



## “From the GM’s Desk” 9th June 2016



The Member for Parkes, Mark Coulton, MP met with Mayor Andrew Lewis and his fellow Councillors on Tuesday morning to go through any issues concerning Council which are in his area of responsibility covered by the Federal Government. The matters discussed included the lack of mobile phone services and the limited impact of the current level of the Mobile Black Spot Funding Program, the appreciation of Council of the recent increase in the level of Road to Recovery Funding and the benefits derived not only in Bourke but right across rural Australia and progress with the construction of the Abattoir for Bourke. Also included in discussions were the Murray Darling Basin Plan and the impact on communities such as Bourke and the fact that to date there has been little if any compensation for the social and economic impact on these communities.

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The outcome of the legal proceedings commenced in the Land and Environment Court by those Councils seeking to challenge the merger proposal that they were subject to will not be known for a while yet. The determination of the Court will no doubt generate considerable interest within the Local Government fraternity across the state.

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Last week I travelled to Dubbo for a meeting with a cross-sector Leadership group. The meeting was looking at ways in which to improve service delivery in Bourke. There were around 50 people in attendance including a good representation from Bourke itself.

The Justice Reinvestment Initiative has been piloted in Bourke and aims to have funding targeted at the reduction of offences by young people within the community.

At the moment there are considerable resources being expended on these offenders if they are incarcerated. The concept involves the allocation of some of this expenditure funding on education and diversionary activities so that there will be a reduction in the level of incarceration and result in savings in the future.

There was a strong representation from all agencies and the Hon. Brad Hazzard, MP, Minister for Family and Community Services has been asked to accept the role as the “Bourke Champion” in addressing the complex issues. Mr Hazzard was in attendance as was the Deputy Premier, the Hon Troy Grant and the Hon. Bronnie Taylor MLC, the Chair of the Upper House Inquiry on Social Issues who visited Bourke with that committee a few months ago.

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All roads will lead to Louth this weekend for the Bi-Annual Field Days which will be held on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> June 2016. There would appear to be something for everyone on the day so if you are looking for a good day out over the long weekend look no further.

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The contractors who were mulching the green waste at the tip last week were very complimentary regarding the stockpile of green waste that they were presented to work with. They commented on how tidy the tip is and the fact there was little in the way of contamination from foreign matter that should have been placed elsewhere. This is a compliment to both the users of the waste management facility and our facility manager. Well Done!

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The work on the re-establishment of an air service for Bourke and Walgett has stalled slightly but is still progressing and negotiations are apparently still being carried out with providers who submitted tenders.

Plans for the work on the improvements at the airstrip are progressing well and will be undertaken in the warmer months.

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Annette and I welcomed Annette's elder sister Nerida who resides in Narromine and younger sister Suzanne and husband Paul Frazer from New Lambton to Bourke for the weekend. They had a good time and took the opportunity for a little "retail therapy" as well as visiting a number of the tourist attractions in and around Bourke.

We took the opportunity to undertake the two hour Sunday afternoon Jandra Cruise and there would have been around 50 other people on the Jandra which is a pleasing number.

There are a good number of tourists in town at the moment after a slow start to the season which will be welcome news for all those in tourism related industries.

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Copies of the petition on the need for improved mobile services that is to be presented to Parliament following the July 2 election are available at the Shire Chambers, Public Library, and Post Office in Bourke and in the hotels in the village areas across the Shire. The petition is to be returned to Katharine by the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016 so it will be collected by Bourke Shire on the 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2016 so that it can be collated and posted.

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It is only a little over a week until the 40<sup>th</sup> Bourke Pro- Am. Why not take the opportunity to attend one of the functions being held in conjunction with the Pro-Am and support this long running event.

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Long serving employee, Les Harding has announced that he will be retiring and leaving Council after 23 years of service. I am sure that you join with Councillors and staff in wishing Les a long, happy and healthy retirement.

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The next meeting of Council is scheduled for 27<sup>th</sup> June 2015 commencing at 9.00 am at the Council Chambers 29 Mitchell Street Bourke.

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Work on the Grandstand at Davidson Oval is now completed with the painting of the outside being undertaken last week. The opportunity was also taken to freshen up the canteen with a coat of paint and likewise the amenities block.

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The extended outage of the filtered water supply earlier in the week was brought about by the failure of a main which was a little unique and for which a spare was not readily available locally. The repairs that were affected are at this stage of a temporary nature and will be completed when the new part is to hand.

While the work should not take as long as this week's work it will require the water to be turned off for a period of approximately two (2) hours. The work will be scheduled to reduce the impact on the community and will be advertised in the local media and on Councils website.

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Whilst there has been good recent rainfall across the state there has not been sufficient to generate any expectation of a significant flow in the river system. It is expected that there will be some flow which will hopefully top the weir but this is hard to determine.

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Bourke Shire Council has engaged with Lyndon Community from Orange to undertake a Drug and Alcohol Awareness Training for supervisors. The course is called Drug and Alcohol First Aid.

On the evening prior to the session being conducted for Council, staff from the Lyndon Community have agreed to put on seminar for local employers and interested persons from within the community to make them aware of their responsibilities in relation to drugs and alcohol in the workplace and the community and how to deal with issues if they arise. The session will be of benefit for all those who have to deal with the impact of drugs and alcohol in their daily lives.

The seminar is FREE and provides an opportunity to gain knowledge in this area without having to meet both expensive registration costs and travel expenses. The seminar will be held at the Council Chambers, 29 Mitchell Street on Thursday, 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2016 and will commence at 6.00pm and will go for approximately one and a half hours.

Council is happy to be able to partner with the Lyndon Community in promoting this educational forum within the Bourke Community.

Registration is not essential but would be appreciated to ensure sufficient resources are available and can be done by contacting Lynette Gooch on 6830 8000.

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### ***Quote for the week!***

***"Friendship ... is not something you learn in school. But if you haven't learned the meaning of friendship, you really haven't learned anything."***

***Muhammad Ali***

Ross Earl  
General Manager