



## “From the GM’s Desk” 28th July 2016



Council has sold, or has under offer all blocks at the North Bourke Development as well as keeping one for its own use. This is a tremendous result and Council will now turn its attention to the availability of further land which can be utilised for residential building purposes. In all there were 16 blocks available and the fact that they have all been sold is a positive economic indicator for Bourke.

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Council are still trying to firm up a date for the meeting with representatives from TAFE Western in relation to the future of the current TAFE campus in Bourke. The plans for Bourke seem consistent with those announced by the Minister for Regional Development, Skills and Business, John Barrilaro MP last week. Council will no doubt echo the feelings of a number of rural Councils in saying that the retention of TAFE in the longer term is extremely important to Bourke particularly given the lack of other alternatives that are obviously available in the Sydney, Wollongong and Newcastle areas.

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To assist prospective candidate in the September Local Government elections learn a little more about the roles and responsibilities of being a member of Council the Office of Local Government last week released an information package to provide further information to prospective candidates

The guide, flyers and other resources are available on the Office of Local Government’s website [www.olg.nsw.gov.au](http://www.olg.nsw.gov.au)

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The New South Wales Electoral Commission also have a comprehensive website [www.votensw.info](http://www.votensw.info) and they 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 that website or can be discussed via their call centre on 1300 135 736.

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

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Advertisements have been placed in the local press in relation to the upcoming Local Government Elections which are scheduled for the 10<sup>th</sup> September 2016. The NSW Electoral Commission has increased its publicity campaign in relation to the 2016 elections with advertisements having first appeared last week in metropolitan, regional and rural press.

Owners, rate-paying lessees or occupiers of rateable land which is not their primary place of residence can enrol or nominate someone to be on the non-residential roll for the Council election. Non-residential rolls lapse after each election so you must enrol using the forms available from

Council's website. Claims for inclusion on the non-residential roll must be lodged with Council by 6.00pm Monday 1 August 2016. The General Manager must then prepare a non-residential roll for submission to the Electoral Commission

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Council at Monday's meeting awarded the tender for the construction of the Splash Park at the Bourke Memorial Pool to Sydney based firm Hydrocare. Hydrocare are an experienced firm and have undertaken a number of similar projects in the past. Hydrocare have indicated that they will be utilising locally based tradespersons for some of the work. The funding for the project was made available under a Clubs NSW grant of \$720,000

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Brewarrina Shire Council have written to Bourke Shire as the lead Council in the Barwon Darling Zone of The NSW Rural Fire Services (RFS) indicating that they will not be paying the increased contribution proposed by the RFS and will only be paying the same as the 2015/2016 contribution plus a 1.8% increase in accordance with the increase allowable under rate pegging.

At the meeting of Bourke Shire on Monday Councillors were sympathetic to the stance taken by Brewarrina and resolved that they too would write to the RFS indicating that Bourke Shire is only prepared to pay a maximum 1.8% increase over the 2015/2016 figure with a similar proposal.

At the recent meeting of Western Division Councils in Cobar Mayor Andrew Lewis indicated that Bourke Shire would take the inequity of the substantial increases being suggested for Bourke and Brewarrina Shire Councils back to the RFS and would do so on behalf of other Councils if they forwarded information in relation to the increases that they were likely to face.

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Council at Monday's meeting considered the tenders received for the replacement of the Bitumen Patching Unit and resolved to accept a tender from Tracserv in Dubbo for an Isuzu Truck fitted with a Paveline Auto Patch Unit. Council will hold onto the old unit and look at the feasibility of fitting the truck chassis with a water tank to increase the capacity of Council's fleet in this regard. Should Council decide not to proceed with that option then the old Unit will be sold by public auction or private offer whichever ever would seem most advantageous.

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Emma Bradbury the CEO of the Murray Darling Association provided Council with a presentation at the July Meeting last Monday detailing the operation of the Murray Darling Association and answered a number of questions from Councillors. Emma was also keen to hear a more about the proposal to establish a Fresh Water Research Station in Bourke.

Also in attendance at the meeting was Leigh Byron, Mayor of Balranald Shire and President of the Western Division Councils and also a Board Member of The Murray Darling Association. Leigh's main focus since assuming the Presidency of the Western Division was to make himself known to all members of the Councils who belong to the Western Division and given the size of the area he is to be commended for his dedication and commitment.

Mayor Andrew Lewis, Councillor Jack Bennett and I took the opportunity to welcome both Emma and Leigh and his wife Dianne to Bourke and joined them for dinner on Sunday night.

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I have been selected as a founding member of the StateCover Workers Compensation Advisory Committee. StateCover is the Workers Compensation Insurer for the vast majority of the Local Government Councils in New South Wales.

The first meeting of the Advisory Committee is scheduled for the week beginning 12th September 2016. Having previously owned and operated my own consultancy business providing advice to employers on workers compensation matters for around eight (8) years, I am looking forward to the challenge and being able to make a positive contribution to StateCover which has become a very important and well run organisation benefitting all members Councils.

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The countdown is on until the Annual Louth Races to be held on Saturday the 6<sup>th</sup> August 2016 and it should be another great day. As usual Council staff will undertake a clean-up of the village and weather permitting try and ensure that the road network in and around the Louth area is in good condition.

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I have had discussions with the member for Barwon Kevin Humphries MP regarding the fact that the four (4) operators who had expressed interest in providing flights to service Bourke and Walgett have now apparently decided not to continue with their expression of interest. There is still a number of options that can be canvassed and Bourke Shire Council will continue to work with Mr Humphries in an attempt bring to fruition the return of service for Bourke.

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The NSW Office of Environment and Heritage have advised that Alluvium Australia who are the consultants appointed by them to assist in developing a preferred option for water management on Tooralé will be back in Bourke on the 5th and 6<sup>th</sup> August to update local stakeholders, including Council on progress with the project and to provide opportunity for further input. Their report is due to be delivered on the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2016 which is a little later than anticipated due to weather interruptions to field work and in order to accommodate stakeholders' availability to contribute to the business case

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*Quote of the week!*

*"We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools".*

*Martin Luther King Jnr*

Ross Earl  
General Manager