



“From the GM’s Desk” 6th August 2015



The decision to reduce the number of flights bringing visiting specialists and allied health professionals to the west of the state has been reversed and the flights will return to normal levels as at the end of August, this is very welcome news.

The reduction of flights caused considerable concern amongst the health professionals and resulted in representations being made by both the specialists and the various communities impacted.

Bourke Shire Council was active in these representations as were our neighbours Brewarrina Shire, with both recognising the importance of having the specialists travelling out this way negating the need for all the patients having to travel to Sydney or Dubbo for treatment and check-ups and as a result significantly reducing the travel time and associated costs involved.

Following their attendance at the relevant training Bourke Shire Council staff will soon be able to provide services for the Department of Fair Trading, including building license applications and renewals, homeowner building permits as well as services in relation to Births, Deaths and Marriages.

The first instalment for the rates is due on the 28th August 2015.

If you are having difficulties meeting your obligations in relation to the payment of rates please contact the Revenue Officer at Council so that a suitable arrangements can be put in place.

Council have received an invitation to appear before the Parliamentary Inquiry into Local Government at the hearing scheduled in Cobar on Monday, 17 August 2015. Bourke Shire will appear at the same time as Cobar and Central Darling Shire. Appearing at a Parliamentary Inquiry involves giving evidence under oath with all the proceedings are recorded in Hansard the official transcript of Parliamentary proceedings.

The Chairman of the Orana Regional Organisation of Councils (OROC) Cr Bill McAnnally from Narromine and the CEO of OROC Belinda Barlow will also appear as will representatives from Coonamble Shire, Broken hill and Bogan.

The fact that the inquiry has elected to have a hearing in a small regional centre such as Cobar is to be commended as it will enable interested persons to see in part how our democratic system operates.

At the meeting of OROC held last Friday both the President of Local Government New South Wales (LGNSW) Cr Keith Rhoades and the CEO of LGNSW Donna Rygate were in attendance. Much of the presentation from Keith and Donna focused around the Local Government Reform Process and the proposed changes to the Local Government Act.

IPART is currently assessing all the "Fit for the Future" proposals with their assessment is due to the Government in mid- October 2015. There are apparently 20 Councils who elected to put in submissions as a "Rural Council" and use template three for their submissions.

Early indications are that only a few Councils have sought to amalgamate with the vast majority electing to remain as they are currently structured.

It would appear that the proposed changes to the Local Government Act will not meet the target date of September 2016 but some of the proposed changes will be introduced in the interim although there is an expectation that some of the changes suggested including two (2) year terms for Mayors will be introduced.

Also on the agenda for OROC was a presentation from Ian Scott the Community Affairs Manager from NBN co who outlined the way the NBN would operate. Following the meeting of OROC Ian Scott and Cheryl Tachril from the planning section of NBN met with some of the Councils scheduled to receive the NBN over the next twelve months on an individual basis. The Mayor, Cr Lewis and I met with Ian and Cheryl who detailed a preliminary timeframe and work that would be involved plus the way in which both the community and Council would be consulted. The NBN for Bourke has commenced the planning stage and hopefully everything is on track for the roll out in this area to commence in around twelve months. There was an assurance that there will be a significant amount of community consultation and explanations available as the project progresses with both the Mayor and I assuring the NBN representatives of Councils support during this consultation period.

The Mayors of Bourke, Brewarrina, Coonamble and Walgett took the opportunity to co- sign a submission to the Minister for Regional Development, the Hon. John Barilaro, MP to seek assistance for both landowners and small business impacted by the drought conditions that have plagued their areas over the past few years. The submission was a joint effort of all Councils led by the Economic Development Officer from Coonamble and Tourism and Economic Development Manager for Bourke Shire Phil Johnston.

Bourke Shire Council will join with Warren Shire in a meeting with the Minister For Regional Development, the Hon. Barilaro, MP to discuss funding available from the Murray Darling Diversification Fund which was set up to provide assistance and economic stimulus for those communities impacted by the introduction of the Murray Darling Basin Plan. None of the applications in the Northern Basin were successful and prior to the calling of applications of round two of the funding which will see the allocation of the remaining \$14 million dollars both Councils are anxious to obtain a clearer understanding of the assessment process. The meeting was coordinated by Warren Shire and Bourke Shire is appreciative of Warren's willingness to include Bourke in the discussions.

All seems in readiness for the Annual Louth Races with good weather predicted a great days racing seems assured. Council staff members as in previous years assisted in undertaking a cleanup of the village area and the roads have been graded in preparation for the high volume of traffic expected. A lot of work goes into the organisation of the race meeting and the events prior to the day and the small community is to be congratulated on its ongoing efforts. The race meeting attracts visitors from across Australia and has become one of outback New South Wales iconic events.

Whilst on events for the weekend try and get down to Davidson Oval this Sunday to support the local Bourke Warriors Rugby League teams who will be participating in each of the three (3) grand finals being played on the day. All three teams, under 14's, under 17's and the Seniors were first into the grand final and a trifecta would be a great result.

The Tour de OROC which sees a bicycle ride around the local government areas that form the OROC region will again be held in 2015 after a successful event in 2013. Each of the participants pays an entry fee and seeks sponsorship. The event will be staged from 5th to 10th October 2015 with a stopover planned for Bourke on the night of the 7th October 2015.

The Tour De OROC aims to raise money towards the construction of Macquarie Homestay which is planned accommodation for patients and families of patients seeking treatment at the Dubbo Base Hospital. In 2013 the event raised around \$175,000 with each of the stopover points conducting a fundraiser event to assist in obtaining the amount. I think Bourke was the highest fundraiser for the stop events in 2013.

The principal sponsor of the event will again be Toyota.

Council has once again resolved to support the Annual Graffiti Removal day to be held on the 18th October 2015. This is a chance for the whole community to get together and make a difference to our streetscape, further details will be provided closer to the event.

In keeping with its support provided in previous years Council has again resolved to make its facilities available free of charge for the conduct of the "Ronny Gibbs" 7s which will be held later this month and see school children from across the North West of the state converge on Bourke and compete in a number of sports.

Mayor, Cr Andrew Lewis will represent Bourke Shire Council at the Annual Conference of the Murray Darling Association to be hosted by Berrigan Shire in Tocumwal and Barooga between the 6th and 11th September 2015.

Council has resolved to provide each school within the Shire with a contribution of \$100. Towards their Annual Prizing giving night which are traditionally held towards the end of each year.

On the way home from Dubbo on Saturday I stopped in at the Nyngan Ag Expo to have a quick look around and was very impressed with both the standard of the exhibits as well as the layout and presentation of the facility generally. It is good to see the support given to the western area by a number of the suppliers is tremendous. Well done to the organising committee.

Quote of the Week!

Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world - Nelson Mandela

Ross Earl
General Manager