



“From the GM’s Desk” 22nd September 2016



The Local Government Elections were held Saturday, 10th September 2016 and the results were finalised and the poll declared on Friday, 16th September.

The result saw previous Councillors Victor Bartley, Sarah Barton, Cec Dorrington, Sally Davis, Lachlan Ford, Barry Hollman and Bob Stutsel re-elected to Council and they will be joined by Ian Cole, Sam Rice and John Thompson as Councillors for the ensuing quadrennial term. I congratulate each of them on their election and look forward to working with them.

Jack Bennett, Stuart Johnson and Alistair Ferguson were the unsuccessful candidates. I would like to thank Jack and Stuart for their contribution whilst on Council and in doing so note that Jack Bennett has had a combined period of Service with Council totally 23 years spread over nearly fifty (50) years.

I conducted a briefing session for all the newly elected Councillors on Monday to provide a basic insight into the role of a Councillor. Things Covered included the Code of Meeting Practice, Code of Conduct and a brief outline of the areas of responsibilities of each of the managers and what projects are currently underway or planned to be underway. In addition Councillors were also provided with a copy of the adopted Operational Plan (Budget) and Delivery Programme which takes Council through to the 30th June 2017 as well as the Community Strategic Plan.

A number of these plans have to be reviewed within the first twelve (12) months of each new Council and it will be rather busy twelve (12) months.

The first meeting of the new Council will be held on Monday, 26th September 2016 and at that meeting the Councillors will elect a Mayor from within their number and also elect a Deputy Mayor.

The Mayor will be elected for a two (2) year period following the changes in the Local Government Amendment (Governance and Planning) Bill 2016 whilst the Deputy Mayor is elected for a period not exceeding that two (2) year period.

Council will also review and adopt the delegations to be given to both the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

Other items on the agenda will be the determination of the internal committee structure and membership of those committees plus the determination of the Councils representative to each of the external organisations to which Council provides a Delegate.

Councillors will also have the opportunity to determine the day and time on which the regular meetings of Council will be held.

The Local Government Amendment (Governance and Planning) Bill 2016 also includes the addition of a new section to the Local Government, Section 233A, which provides that a Councillor must take an oath of office or make an affirmation of Office at or before the first meeting of the Council after the Councillor is elected.

The timetable for the consultative process in relation to the proposed Far West Initiative (FWI) has been released with the date for Bourke Shire Council being as follows:-

- Wanaaring - Thursday, 29th September 2016, between 1.00pm and 2.30pm at the Wanaaring Community Hall
- Louth – Wednesday, 5th October 2016, between 2.30pm and 4.30 pm at the Louth Tennis Club
- Bourke – 1st Session Thursday, 6th October 2016 between 5.00pm and 7.00 pm at Bourke Shire Chambers
- Bourke- 2nd Session Friday, 7th October 2016 between 7.30am-9.30am, at Bourke Shire Chambers. (It is intended that this is a breakfast session which will be supplied by OLG).

The OLG are aware of the difficulties that may arise if the wet weather continues into the early part of next month.

All the details are also available on Council's website www.bourke.nsw.gov.au

The Website also contains a link to the Far West Initiative Website which is <http://www.fitforthefuture.nsw.gov.au/far-west-initiative>

It is important that people are aware of the consultation timetable and make an effort to both attend one (1) 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.

Councils in the Far West Initiative have expressed concern that the consultation schedule did not start until Tuesday of this week and will finish on the 7th October 2016 which is only eighteen (18) days to cover 40% of the state and then allow only another seven (7) days from the finish date of consultation to the lodgement of submissions on the 14th October 2016.

The Office of Local Government (OLG) released the boundaries for the proposed Joint Organisation of Councils (JOs) late last week. The proposed Orana Region covers much of the area of the Orana Regional Organisation of Councils (OROC) with the deletion of Cobar, Bourke Brewarrina and Walgett Shires and the addition of Mid-Western Regional Council which is based in Mudgee.

All Regional and Rural Councils will each be a voting member of a JO. It has been previously foreshadowed the Councils who have been identified to be members of the Far West Initiative (FWI) will not be members of a JO with the FWI effectively fulfilling that role. The opportunity will still exist apparently for Councils to work with other Councils outside their JO with a proposal to have Associate (non-Voting) members of JOs. The four (4) Far West Initiative Councils who are

currently members of OROC would like to see the relationship continue and equally the other member Councils would support the ongoing relationship. The opportunity may be available to have dual membership and certainly this option will be pursued.

The OLG have invited all Councils in Regional and Rural Councils in NSW to provide feedback on the proposed JO boundaries by 5.00pm on Thursday, 27th October 2016.

The consultation paper Joint Organisations: Getting the boundaries right, has been released and is on the Fit for the Future website at <http://www.fitforthefuture.nsw.gov.au/joint-organisations>

The next Meeting of OROC will be in Dubbo on Friday, 30th September 2016 and the formation of JOs will no doubt be on the agenda.

A reminder that the function to acknowledge the contribution of former Mayor, Andrew Lewis to Bourke Shire Council during his 13 years as a Councillor will be held this Saturday, 24th September 2016 commencing at 6.30pm.

Together with Manager of Corporate Services, Leonie Brown and I joined with Local Government Representatives from across the Far west and Central West in attending the 2016 Local Government Forum run by the Rural Fire Service. I took the opportunity to voice Council's concern regarding the massive increase to Bourke Shire Council as a result of the changes made to the formula utilised to calculate the annual contributions for each Council and again highlighted the fact that Bourke Shire Council will only be paying the 2015/2016 contribution plus an increase of 1.8%.

Included amongst the attendees was Helen Pelham the former Director of Finance & Administration at Bourke Shire.

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 Road Running" workshops across the state following the recent Local Government Elections.

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.

Whilst it is difficult to schedule these meetings across the state it will mean that Councillors in this region will have attended at least three (3) meetings prior to the workshop being held.

Quote of the week!

"Kindness is the language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see"- Mark Twain

Ross Earl
General Manager