



“From the GM’s Desk” 29th September 2016



The Mayoral Election held in conjunction with last Monday’s Ordinary Meeting of Council saw Councillor Barry Hollman elected as Mayor whilst Councillor Lachlan Ford will be the Deputy Mayor and both will serve for the ensuing two (2) years following a decision by Council to have the term of Deputy Mayor consistent with that of Mayor which was increased from one (1) year in recent legislation.

Council also resolved to hold the meetings of Council on the 4th Tuesday of each month commencing at 9.00am in the Council Chambers 29 Mitchell Street in Bourke. This is a change from the recent practice of Monday meetings.

Council appointed delegates to a number of external organisations and to its internal committees and these appointments take immediate effect.

All the Councillors were required to undertake an oath of office or make an affirmation of office prior to the commencement of the meeting. This requirement was one of the changes provided for in the Local Government Amendment (Governance and Planning) Bill 2016.

The undertaking of the oath and affirmation I feel is a good initiative and in line with similar procedures in the other tiers of government. Each of the Councillors undertook either took the oath or affirmation on an individual basis.

The function to acknowledge the contribution of Andrew Lewis to Bourke Shire, the broader Bourke Community and Local Government in Western New South Wales was well attended with guests coming from a wide area to recognise Andrew’s service to Council and the community.

Member for Parkes Mark Coulton MP and wife Robyn were in attendance together with Councillor Doug Batten, Mayor of Gilgandra who was accompanied by his wife Cheryl. Councillor Lillian Brady Mayor of Cobar also attended representing the Western Division Councils with Trevor Randall speaking on behalf of the Bourke Community.

A number of former Councillors were also in attendance along with current councillors and staff members and community representatives.

It was good that members of Andrew’s family both locally and from Gulgong were able to be in attendance to mark the occasion. Andrew can be a man of few words and often gets straight to the point but is not afraid to ask the difficult questions. In my speech on Saturday night I referred to one of the compliments Andrew was given at the last years LGNSW Conference when a man unknown to Andrew came up to Andrew and said “mate, you have got to stop coming to these conferences” and Andrew a bit taken back asked why- to which the man replied “because you make too much sense” obviously referring to Andrew no nonsense and common sense approach and solutions to the issues raised.

On behalf of the Council staff I would like to thank Andrew for his contribution to Council over the past fourteen (14) years and the support and encouragement he provided. On a personal basis I have valued the support of Andrew over the past four (4) since I have been in Bourke and enjoyed the opportunity to work with him for the betterment of Bourke Shire.

The Bourke Shire Council Union Picnic Day is be held on Friday, 14th October and as such the Office, RMS Office, Library, Depot and all other operations will be closed for the Day. There will be staff on call for all emergencies and the contact number for Bourke Shire Council "on Call Duty Officer is 0419 722 055.

The Bourke Memorial Pool will not open until the 8th October to allow the preliminary construction works for the "splash park" to commence. This will limit the disruption to the general operation of the pool whilst the site establishment works are undertaken. Whilst it will cause some minor inconvenience I am sure that the long term benefit of the "splash park" will outweigh this minor delay.

The timetable for the consultative process in relation to the proposed Far West Initiative (FWI) has changed slightly with the wet weather and flooding necessitating a few changes. The meeting for Wanaaring on Thursday, 29th September 2016 has been POSTPONED. The Louth meeting will also be delayed by about a week with the timing to be confirmed.

The Far West Initiative meetings are scheduled for:-

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.

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 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 are still to be determined. Local Government provides an extremely important role in the western area of New South Wales and it is important that any changes enhance that role and not reduces it.

It is anticipated that the closing date for submissions in relation to the Far West Initiative will be extended from the advertised closing date of the 14th October in light of the postponement of the meetings in some areas. Attempts to clarify this extension have been unsuccessful to date but will be published once confirmed

The next Meeting of OROC will be held in Dubbo tomorrow on Friday, 30th September 2016 and I will be attending along with newly elected Mayor Barry Hollman.

Councillor Hollman will be one of a number of new Mayors elected within OROC with Councillor Craig Davies at Narromine, Councillor Phillip O'Connor at Brewarrina and Councillor Ian Woodcock at Walgett.

Councillor Rex Wilson from Warren was re-elected for his 29th term, Doug Batten was returned at Gilgandra as were Lillian Brady at Cobar, Michael Webb at Coonamble, Ray Donald at Bogan with Warrumbungle Shire to have their election today.

There are also a number of new Mayors in the Council designated to form the Far West Initiative with only Councillor Leigh Byron from Balranald and Councillor Lillian Brady from Cobar being re-elected. Councillor Darriea Turley is the Mayor in Broken Hill, Councillors Melisa Hederics in Wentworth, Phillip O'Connor in Brewarrina, Barry Hollman in Bourke and Ian Woodcock at Walgett with Central Darling Shire still having Administrator Greg Wright at the helm.

As a result there will be some potential new members of the Far West Initiative Advisory Committee (FWIAC) which may change the dynamics of that committee slightly.

With the Darling River reaching heights not seen for the four (4) years I have been in Bourke council staff have this week reviewed some of its flood procedures to ensure that they are able to react quickly to any potential problems. While there should not be any immediate issue for Bourke additional heavy rainfall in the upper reaches of the catchment will certainly need to be monitored.

The widespread rain has meant good flows in nearly all systems across the state and flooding in a number of areas has already inundated systems to the extent that they are unable to cope with the amount of rain.

I would like to encourage all residents to look after the nature strip in front of their home including the trimming of the edges. In a number of cases the long grass is growing into the gutters and not only stopping the water from flowing but also collecting rubbish and making the street look untidy. It only takes a short while to maintain the strip of grass but the improvement in appearance is very noticeable and demonstrates a degree of pride in town.

Quote of the week

"A meeting is an event at which the minutes are kept and the hours are lost".

Unknown

Ross Earl
General Manager