



## “From the GM’s Desk” 25<sup>th</sup> August 2016



I took the opportunity to visit the weir over the weekend and the water level was as high as I had seen it in my four (4) years in Bourke. The current flow will also put a much needed boost in the Menindee Lakes when it finally reaches that part of the river system.

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There will be an election in Bourke Shire with 13 candidates nominating for the ten (10) positions on Council. The elections will be held on Saturday, 10<sup>th</sup> September 2016.

The Elections for Bourke Shire Council are being conducted by the State Electoral Commission and all details in relation to the election are available on their website [www.votensw.info](http://www.votensw.info). This includes arrangements for pre-poll voting and postal voting.

Advertisements appeared in last weeks’ Western Herald showing the location of polling places as well as a list of candidates and again this information is available from the website [www.votensw.info](http://www.votensw.info)

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I attended the second day of the 2016 LGNSW Finance Summit held in Sydney last week. The keynote speaker was eminent Local Government finance expert, Dr Enid Slack, who is from Canada’s University of Toronto who was engaged by LGNSW to prepare a paper for LGNSW about revenue options from a global perspective.

Key stakeholders were invited to respond to the paper in a series of presentations.

These stakeholders included the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal, NSW Farmers, the Sydney Business Chamber, the Property Council of Australia, the Urban Taskforce Australia, National Parks Association, community sector groups and the NSW Office of Local Government.

Together with the General Manager from Lake Macquarie City Council and the Director of Corporate Services of Blacktown City Council, I was asked to be part of a panel representing New South Wales Councils to give my perspective on the revenue options available. Given that the other two (2) Councils have populations in excess of 300,000 people and Bourke Shire only having 3000 my presentation primarily focussed on the issues being faced by Councils in the west of the state. While it took some time researching and preparing the paper the opportunity to have input to such an important forum was valuable and ensured that the voice of the smaller Councils was able to be heard.

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The Council meeting held last Monday will in all probability be the last for the current Council with the elections being held on the 10<sup>th</sup> September 2016. At the meeting Councillors presented Mayor Andrew Lewis with a framed set of the prints ("A Vision Splendid") the Jenny Greentree paintings which hang in the foyer of the Council Chambers.

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Following the meeting Councillors and Staff attended a small function to mark the end of the quadrennial year. During the evening Certificates of Service from LGNSW were presented to Councillors, Sally Davis, Barry Hollman, Jack Bennett and Andrew Lewis with the other recipient Councillor Bob Stutsel being away but the opportunity will be taken to present him with his certificate at a later date. The certificates are given to those current Councillors who have completed three (3) terms on Council or retiring Councillors who have completed two (2) terms or eight (8) years.

Andrew Lewis was first elected to Council in 2002 and has 14 years of service, Councillors Sally Davis, Bob Stutsel and Barry Hollman were each elected in 2004 and thus to date each has 12 years' service.

Councillor Bennett served on Council from 1962-1965, then again from 1983-1999 and was elected again in 2012 making a total of 23 service years to date.

The certificates are personally signed by both the Minister for Local Government, the Hon. Paul Toole, MP and President of Local Government New South Wales, Keith Rhoades.

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At the dinner the contribution of the spouses /partners of Councillors was acknowledged as they are the ones who have to fill the void when Councillors are at meetings, conferences or inspections.

Manager of Corporate services presented Lorraine Lewis, wife of retiring Mayor Andrew a bouquet of flowers as a small thank you and appreciation of the support she has given Andrew during his time on Council an in particular over the past eight (8) years whilst he was Mayor.

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Outgoing Mayor Andrew Lewis was also presented with an Emeritus Mayor Certificate intended to provide ongoing recognition to those who have served as Mayor for minimum of three (3) one (1) year terms or one (1) full term as a popularly elected Mayor.

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The Grand Finals of the Barwon Darling League were held in Bourke on Sunday and saw a good crowd in attendance. Bob Walsh from Narromine and the Vice President of Country Rugby League (CRL) made the trip out to represent CRL on the day and he was accompanied by Rick Walford ex- St George player who is originally from Walgett but now works with National Rugby League as a development Officer.

Well done to the local Bourke Warriors who not only had two (2) junior sides involved but also undertook the coordination of the day. The Under 17's side were successful in winning the premiership with the Under 14's side being runners up on this occasion.

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While in Sydney I had the opportunity to visit the new Offices of StateCover Mutual which are located at 28 Margaret Street in Sydney which is the same building as LGNSW and for those of us visiting from the country it makes coordinating visits much easier. I took the opportunity to catch up with the Chief Executive Officer of StateCover, Linda Bostock and other members of the StateCover team who provide services to Bourke.

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I also took the opportunity to catch up with Katrina Carlon the Principal Advisor to the Minister for Local Government, the Hon. Paul Toole, MP. Katrina was kind enough to give me a tour of their office complex and while on that tour I had the opportunity to meet briefly with Minister Toole and have a chat about the Far West Initiative and a few other issues impacting on Local Government.

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In addition to the above I also met with representatives from the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) in relation to the proposal to re-establish an air service to both Bourke and Walgett which DPC were facilitating on behalf of the Government. The General Manager of Walgett, Don Ramsland joined in the discussion via telephone. Both Councils are keen to see an air service to their towns and we now need to review a few things and in particular anticipated patronage prior to approaching airlines directly. There is still a commitment by DPC to assist; however, at the current time it was felt that a little additional work on the ground locally would prove beneficial.

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Work on the structural assessment on the Charles Street water reservoir took place earlier in the week and Council will be awaiting the receipt of the report that will follow the inspection so that any work that may be required can commence and the reservoir put back into service.

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Indications are that the Discussion Paper in relation to Far West Initiative should finally be out this week together with the consultation strategy. As part of the process in ensuring that all residents have an understanding of the concept of the Far West Initiative and have the opportunity to have input the Office of Local Government have indicated that they will be undertaking an extensive consultation process which would see meetings held in the vast majority of towns and villages within the area of the Far West Initiative.

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***Quote of the week!***

*Trying is a part of failing. If you are afraid to fail then you are afraid to try.*

Ross Earl  
General Manager