



“From the GM’s Desk”

3rd September 2015



The Annual Elections for the position of Mayor and Deputy Mayor will be held in conjunction with September Meeting of Council to be held on the 28th September 2015. The meeting will also determine the composition of the various council committees as well as delegates to represent Council on the external organisations of which Council is a member. The meeting will also consider the time and day for the holding of the Ordinary Meeting of Council.

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

Having been successful in the initial expression of interest stage of the Restart New South Wales Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund for Airports, Council has now lodged a formal application for funding to upgrade the lighting at the Bourke Airport and also undertake reseal of the runway. The value of these works will be approximately \$720,000. Council has been required to make a contribution and if the application is successful that contribution of \$150,000 will come from a reserve establish for the upgrade of the airport.

The 20th Annual Ronnie Gibbs “7” held last week with a great representation from all our neighbouring towns.

The fundraising dinner held in conjunction with the carnival was also a huge success with around two hundred people in attendance. An extremely pleasing aspect of the night was the representation from both the Country Rugby League and the NSW Rugby League Officials and past NRL players in attendance to recognise the significance of the function and the work Ronnie has done over the past twenty years. Current NSW State of Origin Coach and former Australian representative Laurie Daley was in attendance as was dual International and now TV personality, Wendell Sailor. The recently retired CEO of Australian Rugby League, Geoff Carr made the trip out as did a number of other legends of the game.

Well done Ronnie on both the 20 year milestone and your ability to ensure that the officials of the game retain a close connection with the grassroots supporters and players of the game.

I had the opportunity to accompany the official visitors to the Ronnie Gibbs "7" on the Jandra on the Wednesday afternoon and for many it was their first trip to Bourke. It was good to receive positive comments regarding the presentation of the facilities and the town generally.

It was also pleasing to see a number of ex-residents of Bourke make the effort to travel back for the occasion.

Local Federal Member, Mark Coulton and wife Robyn met with Councillors and staff last Thursday and Council raised a number of issues with Mark including the lack mobile phone service coverage within the Shire. The President of the Louth Race Club joined the meeting to detail the impact that the lack of mobile coverage has on the Louth Races, including the inability to access betting fluctuations, the impact on the Tote Facility and the delays in the operation of the ATM. Jim highlighted the fact that mobile service is no longer a luxury but has become a necessity and unless the situation in Louth is addressed it will seriously impact on the ability of the committee to grow the event.

The Darling River continues to have a steady flow with the recent rain resulting in minor inflows and a slight rise. Unfortunately the levels in the river have failed to reach the height to allow irrigators to be able to pump. Hopefully the ensuing few weeks will see additional rain the catchment.

David Papps, the Environmental Water Holder will be in town next week and will meet with representatives of Council and also representatives of local irrigators. David was in town with the Parliamentary Secretary for the Minister for the Environment , the Hon. Bob Baldwin, MP a couple of weeks ago so it is good to see him back again and taking an interest in the area and spending time speaking to the stakeholders most impacted by the introduction of the Murray Darling Basin Plan.

Council's Auditors will be in town during the last week of September to undertake an Audit of Councils Financial Reports for 2014/2015 and the finance staff members have been busy ensuring that all the reporting requirements have been addressed and the changes to some of the reporting schedules have also been put in place. Council have been assisted in the preparation of the Financial Reports by Brian Tickle from Condobolin.

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, and liquid waste, building and commercial quantities of waste.

On Monday, the Mayor, Cr Andrew Lewis and the Manager of Corporate Services, Leonie Brown travelled to Griffith for the funeral of the late Ken Croskell who passed away last week. Ken was the General Manager of Bourke Shire Council from 2003 to 2007 before taking up the same position at Carrathool Shire based at Goolgowi and Hillston. The Mayor, Councillors and staff extend their sympathy to Ken's family.

Each year Local Government New South Wales asks Councils to undertake a "Cost Shift Survey" which seeks to identify the cost of providing services which have been passed onto Local Government by the other tiers of Government, including services that are required to be supplemented to ensure that the services meet the needs of residents. It also includes services which have previously been part funded by the other tiers of Government but the contribution by the other levels of Government has fallen well behind the real cost in providing the services. The cost to Bourke Shire has been calculated at just over \$1 million dollars. Over the past few years the total cost for the twelve Councils in the OROC area has been calculated and in 2011-2012 that figure was over \$14 million dollars which is a significant amount of money. No doubt the 2014/2015 figures will show an increase on that amount.

Following the announcement that RaRMS have been the successful tenderer to supply Visiting Medical Officers Services to Bourke, Council resolved to seek a meeting with RaRMS so that they can further detail their plans for Bourke. I have had discussions with Shane Hatton the Operations Manager with RaRMS and preliminary arrangements are in place for them to visit Bourke on the 28th September 2015 and address the September Meeting.

Mayor, Cr Andrew Lewis will be attending the Annual General Meeting and National Conference of the Murray Darling Association at Barooga and Tocumwal on the 9th 10th and 11th September 2015.

Early October will see the next round of removal of fig trees from the streetscape. Those trees earmarked for removal have been advertised in this week's edition of the "Western Herald" with the owners of the homes adjacent to those trees will be receiving a letter late this week or early next week.

There are a lot of activities associated with the “Festival of One Thousand Stories” happening this week and full details have been advertised in the “Western Herald” with programs also available at the Council offices.

Don't forget to book a table for the Trivia Night to be held on the 16th September at the Bowling Club to raise funds for Tour De OROC. Tickets are \$10.00 per head with tables of 10 preferred. Booking can be made at Council.

Quote of the Week

Obstacles don't have to stop you. If you run into a wall, don't turn around and give up. Figure out how to climb it, go through it, or work around it.”

Michael Jordan

Ross Earl
General Manager