



“From the GM’s Desk” 20th August 2015



Council will be conducting a “Fee Free Tip weekend” on the 12th and 13th September 2015 to allow residents to undertake their annual spring clean in preparation for the upcoming summer period.

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

Residents visiting the Bourke Waste Management Facility will be greeted by a new face with Tony “Chook” Atkins taking over from long serving employee Dave Neylon who retired earlier this week.

On behalf of Council, I would like to thank Dave for his dedicated and loyal service and wish him well in his retirement.

A reminder that the first instalment of the 2015/2016 rates is due on Monday, 31st August 2015.

Persons with arrears are also reminded that interest is accruing at a rate of 8.5% per annum on the outstanding amounts. If you need to make arrangements for the payment of rates you are encouraged to contact Council’s Rates and Water Billing Officer.

The Mayor, Cr Andrew Lewis and I represented Council at a Public Hearing in relation to the Inquiry into Local Government being conducted by the New South Wales Legislative Council Standing Committee No. 6 held at Cobar on Monday, 17th August 2015. Broken Hill, Warren, Bogan and Cobar Councils were also in attendance as were The Chair of OROC, Bill McAnally and Executive Officer, Belinda Barlow. The Committee was chaired by the Hon. Paul Green, MLC and had another six (6) members of the Legislative Council on the Committee representing a cross section of the major political parties.

Cobar and Bourke representatives provided evidence for the first two hours and then it was the opportunity for Broken Hill, Bogan and Warren Councils and OROC to give evidence

The Committees are very formal in their structure and run under relatively strict guidelines with all the proceedings recorded in Hansard, the official parliamentary record.

The Committee were keen to ascertain the respective Council’s view on things such as rate pegging, the allocation of the Financial Assistance Grants, Road Funding and the current Local Government Reform Process.

Included in the other matters raised was the fact that Councils in the west of the state provided many services that were non-traditional local government services including involvement in the provision of medical facilities.

The Committee members also asked questions in relation to the benefits of amalgamation and if the Councils thought that it would be a good option to reconvene the Local Government Boundaries Commission before considering any amalgamations.

Additionally the Standing Committee were interested to get an understanding of the concept of the Far Western Initiative and what progress had been made in the development of the proposal.

The Committee had the hearings scheduled on Monday with the Cobar meeting to be followed by the meeting in Wagga on the Monday afternoon. The Wagga meeting was attended by the Minister for Local Government Hon. Paul Toole, MP with the President of Local Government New South Wales, Keith Rhoades also making the trip to attend.

The article in Sundays Telegraph newspaper suggesting that all Councils could be replaced by an administrator prior to amalgamations certainly created considerable interest amongst Local Government circles with the President of Local Government New South Wales issuing a press release early on the Sunday, seeking an explanation from the Minister as to the validity of the claims that he had put a suggestion to Cabinet regarding the wholesaling sackings. The Minister subsequently indicated that he had not put the suggestion to Cabinet.

The Minister for Local Government the Hon. Paul Toole, MP hosted a teleconference last Friday to detail the next steps in the development of the concept of a Far Western Initiative involving those Councils in the West of the State including Balranald, Bourke, Broken Hill, Brewarrina, Central Darling, Cobar, Walgett and Wentworth Councils. He indicated that the Premier had asked him to lead the process and he will be forming a steering committee with a representative from each of the Councils together with representatives from both the State and Federal Government.

The concept involves Councils being more actively involved in the delivery of services to their communities although there is still a considerable amount of work to be undertaken in clearly identifying the roles and responsibilities. This will be the function of the steering committee.

At the meeting of Council to be held on Monday, 24th August Council will consider a report dealing with the outcomes of the teleconference and look to appoint a representative on the committee.

A number of local events will be held over the coming weeks to compliment the end of the visitor season and the start of the school holidays. For those keen on fishing the major local fishing challenge will be held this weekend with many prizes available in various categories.

The Annual Bourke Boar Buster Competition will be held on 28th – 30th August and this competition has attracted great interest over the past two years since it has been established.

The event brings together those involved in the sport of wild pig chasing and in doing so also raises a considerable amount of money for charity.

Registrations for this event have closed, but there are many events being held on Sunday, 30th August for spectators to participate in and also lucky door prizes and activities for the kids.

The first week in September will see the second Annual Festival of a Thousand Stories which proved very successful in its first year. I understand that this year the Poets Trek will be heading for Louth for the first time and will include a performance of the Mary Devine Story at Louth on the 2nd of September. Other highlights of the week will include writing workshops, music events and the Outback Colour Run to be held on Saturday, 5th of September.

Today Mayor, Cr Andrew Lewis and I will be joining with representatives from Walgett, Brewarrina and Queensland based Balonne Shire for a meeting to be held in Brewarrina to discuss the options available for the control of wild dogs within the boundaries of each of the Council areas. The meeting is an initiative of Cr Bill Loughman from Brewarrina Shire.

Suggestions have included the replacement of the existing fencing and to look to the Federal Government to contribute to the cost of that fencing.

The meeting will commence at 10.30am and will also include representatives from the grazing industry who have been severely impacted by dogs attacking new born lambs and other stock.

Members of the New South Wales Grants Commission will be visiting Bourke and meeting with available Councillors and Senior Staff on Wednesday, 23rd September at 9.30.

The Commission makes recommendation on the allocation of Federally Funded Financial Assistance Grants (FAGs) to New South Wales Councils.

The purpose of the meeting is to provide the opportunity for the Commission to explain its operations and the basis of its calculations.

With Councils allocation being over 5 million dollars each year the funding is an extremely important part of our budget.

Members of the public are also welcome to attend the briefing session which will go for around two (2) hours.

The New South Wales Grants Commission last met with Council about five (5) years ago.

Member for Parkes, Mark Coulton, MP will be meeting with Council on Thursday, 27th August 2015 to discuss issues impacting Council and no doubt the issues of mobile phone services will be high on the agenda. Mark has been a strong advocate for Council, however, there would appear to be a number of areas that are more densely populated and have poor mobile coverage and these areas seem to have had precedence over the west of the state.

Dates for the Diary

24 th August	Council Meeting
12 th –13 th September	Fee Free Tip Weekend
28 th September	Council Meeting including Mayoral Elections
7 th October	Tour De OROC in Bourke Stopover
18 th October	Graffiti Removal Day

Quote for the Week!

"It always seems impossible until it is done"

Nelson Mandela

Ross Earl
General Manager