



“From the GM’s Desk”

15th September 2016



The Local Government Elections were held last Saturday and the results should be finalised late Thursday with the official results to possibly be released on Friday.

Counting is still taking place; advice received from the NSW Electoral Commission is that counting should be completed on Friday.

On reviewing the voting it was interesting to note that the percentage of informal votes within the shire was only around 3% while in some areas across the state it was in excess of 10%.

The timetable for the consultative process in relation to the proposed Far West Initiative (FWI) is to be released later today. The consultation process is to begin next week.

Once the consultation dates for Bourke Shire have been finalised Council will ensure that the details are available via its website.

It is important that people are aware of the consultation timetable and make an effort to both attend one of the meetings and if necessary make a submission.

The proposed changes to Local Government with the potential introduction of a statutory body to undertake a number of functions regionally will need to be carefully considered with the representation, funding and actual functions still to be determined. Local Government provides an extremely important role in the western section of New South Wales and it is important that any changes enhance that role, not diminish it.

The Chief Executive of Local Government New South Wales, Donna Rygate and Toni Allen Senior Media and Policy Advisor visited Bourke yesterday and together with other staff members I had the opportunity to meet with them and raise a number of issues including the increase in the Rural Fire Service Levy and the propose introduction of the Emergency Services Property Levy (ESPL).

Today, I will be in Sydney attending the first meeting of the StateCover Workers Compensation Advisory Committee to which I was recently appointed. StateCover provides workers compensation for the majority of Councils in New South Wales and I will be joined on that advisory board by seven (7) other representatives from across the state.

I am the only representative from west of the Newell Highway.

Prior to the StateCover meeting I will be meeting with representatives of Treasury and LGNSW and possibly the Office of Local Government (OLG) regarding the ESPL and the impact on rural Councils with large areas. I will particularly be conveying that message of behalf of the eight (8) Councils identified for the Far West Initiative.

In the late afternoon I will be talking with LGNSW regarding the Far West Initiative Consultative paper and providing some assistance in regard the preparation of a submission by LGNSW.

While it will be a very full day it is important to take the opportunity whilst in Sydney to schedule meetings within the available time and also ensure you keep abreast of issues impacting on Local Government and have an input into the decision making processes. It is also important to keep in contact with the people you deal with on a regular basis by email and telephone.

The next meeting of the Orana Regional Organisation of Councils (OROC) will be held on the 30th September 2016 in Dubbo and as I have mentioned previously there has been changes already in the executive of OROC with the Chair, Bill McAnally and Deputy Chair, Andrew Lewis both electing not to contest the recent elections. The elections for Mayor of most Council's is scheduled for later this month and there is always the possibility of other changes with the Mayor of each of the member Councils as the representatives on the Board of OROC with the exception of Dubbo Regional Council where the Administrator fulfils that role.

Bourke Shire Council has been an active member of OROC with some very tangible benefits being derived. The current membership of OROC also mirrors to large degree the membership of the Lower Macquarie Water Utilities Alliance which again has provided significant benefit to Council.

Annette and I travelled to Enngonia for the family fun day last Sunday. There was a good roll up of locals and visitors from Bourke and other parts of the district. The support from a number of the agencies within the Shire was also welcomed by the Enngonia Community and it was good to see a number of the agencies travelling out to contribute to the day.

Congratulations to all who assisted in the coordination of the day.

Council staff were out at Enngonia in the lead-up to the weekend to ensure that the Oval was well presented and I received numerous positive comments about the job the staff did. The facilities at the oval are excellent for such a small community and it is good to see them being utilised.

Council will be hosting a function to recognise the contribution to both Bourke Shire Council and Western New South Wales made by Andrew Lewis during his period of fourteen (14) years as a Councillor of Bourke Shire Council and in particular the last eight (8) years when he served as Mayor. The function will be held at the Back O' Bourke Centre on Saturday, 24th September 2016 between 6.30 and 9.30pm.

An invitation is issued to all those who would like to attend and recognise Andrew's contribution to our community. RSVP's should be received by Council no later than 16th September 2016 by phoning 68308000 or via email khoward@bourke.nsw.gov.au

A "Small Animal De-sexing" program will run from Alice Edwards Village on Monday, 19th September and at the old Gunderbooka/CDEP Yards on the Tuesday, 20th and Wednesday, 21st September. The program is for Bourke residents who hold a current Pension or Health Care Card and is offering De-sexing of male and female dogs and cats, vaccination for parvovirus in dogs, microchipping, health check and health care service for dogs and cats, treatment for worms, ticks, fleas and mites, euthanasia for sick dogs and cats and information about health care of your pet.

The Office of Local Government in conjunction with Local Government NSW will again be providing support to Councils and Councillors to help them in their roles by conducting “Hit the Ground Running” workshops across the state following the recent Local Government Elections. A similar series of workshops were held following the 2012 elections. The 2016 program has been updated to include information on how Local Government Reform affects each Council, particularly following the recent amendments to the Local Government Act 1993. The workshops aim to provide essential information to support Councillors serving their community and fulfilling their responsibilities.

The nearest location to Bourke is Cobar with the workshop at Cobar to be the last of the workshops held and is scheduled for Tuesday, 29th November 2016.

The Far West Team of the Rural Fire Service will be subject to a number of staff changes over the next month with the Zone Superintendent Chris Favelle announcing his intention to take a period of leave pending his retirement from the RFS whilst Inspector Robyn Favelle will be transferring to Forbes. Both these changes will be effective as of the 30th September 2016. Additionally, Bourke based Officers Craig Warwick and Shelly Stingmore have also accepted transfers with Craig having already commenced duties with the RFS team in Albury and Shelly going to RFS headquarters later this month.

Bourke and Brewarrina Shire Councils as part of the Barwon Darling Zone have had a very good working relationship with all these RFS staff members and would like to wish them well for the future.

Quote of the week!

Continuous effort - not strength or intelligence - is the key to unlocking our potential.

Winston Churchill

Ross Earl
General Manager