



“From the GM’s Desk” 16th July 2015



Mark Sunday, 18th October in your diary as it will be the date of the 2015 Graffiti Removal Day. Graffiti Removal Day is run by Rotary Down Under with the support of a wide range of community organisations including, Scouts, Girl Guides and the Australian Men’s Shed Association. The day is sponsored by the NSW Government, Rotary Down Under, Dulux, Selleys Smart Graffiti and Brookfield Johnston Controls.

The Graffiti Removal Day has been successful in Bourke in the past and coupled with the efforts of Council has seen a reduction of this mindless vandalism in our community. It is a great opportunity for community groups and individuals to make a significant impact on the appearance of the town. Bourke Rotary will again be assisting with the coordination locally.

The North Bourke area has received a real boost with the four (4) new homes built for police residences being complimented by the new homes being constructed on the blocks released by Council with a number of other homes being considered for the area.

The next Council meeting of Bourke Shire is scheduled for the 27th July 2015 and will be held in the Council Chambers, 29 Mitchell Street Bourke commencing at 9.00am. A public forum is held at 10.00am and anyone who wishes to address Council is invited to do so at that time. To enable any information to be available it is advantageous if persons wishing to speak advise the Executive Assistant, Kai Howard-Oakman of their intention to attend.

Representatives from Campaspe Shire, based in Echuca visited Bourke to look at the way Bourke caters for the tourist Industry and exchange a number of ideas. A considerable amount of the visitation to Echuca revolves around the Murray River with Echuca located on the banks of that famous water course.

There are some similarities to Bourke in that regard and whilst obviously Echuca is a much larger centre than Bourke the importance to both communities of tourism is obvious and something that will continue to be fostered.

The Back to Bourke Committee who organised the highly successful events last Easter is again back in full swing looking at 2016. The group is relatively small but extremely hard working and would appreciate hearing from those that wish to organise events for the 2016 Reunion. The Back to Bourke Weekend was very much a whole of community event and it is important that the support

of the whole of the community is provided to the committee. Why not volunteer to help with one of the activities planned for the weekend and share the load.

The Councils of Bourke, Brewarrina, Walgett and Coonamble continue to demonstrate a strong cooperative approach in seeking support for both the rural sector and the commercial and retail sectors of their communities who are experiencing difficulties as result of the extended drought conditions.

The Councils have adopted a regional approach in their endeavours and it is good to see this collective approach to a problem evident across all four (4) shires. As I have mentioned before the recent rainfall has been extremely welcome and whilst it increases a level of confidence it does not translate into immediate income for the community and the impacts of the drought will be felt for some time yet and the recovery time for some will be several years.

I will be travelling to Dubbo for a meeting of the General Manager's Advisory Council (GMAC) to the Orana Regional Organisation of Councils (OROC) on Friday. GMAC provides advice to OROC on a number of matters as well as coordinating a number of projects aimed at both fostering regional cooperation and instituting costs saving initiatives for the member Councils. Some of the more recent examples were the joint tender for the supply of electricity across the region and the appointment of a joint Code of Conduct Reviewer Panel with each producing savings in terms of advertising and assessment together with ongoing costs.

OROC will meet in Dubbo on the 31st July and included on the agenda this meeting is a visit by the President of Local Government New South Wales, Keith Rhoades and the Chief Executive, Donna Rygate. With the current Local Government reform process under way no doubt both Keith and Donna will be able to provide some insight as to what they think may be the expected outcome of this process.

Whilst in Dubbo Mayor, Cr Andrew Lewis and I will also meet with Ian Scott the Community Affairs Manager for the National Broadband Network regarding the role out of the fixed line NBN in Bourke which is scheduled to occur over the next twelve (12) months.

The announcement that Bourke was to receive the NBN was welcome news when it was first announced and hopefully this meeting will shed light on the exact details relating to the area to be covered and anticipated timetable.

Council has received the first two instalments of the 2015/2016 Financial Assistance Grants which is a welcome boost to our finances. There are a number of factors which are considered in the determination of these grants including the increase or decrease in population of each Local Government area.

Council always welcomes the opportunity to discuss matters with both the State and Federal Members and in this regard we are fortunate to regularly have visits from the Member for Barwon, Kevin Humphries and the Federal Member for Parkes, Mark Coulton.

Kevin was in town last week whilst Mark made a visit earlier this week. Kevin has by far the biggest electorate in the New South Wales Parliament whilst Mark has the biggest Federal Electorate in NSW and one of the larger ones in Australia. With electorates being determined on a population basis and the rapid increase along the eastern seaboard we will see an ongoing expansion of the rural electorates. Perhaps one of the criteria to stand for the election for these areas is the holding of a pilot's license.

Council has been invited to lodge an expression of interest for funding Under Restart NSW funding for regional infrastructure projects to go towards clearing a backlog of projects in country towns affected by ongoing water quality and sewer problems. The projects eligible for funding are those previously remaining in the Country Towns Water Supply and Sewage Scheme with Council having three (3) projects eligible including an upgrade of the water treatment plant. Council has the NSW Department of Public Works developing plans that will accompany the expression of interest for funding to upgrade the Water Treatment Plant. With the use of improved technology and improved automation it is hoped that the new plant will result in some costs savings.

Council staff have also commissioned reports in to a number of the village water supplies with a view to having "shovel ready" projects available should funding become available to upgrade these supplies. Most of the village water supplies have bores attached to them and funding may be available to increase the capacity of the bores, many of which are quite old. The village of Byrock currently doesn't have a bore and relies on local run off into the open catchment, if funding became available and a successful bore could be drilled in that area it would negate the need for water carting which is what is required during the dry periods at considerable expense.

The Louth races are a little over three (3) weeks away and the village is preparing for this huge annual event. I was looking at the advertisement for the races and couldn't help but notice the great support that the event has attracted which is evidence of a hard working committee, the generosity of the sponsors and their confidence in the success of the day. This is no doubt coupled with the excellent reputation that the Louth Race meeting has throughout the wider racing fraternity and the region generally.

Annette and I took in the Outback Show on Saturday along with a number of visitors and Luke and Karen together with their team of trained camels, bullocks, horses and dogs put on a very enjoyable show. With his sense of humour and ability to recite a number of poems verbatim Luke had the crowd engaged for the entire show with one lady sitting in front of us having tears from laughter streaming down her face.

At the end of the show Luke dedicated a few minutes detailing the other attractions of Bourke and certainly proved a great ambassador for the town recognising the need to provide our visitors with an “experience” and not restricting their visit to one or two of the attractions in Bourke.

Quote of the Week

“The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now”. – Chinese Proverb

Ross Earl
General Manager