



“From the GM’s Desk” 29th October 2015



Bourke Shire Council has been earmarked for membership of the Far West Initiative and as a result was not required to participate in the “Fit for the Future” process. Council is closely monitoring the decision by IPART in declaring Councils “Fit or “Unfit” following their assessment of the “Fit For the Future” submissions and the subsequent actions by them may have an indirect impact on Bourke Shire.

There is an obvious push by the State Government to promote mergers of Councils across the State. Councils have been given up to Wednesday, 18th November 2015 to respond to the IPART findings and have also been asked to submit their merger preferences.

Council will continue working with the Far West Initiative Advisory Committee to develop a new model for this part of the state.

The Legislative Council’s Standing Committee on Social Issues is holding an inquiry into Service Coordination in Communities with High Social Needs.

The Committee will be visiting Bourke on Thursday, 5th November 2015 and will undertake a number of visits and hear from agencies and community members.

Bourke Shire Council will have the opportunity to highlight some of the issues within the community of Bourke.

The terms of reference are as follows;

1. That the Standing Committee on Social issues inquire into and report on the Service Coordination in Communities with High Social Needs, including:
 - a. The extent to which government and non-government service providers are identifying the needs of clients and providing a coordinated response which ensures access to services both within and outside of their particular area of responsibility
 - b. Barriers to the effective coordination of services, including lack of client awareness of services and any legislative provisions such as privacy law
 - c. Consideration of initiatives such as the Dubbo Minister’s Action Group and best practice models for the coordination of services and
 - d. Any other Related matters

2. That the Committee report by 11 December 2015

The Membership of the Committee is:-

The Hon. Bronnie Taylor MLC	<i>The Nationals</i>	Chair
The Hon. Gregg Donnelly MLC	<i>Australian Labour Party</i>	Deputy Chair
The Hon. Shayne Mallard MLC	<i>Liberal Party</i>	
Revd. the Hon. Fred Nile MLC	<i>Christian Democratic Party</i>	
The Hon. Dr. Peter Phelps MLC	<i>Liberal Party</i>	
The Hon. Penny Sharpe MLC	<i>Australian Labor Party</i>	

The level in the weir continues to slowly drop and water restrictions will again be introduced once the water stops flowing over the weir. Hopefully, that won't be for another few weeks however, in the meantime I would ask all residents to be "water wise".

As I mentioned in last week's column the dry weather is making things extremely difficult for road maintenance activities and grading has been restricted in some areas to shoulder grading, although the generosity of local landowners in supplying water has allowed some maintenance to continue.

The Bourke Shire Council staff Union picnic day will be held tomorrow, Friday, 30th October 2015 and all Council offices and the Library will be closed for the day. Council will have staff on call for any emergency situation that may arise and can be accessed by calling 0419722055.

The Waste Management Facility will be operating as normal.

The 2016 Australia Day awards are open and can be lodged at Councils Offices. Bourke has a great number of volunteers who give unselfishly of their time for the benefit of the community and the awards are an ideal opportunity to acknowledge that contribution. Volunteers and award recipients can come from a across wide range of areas and there are a number of categories to reflect the diversity of the contributions.

The Louth celebrations for the sesqui- centenary of the village are on this Saturday and there a number of events planned. Why not take the opportunity to travel down to the village and enjoy the festivities to be held on the day.

The Mayor, Cr Andrew Lewis and Manager of Tourism and Economic Development gave evidence to the Senate Select Committee on the Murray Darling Basin Plan at the inquiry held in Griffith on Tuesday. The Inquiry is looking at both the positive and negative impacts of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan and associated Commonwealth programs on regional communities. Representatives from Warren Shire and Griffith Shires were also in attendance to detail the impacts on the plan to their respective communities and surrounding areas.

While it involves a considerable amount of travel the attendance at these Parliamentary Hearings and Inquiries is essential if our Council is get the community's message across to the decision makers.

The Mayor, Cr Andrew Lewis and I will be travelling to Lightning Ridge this afternoon to attend the Meeting of the Orana Regional Organisation of Councils (OROC) and much of the discussion will focus around the IPART report and the push by the State Government for mergers.

Of the twelve OROC Councils, only Dubbo was deemed to be "Fit for the Future" as a standalone entity, whilst Coonamble, Bogan, Warren and Gilgandra were deemed "Fit for the Future" under the Rural Council Model.

Narromine, Wellington and Warrumbungle Shire Councils were not deemed "Fit for the Future" whilst Bourke, Cobar, Brewarrina and Walgett are all part of the Far West Initiative.

Paul Mann, General Manager of Gilgandra won't be attending the OROC meeting as he is participating in the Cooee March Re-enactment which involves walking from Gilgandra to Sydney together with a group of equally dedicated and committed souls. Well done Paul!

The town is looking good at the moment, with the spring flowers and the grass greening up nicely.

You cannot but notice the transformation of the grounds of the Probation and Parole building (People may recall it as the old DMR building) at the corner of Mitchell and Glenn Streets over the past few weeks and the lift it has given to that area.

Bourke will be visited by a group of Rotary Members who are also motorcyclist enthusiasts who will be taking part in a ride which will commence in Cobar on Monday, 2nd November. The group will be hosted in Bourke for lunch at the Bourke Men's Shed with the lunch to be supplied by Bourke Rotary Club.

I will be attending a meeting of the Regional Leadership Group which will be held in Dubbo on Tuesday, 3rd November 2015. The group brings together the General Managers across the Region together with the Regional Directors of the various government Departments. Guest for this meeting will be our Local Representative in the House of Representatives Hon. Sarah Mitchell, MLC.

There has been strong interest in the blocks of land that Council have for sale at North Bourke with eight (8) already been sold and interest expressed in a number of others. These are ideal lifestyle blocks each of which has an area of 2000 Square metres, or half an acre.

The news that Bourke should have an air service operating once again next year has certainly been welcomed by the Bourke community and surrounding district. The ability of people to be able to fly in and out of town will have a significant positive impact on all sections of our community, and in particular the ability to enhance tourist visitation.

The quarterly meeting of the Local Emergency Management Meeting will be held on Tuesday, 3rd November at the Rural Fire Services Offices and will bring together all the Emergency service organisations within Bourke plus representatives throughout the region. The meetings are a valuable forum for all agencies to familiarise themselves with the other services and their capabilities to respond to incidents locally. It also fosters a high degree of cooperation.

Our friendly Breakfast Announcer on 2WEB, David Sharp is now an Australian Citizen following a naturalisation ceremony held during Monday's Council meeting. Congratulations to David!

The NSW Department of Planning and Environment have sought input from the relevant agencies in relation to the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARS) for the abattoir Proposal. The SEARS is a listing of requirements that should be addressed by the proponent when preparing the Environmental Impact Statement that needs to accompany the Development Application in respect of the Abattoir construction. The Department of Planning will be the consent authority in respect of the Abattoir proposal as it has been deemed a State Significant project.

Quote of the Week!

"Sometimes you need those bad days to help you appreciate the good ones"

Ross Earl
General Manager