



“From the GM’s Desk”

2nd June 2016



The Mayor, Councillor Andrew Lewis and I travelled to Sydney to attend the meeting of the Far West Initiative Advisory Committee (FWIAC) held in Sydney on 25th May 2016.

The Meeting was attended by six (6) of the eight (8) Councils proposed for membership of the Far West Initiative together with representatives from the State and Federal Government and the NGO sector. The Minister for Local Government, the Hon. Paul Toole, MP was also in attendance for part of the meeting; however, the near riotous scenes from the first meeting of one of the newly formed Sydney Councils meant his urgent attention was required to deal with the situation which saw the abandonment of the meeting and the deployment of the Riot Squad.

The discussions from the meeting are confidential however, after each meeting a communique is produced and the following is taken from that communique.

“The Minister for Local Government addressed the meeting noting the positive progress to date and emphasising a desire for this process to identify an approach that would deliver genuine improvements for the Far West Region.

The focus of the May Meeting was to reflect on the possible content for the discussion paper to be released in July 2016. Michelle Robertson, Associate Director, Institute for Public Policy and Governance, University of Technology presented a new analysis on governance reform options that followed on from the April Meeting. The discussion then focussed on potential options for a regional body. This included discussing the potential for current local government functions to be delivered or coordinated by a regional body or shared between the two levels including strategic planning, service delivery and administration.

Advisory Committee Members provided their initial feedback on the options identified.

The next meeting of the FWIAC is expected to be held in Cobar in July.”

There are currently legal proceedings in the Land and Environment Court which had been initiated by a numbers of rural Councils which have been earmarked for merger and have sought a legal challenge to the process. The outcome of these legal proceedings may have the potential to impact on a number of other mergers across the state to be finalised.

Council has appointed the Mayor Councillor Andrew Lewis as its voting delegate for the upcoming elections for the Board of Local Government New South Wales. The elections have been further complicated by the fact that following the recent mergers, a number of the potential candidates for the Board are no longer Councillors following the proclamation of new Councils and the appointment of Administrators instead of Councillors as they are ineligible to stand.

The New South Wales Electoral Commission (SEO) has asked Council to assist in raising the awareness of potential candidates regarding the upcoming Local Government Elections in September 2016.

The SEO are keen to ensure that any individuals or groups who are considering nominating as a candidate/group of candidates know their funding, disclosure and compliance obligations. The relevant information for candidates and groups can be found on their event website (www.votensw.info) or can be discussed via their call centre on 1300 135 736.

As indicated last week I will be travelling to Dubbo tomorrow for a meeting with a cross-sector Leadership group. The meeting will focus on the Maranuka Justice Re-Investment Project for Bourke which is an initiative that uses the collective impact approach to reduce offending and incarceration and increased community safety in Bourke.

The meeting is being convened by the Minister for Family and Community Services, the Hon. Brad Hazzard MP who has been appointed by the Premier of NSW as the Government Champion for Bourke.

The purpose of the first meeting is to:-

- Create a cross sector-leadership table in support of Maranguka's Justice Re-Investment Project for Bourke.
- Brief Senior leaders from all sectors about Maranguka and Justice Reinvestment for Bourke
- Demonstrate the need for all sectors to work better together to achieve the goals of reducing youth offending and incarceration, building alternative pathways and creating a safer community.

The meeting will also be attended by the Deputy Premier of New South Wales Hon. Troy Grant MP who is also the member for Dubbo.

Congratulations to all those who participated in various capacities to stage Bourke's Biggest Morning Tea which I understand was once again a huge success and indicative of the support that a very generous Bourke Community gives to all charities. Bourke certainly "punches above its weight" it supporting worthy causes.

Staff at Bourke Shire Council's office held a function to support the fundraising efforts and thanks to the efforts of those staff members who provided some great food around \$200.00 will be added to the funds raised locally.

At the Meeting of Council held on the 23rd May 2016 Council adopted the Draft Operational Plan for 2016/2017. Council did not receive any submissions in relation to the Draft Operational Plan and staff will now commence planning for the works to be undertaken during the 2016/2017 Financial year.

At the May Meeting of Council it was resolved that the Mayor be Council's nomination on the Barwon-Darling Water Resource Plan Stakeholder Advisory Panel (SAP) which is being convened by DPI-Water. DPI Water proposes to utilise the SAP in concert with targeted consultation to ensure effective engagement with interested parties.

It is deemed important that Council be represented on the SAP and the appointment of the Mayor as Council's delegate reflects that importance.

The May meeting of Council also saw a request from Katharine Marsh from Kojonup in Western Australia for Council to support a petition she is coordinating and will be presented to the House of Representatives following the Federal Election on the 2nd July 2016. The petition is calling for increased funding to assist in eliminating identified mobile phone blackspot areas. Katharine points out that in black spots no access is available for emergency service calls such as 000 and this can have grave consequences and can often mean the difference between life and death.

Copies of the petition are available at the Bourke Shire Chambers, Public Library and in the hotels in the village areas across the Shire. The petition is to be returned to Katharine by the 30th June 2016 so it will be collected by Bourke Shire on the 23rd June 2016 so that it can be collated and posted.

Council has been a strong advocate for improved mobile services across the Shire and in rural Australia generally and I urge all residents to sign the petition to try and influence our politicians to commit additional resources to improve mobile coverage particularly in the rural and remote areas.

The recent rain has had a positive impact on gardens and pastures in and around Bourke but has done little to increase the flow from up steam in the river and water restrictions remain in place. The wet conditions and cooler weather has seen the level in the weir pool not drop as quickly as initially thought but is still only at around 3.7 metres. With rain again expected later in the week we could see a slight rise in the level.

It is only a couple of weeks until the 40th Bourke Pro- Am and from all reports it will be a big event with a number of ex-residents returning to Bourke for the weekend and already there have been some 12 golf professionals who have accepted an invitation to attend and play in what is a unique event on their golfing calendar. I understand that the Pro-Am is the longest continually run event of its type in NSW, if not Australia, which is a remarkable achievement particularly given the issues of drought and flood that have plagued the district during that period. Well done to all those involved with the club today and those who have contributed to the success of the club and the Pro-Am over the past 40 years.

Quote for the week!

"Keep your eyes on the stars and your feet on the ground "- Theodore Roosevelt

Ross Earl
General Manager