



“From the GM’s Desk” 16th June 2016



Former Bourke residents were well represented amongst the 2016 Queen’s Birthday Honours recipients with John (Fox) Robinson being made an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) and Judy Jakins, being made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) whilst Gary Lavelle received the Public Service Medal (PSM). Gary is General Manager of Temora Shire Council.

The Louth Branch of the Isolated Children’s and Parents Association (ICPA) have been advised that they will be hosting the New South Wales Annual Conference of that organisation in Bourke on the 29th and 30th March 2017. The arrival of over 150 delegates will be a welcome boost for the town’s economy and Council will try and assist the Louth ICPA where it can in the coordination of the event. I understand that this important organisation had its beginnings in the Bourke District. The conference not only brings together parents of students from across the state but also politicians, educationalists and representatives from boarding schools.

At the recent Cross Sector Leadership meeting held in Dubbo to discuss the issues in Bourke a number of speakers highlighted the link between literacy levels and the systemic social issues that some towns including Bourke are facing. There is an obvious link also between employment opportunities and literacy and no doubt links exist between poor levels of literacy with other social disadvantage including health.

With a high number of persons sent to detention centres or gaol for anti-social behaviour apparently having low literacy and numeracy skills it would appear to me an ideal opportunity during their periods of incarceration to increase their literacy skills. A number of those involved would have missed extended periods of school and as such fallen behind and never been able to catch up and it is an opportunity to learn rather than ability that has caused the problem.

In an effort to bridge this gap in literacy levels an incentive by way of reduced period of custodial detention for improved literacy achieved could very well be worth consideration. It would not only be a very worthwhile incentive for a reduced period of incarceration but one that would see tangible outcomes on their release by way of increased employment opportunities and also the ability to read with their children and other children to improve literacy levels more generally.

The Literacy for Life Program run across a number of western towns over the past two years has apparently resulted in some very successful outcomes and the reduction in custodial detention periods for increased literacy outcomes just might be the catalyst for further improvement.

Voting has commenced in the new elections for the Board Members of Local Government New South Wales (LGNSW). The new elections have been necessary due to an anomaly in the initial elections held in conjunction with the Annual Conference on October. The elections have been further complicated by the fact that some candidates initially nominated are now no longer eligible

to stand as they are no longer Councillors due to the fact their Councils have been merged and Administrators appointed to replace the previous elected Council. The Mayor Councillor Andrew Lewis is Councils authorised voting delegate.

The official naming of the Bridge over the Bogan River at Beemery as the Wayne O'Mally Bridge will take place on the 1st July 2016. The Minister for Roads the Hon. Duncan Gay MLC has accepted an invitation to perform the naming ceremony and the Member for Barwon Kevin Humphries MP will also attend. The naming ceremony is being coordinated by the Roads and Maritime Services staff in cooperation with the staff of Bourke Shire. Final details are still being confirmed.

The background paper in relation to the guidelines for Joint Organisation of Councils which are proposed to be established as part of the Local Government Reform Process was released last week with submissions in relation to the background paper due on the 15th July 2016. Copies of the paper can be obtained from www.fitforthefuture.nsw.gov.au. If you want to provide any comments an online feedback facility is now available at www.haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au follow the links to the JO documents.

The New South Wales Electoral Commission (SEO) has asked Council to assist in raising the awareness of potential candidates for 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.

The Louth Bi-annual Field Days were held on the Saturday of the long weekend and were once again very successful with a great response from exhibitors and a very good crowd and in attendance to take advantage of the displays. The community of Louth and District are to be commended for the amount of effort they put into promoting the village and in doing so raise funds for the improvement of facilities within the village. I had a lot of favourable comments regarding the road to Louth from Bourke on the day.

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 30th June 2016 so it will be collected by Bourke Shire on the 23rd June 2016 so that it can be collated and posted.

The 40th Bourke Pro- Am is on this weekend. Forty (40) years continuous for any event is a remarkable record and congratulations must go to all persons who have been involved over that period and I am sure that we can look forward to a continuation of the event for many years to come.

The next meeting of Council will be on the 27th June 2015 commencing at 9.00am as usual. A Public Forum will be held at 10.00 on the day and anyone with an issue that they would like to bring up to Councillors are invited to attend. Council encourages anyone who may be attending to present at the forum to contact the Executive Assistant Kai Howard- Oakman on 0268308000 so that, if required, arrangements can be made for any computer presentation or additional information sought.

Bourke Shire Council has engaged the Linden Community from Dubbo to undertake Drug and Alcohol awareness training for our supervisors. The course is called Drug and Alcohol First Aid and as I mentioned last week the Lyndon Community have also agreed to hold a seminar for local business on the evening of the 23rd June 2016. Information regarding the seminars is available from Bourke Shire Council. The Seminars will be provided free of charge and will held at the Council chambers starting at 6.00pm and will run for around one and a half hours.

Remember bookings for all Council facilities are to be made through Councils Engineering Department to ensure that we do not have multiple uses on the one day and also to ensure that they are properly prepared.

Tenders will next week be advertised for the construction of the Splash Park at the Bourke Memorial Pool. Tenders will close on the 15th July and it is anticipated that a report will be presented at the July meeting to be held on the 25th July 2016. It is anticipated that construction will take around three (3) months so all things being equal it is hoped that it should be operational sometime in late October or early November.

Quote for the week "Everyone can rise above their circumstances and achieve success if they are dedicated to and passionate about what they do."

Nelson Mandela

Ross Earl
General Manager