



“From the GM’s Desk” 4th August 2016



Unfortunately the filtered water tower in Charles Street has developed a significant leak and has been taken “off-line” while an assessment is made of the problem and the options available for the repair required. Council has two (2) water towers that usually service the town with the other tower located in Wortumertie Street; the Wortumertie Street tower has the capacity to keep the town supplied and maintain adequate pressure.

Arrangements have been made for experts in this field to visit Bourke as soon as practical to undertake the required assessment.

Next Tuesday, 9th August 2016 is Census night and I would encourage all residents to complete the necessary forms.

From a Council point of view it is important that the census reflects the actual population of the Shire with a number of grants being population based and also providing valuable information regarding the demographic structure of the shire i.e. the age profile which in turn helps various agencies plan for the future.

The Local Government Elections are being held on the 10th September 2016.

The Elections are being conducted for Bourke Shire Council by the State Electoral Commission and all details in relation to the election including information for prospective candidates is contained on their website www.votensw.info

Additionally, the Office of Local Government has information in relation to the role of a Councillor on their website www.olg.nsw.gov.au

Council wishes to advise residents that they can report street light which are not functioning correctly by contacting Essential Energy by calling 13 20 80 or by visiting www.essentialenergy.com.au/streetlight

Louth Races are on again this Saturday, 6th August 2016 and once again a big influx of visitors will swell the population of the village for this very popular event on the Western NSW racing Calendar.

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 6th August 2016.

I will be meeting with Ross Hardie of Alluvium Australia and if anyone would like to have the opportunity to discuss the work that Alluvium Australia are doing, they are invited to meet with him at Diggers on the Darling after 2.30pm on Friday.

The Manager of Tourism and Economic Development will travel to Sydney this weekend to represent Bourke and the Orana Region at the Country Week Expo to be held on Saturday and Sunday. On the way home he will also represent Council at the Orana Freight and Logistics Forum organised by Orana Regional Development Organisation

Council is still trying to get a firm date from representatives from TAFE Western for their proposed visit to Bourke to discuss plans for the current TAFE site. Council has offered to assist with the advertising and coordination of community consultation process.

Councillor Sarah Barton represented the Mayor Andrew Lewis at the NAIDOC Week ceremony to recognise the important contribution made by Indigenous Ex-Servicemen and Ex-Service Women. The service was held last week at the Bourke Aboriginal Health Service whilst I had the honour of laying a wreath on behalf of Bourke Shire Council. There was once again a very good attendance at the ceremony.

The Annual Conference of LGNSW will be held in Wollongong from Sunday, 16th October 2016 until Tuesday, 18th October 2016. The Conference will no doubt have a strong focus on the current Local Government Reform Process and given that it is being held about a month after the Quadrennial elections it is expected that a number of new Councillors will take the opportunity to attend to familiarise themselves on the working of Local Government New South Wales.

President of Local Government New South Wales (LGNSW), Councillor Keith Rhoades and the Chief Executive Officer of LGNSW, Donna Rygate have indicated that they will be visiting Bourke on the 14th September 2016 as part of their ongoing commitment to meet with as many member Councils as they can. Prior to Bourke they will visit Brewarrina Shire Council.

Council is still awaiting the outcome of its application for funding under the Water and Sewage Infrastructure Backlog Programme with funding being available via Restart New South Wales. Council has two (2) projects for which applications for funding have been submitted with these being funding for a new Water Treatment Plant and funding an additional pond at the Sewerage Treatment Facility.

The first instalment for the rates is due on Wednesday, 31st August 2016.

If you are having difficulties meeting your obligations in relation to the payment of rates please contact the Revenue Officer at Council so that, if possible, suitable arrangements can be put in place.

Representatives of CAPRA Pty Ltd, the proponents of the proposed Abattoir were in Bourke yesterday and met with representatives of Council regarding the status of the planning approval for the Abattoir.

Members of the Murray Darling Basin Authority will be in Bourke on Wednesday, 10th August 2016 to meet with invited members of the community to discuss the Northern Basin Review and other water management issues. The meeting is one of a series of follow up meetings to those held earlier this year and these meetings will be held in 10 locations across the Northern Basin.

The meetings will be held in two (2) sessions with a more formal presentation in the morning touching on:-

- The work to date
- Water recovery scenarios being looked at and the decision making process
- How water recovery influences environmental outcomes
- Findings from the social and economic research

A number of local people have been invited to attend this session.

The afternoon session will take the form of a community drop in/Q&A Time and will run from 2.00pm - 4.00pm.

Mayor, Councillor Andrew Lewis and I participated in “Bourke’s Big Sleep Out” on Tuesday night along with around 12 other people. The initiative for Bourke was coordinated by Centacare with the “Sleep Out” being held in the Bourke High School Multipurpose Centre. There was a good representation from a broad cross section of community organisations in Bourke. The problem of homelessness is one of those seemingly “silent problems” within our community and indeed many other communities and the “Big Sleep Out” is designed to increase the awareness of the problem.

I have written to the Rural Fire Service informing them of Council’s decision and the similar decision of Brewarrina Shire Council that neither Council is prepared to pay the proposed 27.5% increase in contribution as requested by the RFS but limiting the increase to 1.8% above the 2015/2016 contribution in line with the allowable rate increase for Councils.

This payment was made by the due date of the 1st August 2016

I have also prepared a brief submission on behalf of the Western Division Councils detailing the inequity of the proposed increase as requested at the meeting of Western Division Councils held in Cobar on 11th July 2016.

While Bourke and Brewarrina Shires are currently looking at increases of over 27% the figure for Carrathool is even higher. Clearly Councils who have their rates capped at 1.8% cannot sustain increases of the magnitude proposed by the RFS.

The video conferencing equipment that was made available to all Councils who are members of the Far West Initiative has finally been delivered and should be operational with the next week. The equipment was supplied via the Minister for Local Government, the Hon. Paul Toole, MP and Office of Local Government and will provide the opportunity for more effective communication between the eight (8) member Councils of the Far West Initiative. The equipment will lend itself to a number of other uses within the Councils including training and seminars. Staff often forgoes the opportunity to attend training and educational initiatives because of the travelling involved and if these are able to be presented “on-line” it should be beneficial.

Quote of the week!

Hard work doesn't guarantee success, but improves its chances.

BJ Gupta

Ross Earl
General Manager