their photograph taken with the students.

Council has received advice that the Parliamentary Secretary for the Minister for the Environment, Bob Baldwin will be visiting Bourke in July as part of his Tour of the Northern Section of the Murray Darling Basin and Mr Baldwin will be accompanied by the Member for Parkes Mark Coulton. The Tour was initially scheduled in May but the devastating storms that hit the area north of Newcastle resulted in the tour being cancelled as that area forms part of Mr Baldwin’s electorate and Mr Baldwin rightly determined the welfare of his constituents should take precedence.

The 39th Annual Bourke Pro-Am Golf Tournament was held last weekend and again attracted a good field and the local Golf Committee have already it seems started planning for the 40th Pro Am to be held in 2016. I was interested in learning that the Bourke Pro Am is the longest continuing running Pro Am in Australia which is certainly a significant achievement for such a small community and a credit to those who have assisted in running and sponsoring the event over that period.

Work is continuing to rectify the fault in the electronic componentry that resulted in the PV Jandra being out of action for the past couple of weeks. It is unfortunate that due to the age of the vessel and the electronics within the vessel, that the sourcing of replacements has proved quite difficult. In an era when there are very rapid changes in technology it is an issue that will face all sectors of our community. The days of changing elements in jugs which people from my era will remember and getting things like small appliances repaired are basically a thing of the past as we move into greater mass production and into what has become a throw-away society.

Together with the Mayor, Cr Andrew Lewis, his wife Lorraine and I represented Council in attending a function held last Thursday night to acknowledge the fact that the National Australia Bank, including its predecessors, has provided 150 years of continuous service to Bourke and District which is a remarkable achievement and in a time when many Banks seem to be withdrawing or reducing their services in many rural areas is very much appreciated.

The Bank was represented by Senior Staff from both Orange and Dubbo.

The Mayor, Cr Lewis presented the Bourke Branch with a plaque to mark this significant milestone.

It was interesting to note that for all this period the National Australia Bank had provided banking services to the Murray Family from Louth and Mr Dermott Murray was a special guest for the occasion and spoke on the long association that his family had enjoyed.

The next meeting of Council will be on Monday, 22nd June 2015 commencing at 9.00am as usual. A Public Forum will be held at 10.00am on the day and anyone with an issue that they would like to bring up to Councillors are invited to attend. Council encourages anyone who may be attending to present at the forum to contact the Executive Assistant, Kai Howard-Oakman on 0268308000 so that, if required, arrangements can be made for any computer presentation or additional information sought.

Council continues to make representations in relation to the economic and social impact that the water buy backs have had on our community both economically and socially and have written to the Minister for the Environment the Hon. Greg Hunt, MP questioning the announcement of another round of buy backs prior to any substantive evaluation of the impact of the previous

decisions to reduce the availability of water for irrigation and other agricultural purposes in the region.

New South Wales Farmers have arranged a meeting with the NSW Minister for Regional Development, the Hon. John Barrilaro, MP to discuss the effects of the drought and in particular its effects on Small Business. The meeting is a follow up on the meeting held recently in Dubbo. Representatives from Walgett, Brewarrina and Coonamble Councils will also attend. Mayor, Cr Lewis attended the meeting in Dubbo and Council continues to advocate strongly for the impact of the drought within our communities to be recognised.

The guidelines for funding to be provided by the Drought Stimulus Package announced late in May to assist communities impacted by drought are close to being finalised and looking forward to their release so that a number of projects can be submitted for funding.

The Cuttaburra Bridge no. 3 on the Wanaaring Road is taking shape with the pylons having already been put into place. The contractors are hopeful that the bridge will be finalised before the end of June.

Remember booking for all Council facilities are to be made through Councils Engineering Department to ensure that we do not have multiple uses on the one day and also to ensure that they are properly prepared.

I received a number of positive comments regarding the condition of the road to Hungerford from people who travelled out for the Field Days and it is good to get such positive comments. As I have mentioned before it is extremely difficult to maintain a road network as large as we have with the limited funding available. Council strives to maximise the value for the dollars spent. The co-operation of residents and visitors in minimising the use of the unsealed road network during wet weather and adhering to the road closure notifications is appreciated and significantly reduces the damage to the road surface.

Thought for the week!

Genius is 1% inspiration and 99% perspiration – Thomas Edison

Ross Earl
General Manager