



“From the GM’s Desk” 1st September 2016



Bourke Shire Council will be hosting a function on Saturday, 24th September 2016 to express its appreciation to outgoing Mayor, Andrew Lewis for his service to the community as Mayor for the past eight (8) years and his service as a Councillor for the past 14 years.

Details in relation to the function will be in the next edition of the Western Herald.

The Local Government Elections will be held on Saturday, 10th September 2016.

An election is scheduled for Bourke Shire Council with 13 candidates nominating for the 10 positions on Council. 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 This includes arrangements for pre-poll voting and postal voting.

Not all Councils will be having elections as some have recently been merged and others have been identified for possible merger and the elections for each of those type of Councils has been deferred.

It you are not registered in Bourke but elsewhere in the state you should check to see if your Council has an election on the 10th September 2016 by going to www.votensw.info

Pre-Poll is available at Council Offices from 8.30am - 4.30pm Monday to Friday.

Voting is compulsory.

There is no absentee voting in the Local Government Elections although persons enrolled at Bourke can also vote in Cobar as that is where the Returning Officer is located and the Sydney Town Hall has facilities for voting in respect of all Councils.

Postal voting is available and details can be obtained from the website.

Advertisements have appeared in previous editions of the Western Herald and appear again in this week’s edition detailing the location of polling places as well as list of candidates and again this information is also available from the website www.votensw.info

The current Councillors will cease to hold Office at midnight on the 9th September 2016 with the Councillors for the next quadrennial term commencing office once the poll for the election to be held on the 10th September is declared.

Council was fortunate to receive an increase in the 2016/2017 Financial Assistance Grants despite the fact that the total allocation available has been frozen for the past two (2) years. Council recorded its appreciation for the additional funding and has written to the Minister for Local Government, the Hon. Paul Toole expressing that appreciation, noting that the funding would be utilised for infrastructure upgrades and renewal.

The structural assessment on the Charles Street Water Reservoir took place last Friday and the reservoir is now once again in service.

Some remedial works will need to be undertaken to ensure that the life expectancy of the reservoir is maximised. Prior to that work being undertaken Council will need to prepare detailed specifications for any identified works and in all probability call tenders for the works.

The Discussion Paper in relation to Far West Initiative was finally released last Friday and can be accessed by visiting the website <http://www.nsw.gov.au/far-west-initiative>

As part of the process of 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 would 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.

The times and dates of the various meetings will be advertised and Council will ensure that adequate notice is given as to the location and times of the meetings scheduled within Bourke Shire.

The Consultation will hopefully commence on Monday, 5th September 2016 and be finalised on Friday, 14th October 2016.

It is proposed to hold a meeting of the Far West Initiative Advisory Committee via video conference prior to the rounds of Community Consultation commencing on Monday, 5th September 2016 and prior to the elections.

There are a lot of activities associated with the "Festival of a Thousand Stories" which starts this week and full details have been advertised in the "Western Herald" with programs also available at the Council Offices and the Back O' Bourke Exhibition Centre.

The Local Government Amendment (Governance and Planning) Bill 2016 has passed through both Houses of Parliament and will apparently be gazetted this week. Some of the changes that will come into effect are as follows:-

- a. Increase the term of office for Mayors elected by Councillors from 1 to 2 years
- b. To enable Councils to delegate the function of accepting tenders (other than for services currently provided by Council staff members) and granting of financial assistance

- c. To provide for the Council auditor functions to be exercised by the Auditor-General (or a person appointed by the Auditor-General) and to confer other auditor functions relating to local government on the Auditor General
- d. Clarifies that a Mayor who is elected by Councillors ceases to hold office as Mayor if the person ceases to hold office as a Councillor.
- e. Requires a Council to adopt a policy for payment of expenses and provision of facilities within the first twelve months of each Council term instead of requiring the policy to be renewed each year
- f. Require Councils to establish Audit, Risk and Improvement Committees
- g. To provide for a model Code of Conduct for meetings
- h. To require Councillors to take an oath or make an affirmation of office
- i. To provide expanded descriptions of the roles of Councillors ,Mayors and Councillors and the functions of General Managers
- j. To limit the role of Councils in determining the staff organisation of a Council to senior positions.

There a number of changes all of which will take place once the proclamation occurs and the changes are gazetted.

The changes are part of “Phase 1” of the review of the Local Government Act which has been around three (3) years in the making.

Council will again this year support the presentation nights of each of the schools within the Shire via a donation of \$100.00 to each school.

The Orana Regional Organisation of Councils (OROC) was due to meet in Bourke on the 30th September 2016, however, at the request of some members that meeting will be transferred to Dubbo and the meeting scheduled for December will be held in Bourke. The December Meeting will be the Annual General Meeting of OROC. With the current Chair of OROC, Councillor Bill McAnally from Narromine and other Deputy Chair, Councillor Andrew Lewis from Bourke both not standing at the elections the remaining Vice Chairman, Councillor Rex Wilson of Warren will assume the Chair until the Annual General Meeting.

I will be travelling to Dubbo on Friday, 2nd September 2016 to attend the General Managers Advisory Committee (GMAC) of OROC and no doubt the changes to the Local Government Act and the release of the Far West Initiative Discussion Paper will be topics of conversation at the meeting.

Local Government New South Wales (LGNSW) has now taken up the matter of increased contributions to the Rural Fire Service on behalf of its members. In the notification of the increases it appeared that the changed formula was developed in conjunction with LGNSW, however, it would appear that is not the case. My understanding is that there are a number of Councils faced with huge increases; Hay Shire Council with a 51.5% increase is perhaps the most impacted.

I attended a function on the weekend to mark the retirement of Mick Williams from the New South Wales Police Service after 30 years of service, much of that period spent within the Darling River Command.

I joined with his colleagues and the Bourke community in congratulating Mick on his service and achievements during that time. Mick has previously been awarded the Police Service Medal which is a very prestigious award and indicative of the esteem in which he was held. Mick will remain a resident in Bourke and I trust he enjoys a long and healthy retirement.

Quote of the Week!

"It is health that is the real wealth and not pieces of gold and silver"

Mahatma Ghandi

Ross Earl
General Manager