



“From the GM’s Desk” 3rd December 2015



James Price, a representative of CAPRA Pty Ltd which is the proponent company for the proposed abattoir to be built north of Bourke, will be in Bourke on the 7th and 8th of December 2015. He will meet with Councillors and then join with Council in hosting a series of information sessions with various sectors of the Bourke Community in respect of the abattoir and the planning and approval process that needs to be undertaken prior to construction.

Meetings scheduled to date include a meeting with the Bourke Business Houses at 5:15pm on Monday, 7th December 2015 and a general community meeting to be held with CAPRA at 6:00pm on the 8th of December 2015 both are planned to be held at the Council Chambers at 29 Mitchell Street Bourke.

The Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) will be joining with the Office of Local Government (OLG) in hosting a series of Stakeholder meetings to detail the concept of the Far West Initiative more fully to the communities of the eight (8) Councils involved, in addition those in the unincorporated area.

The aim of the meetings is to create awareness amongst the communities and the Department of Premier and Cabinet have issued invitations to a number of parties including business groups, progress associations, social groups and other interested parties. The DPC will meet with Bourke Shire Council at 12.00pm this Thursday, 3rd December and the Stakeholder meetings will follow from 2.00pm. The meetings for Brewarrina will be held tomorrow, Friday 4th December. Invitations to various groups have been issues by the Department of Premier and Cabinet to attend one of the sessions.

On the 1st March 2015 TAFE Western held a public meeting to discuss plans for the future of the TAFE Campus at Bourke. The meeting detailed the options being considered by TAFE Western regarding the ongoing delivery of services in Bourke.

The meeting heard that the damage to the TAFE building as a result of the structural issues would necessitate the probable demolition of that part of the complex. The option being considered at the moment was the lease of the downstairs section of the building owned by the Outback Division of General Practice, formerly the Post Office Hotel and more recently the Office of Far West Medicare Local.

The TAFE representatives outlined the changing methods of delivery of some courses and the utilisation of both mobile teaching facilities and technology such as Video Conferencing and how these would provide an effective method of service delivery in the future.

The loss of a physical presence the TAFE buildings was a concern raised and the potential sale of the redundant buildings also of concern.

The TAFE staff answered numerous queries from the floor; however, it was obvious that the potential loss of the buildings was not well received by the community.

To provide the opportunity for residents to rid their homes and yards with unwanted rubbish prior to Christmas a “Fee Free Day” will be held this Saturday, 5th December 2015. All domestic rubbish will be able to be dumped free of charge on that day. There are some minor exceptions, with a charge still applying to tyres, asbestos, chemicals, liquid waste, building and commercial waste.

SafeWork NSW will be visiting some towns in the far West as part of their Safer Community/Safer Towns Days Program. They will be in Bourke on Tuesday, 15th December and Brewarrina on Wednesday 16th December. SafeWork NSW Inspectors will be in the towns to provide information, guidance and advice on Work Health and Safety, Return to Work and Workers Compensation.

The book signing and presentation at the Bourke Public Library with Author, Adrian Mitchell at the Library was very successful with a good crowd in attendance including people from Brewarrina. All the available books were sold, which was a tremendous result.

Mayor, Cr Andrew Lewis and Manager of Corporate Services, Leonie Brown represented Council at the NSW Local Government Excellence in the Environment Awards held in Sydney on Tuesday.

Bourke Shire Council won the category in the Community Sharps Management section of the Awards for those Councils with a population of up to 20,000 and was also named the overall winner of that section which is an extremely pleasing result.

Council’s nomination was based on its involvement in the Bourke Community Sharps Interagency Group and its coordination of a regional education strategy across Western New South Wales which resulted in 285 staff from 19 Councils undertaking an accredited course in the Safe Collection and Disposal of Community Sharps. The Council’s efforts in installing a number of disposal bins were also recognised.

Bourke Shire Council has made it to the second round of the 2015 Clubs Grants. Bourke Shire Council’s project is one of the 34 shortlisted from the initial 413 applications to share in the 8 million dollars that is available. The grant is in respect of the installation of a “water splash park” for the pool complex. The installation of a splash park was one of the priorities identified in the Community Strategic Plan.

The project is estimated to cost around \$720,000.00. Council staffs are busy finalising the application.

A reminder that nominations for the Bourke Shire Council Australia Day Awards for 2016 are open. Whilst nominations are open till 6th January 2016, we find that many organisations will be having their last meetings for the year over the next week or so and the opportunity may be taken to endorse an application. As we move into the festive season and the traditional summer holidays some issues such as nominations for these awards can be overlooked and deserved nominees may not get nominated.

RaRMS have now taken over as the provider of Medical Practitioners to the community of Bourke with the changeover being affected over last weekend. Arrangements have been put in place for RaRMS to take over the lease of both Medical Centre (Darling River Medical Centre) and the Allied Health Facility (Kini Health) as well as the Council owned residences. As I have said previously in welcoming RaRMS to our community we also thank Ochre Health for their dedication to Bourke whilst they were the providers of the services to Bourke.

The Lower Macquarie Water Utilities Alliance have commenced an Asset Management Working group amongst its membership with the first of the meeting of that group held in Narromine on Monday. Council was represented by Manager of Works, Peter Brown and Senior Governance Officer, Charlotte Finch.

Council has done a considerable amount of work on its Asset Management System over the past three (3) or four (4) years and looks forward to further enhancing this area which is important in the compilation of the long term financial planning process.

At the November meeting Council's Auditor, Gary Mottau of Hill Rogers Spencer Steer joined Council by teleconference and spoke in regards to Council's audit. The report was very positive with most of the indicators relating to the financial performance of Council being positive and the result for 2014/2015 a significant improvement from 2013/2014. The only area for concern was the increase in the level of unpaid rates and charges which has risen to what would be considered an unacceptable level. Action is being taken to address the matter with Councils debt recovery agents being increasingly active.

Mayor, Cr Andrew Lewis and I will be in Sydney next Monday, 7th December 2015 for the meeting of the Far West Initiative Advisory Committee. We will travel home afterwards to meet with James Price of CAPRA on Tuesday, 8th. Mayor, Cr Andrew Lewis has convened a meeting of those Councils involved in the Far West Initiative for afternoon of the 6th December so that each of the Councils will have the opportunity to discuss their thoughts on some of the identified options or other proposals prior to the meeting of the Advisory Committee.

Quote of the Week!

“Common Sense is not so Common” - Voltaire

Ross Earl
General Manager