



“From the GM’s Desk” 10th December 2015



It has been an exciting week for Bourke Shire, firstly with the news that it had been successful in gaining a grant of \$10 million dollars from round two of the National Stronger Regions Fund (NSRF) which will be utilised to provide the enabling infrastructure for the proposed abattoir.

Member for Parkes Mark Coulton, MP said that the submissions for funding in round two were very competitive and of a very high standard.

A considerable amount of work goes into the preparation of a grant application and to be rewarded in this instance with such a substantial grant is tremendous and I would like to thank all the staff involved for their hard work in this regard.

The success of this application is a positive step forward in bringing the construction of the abattoir closer to fruition.

The second piece of good news came on Tuesday with the announcement that Bourke Shire Councils was successful in its application for funding under Restart NSW Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund: Airports. The funding was for an amount of \$570,000 which will be supplemented by an amount of \$150,000.00 from Councils reserves to provide a total of \$720,000.00 for the reseal and remarking of Bourke Air Strip plus the upgrade of the airstrip lighting system.

The airport is extremely important to both the maintenance and expansion of our tourism industry as well as providing an essential link for medical services. The upgrade works are very welcome and will be welcomed by all airport users.

Enquiries made during my visit to Sydney earlier in the week indicated that the tenders for the provision of a regular passenger service to Bourke and Walgett should be called prior to Christmas which would be a huge benefit to all sections of our community. Four (4) operators have been shortlisted to provide tenders.

While it is unclear when the service would actually start it anticipated that it should be in the first half of 2016.

The Annual Senior Citizens Christmas luncheon hosted by Bourke Rotary was held last weekend and was again a very successful affair with around 60 local residents in attendance. Entertainment was provided on the day by the Bourke Choir, Bourke Gateway Concert Band and the Bourke Line Dancers.

Rotarian Lisa Crothers once again did a tremendous job in coordinating the day.

The series of meetings hosted by CAPRA Pty Ltd, the proponents of the proposed Abattoir development, in conjunction with Council were well attended with members of a broad cross section of the community anxious to get a better understanding of the proposal. This included the anticipated timetable for both the planning and construction stages. James Price of CAPRA provided a comprehensive overview and in turn fielded and answered a number of questions relevant to the proposal.

SafeWork NSW will be visiting some towns in the region 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.

A reminder that the 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 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 fail to get nominated.

Mayor, Cr Andrew Lewis and I attend the meeting of the Far West Initiative Advisory Committee in Sydney on Monday, 7th December 2015.

The meeting was to be held in Bourke but was transferred to Sydney to allow the opportunity for the Minister for Local Government the Hon. Paul Toole, MP to attend. However, as it turned out he was unable to make it much to the disappointment of the Councils.

Mayor, Cr Andrew Lewis invited each of the eight (8) Councils to a meeting on the Sunday afternoon prior to the Meeting on Monday to allow each of the Councils to talk openly and frankly about their individual positions and thoughts on the proposed models being presented. This enabled a clearer position of all Councils to be presented to the meeting of the FWIAC on the Monday. The meeting was attended by all the FWI Council's with the exception of Broken Hill who later endorsed the recommendations after a review.

Prior to the meeting T-Corp provided an update of the estimated Financial Sustainability Rating (FSR) of each of the Councils and there was a significant improvement across all the Councils. Bourke Shire saw its rating raised from weak to moderate which is generally considered to be an acceptable rating.

It was obvious that all Councils had over the past three (3) years clearly embraced the concept of Integrated Planning and Reporting and had developed plans that displayed an increased level of maturity that contributed to the improved FSR.

The Department of Premier Cabinet and the Office of Local Government are continuing with their community awareness program in relation to the FWI and have visited Broken Hill, the

Unincorporated Area, Balranald, Wentworth, Brewarrina and Bourke and have trips planned for Cobar and Walgett prior to Christmas with Central Darling to be completed early in the New Year.

Work will continue in the development of options that may be considered suitable for a new model of governance for Local Government in the far West with the model to also include consideration of the roles and responsibilities currently being undertaken by the other tiers of Government.

Water restriction will come into force as of 8.00pm tonight, Thursday, 10th December 2015 with the use of fixed hoses and sprinklers limited to two hours per day for each household either between 6am and 8am or 6 pm and 8pm.

The flow in the Darling has reduced and the water is no longer flowing over the weir and unfortunately at the moment there is no appreciable flow being recorded upstream.

Hand held hoses can be utilised at all times.

As in the case of previous water restrictions the watering of parks and ovals will take place where possible outside these times to allow maximum pressure to be available.

The cooperation of all residents is sought.

Over the Christmas period Councils Offices will be closed from 2.00pm on Thursday, 24th December 2015 until 8.00am on Monday, 4th January 2016.

The arrangements for all other Council services have been advertised in the Western Herald and are also detailed on Councils Website www.bourke.nsw.gov.au

It is important to note that the garbage collection normally scheduled for a Friday which is Christmas day will be undertaken on the 24th December with a double garbage run taking place on that day.

For all emergency calls please contact Council's duty Officer on 0419722055.

Quote of the Week!

Never argue with stupid people, they will drag you down and beat you with experience- Mark Twain

Ross Earl
General Manager