



“From the GM’s Desk”

6th October 2016



As I flagged in last week’s column the timetable for the consultative process in relation to the proposed Far West Initiative (FWI) has changed due to the wet weather and also the scheduling of additional meetings, including one at Enngonia.

The meetings within Bourke Shire currently scheduled at this point are as follows;

Bourke - 1st Session – Thursday, 6th October 2016 between 5.00pm and 7.00pm at Bourke Shire Chambers, *a free barbeque will operate prior to the meeting.*

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 free of charge by OLG.*

Louth – Wednesday, 5th October 2016 between 12.00pm and 2.00 pm at the Louth Tennis Club
A light lunch will be served from around 11.30pm

Enngonia – Wednesday, 12th October 2016 between 6.00 and 8.00pm at the CWA Hall
A barbeque will operate before the meeting

Wanaaring - *Still awaiting confirmation of details*

All the above 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 attend one of the meetings to find out what is exactly being planned for the Far West of the State and if necessary make a submission.

The proposed changes to Local Government involve the introduction of a statutory body to undertake a number of functions regionally and will need to be carefully considered along with the determination and appointment of representatives, sources of funding and actual functions to be undertaken. 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 and not reduces it.

The closing date for submissions in relation to the Far West Initiative has been extended to at least the 31st October 2016 with the exact date to be finalised once the meetings that have had to be postponed are held.

IT IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT THAT RESIDENTS MAKE THE EFFORT TO ATTEND ONE OF THE MEETINGS AND HAVE THEIR SAY IN THE FORMATION OF THE FAR WEST INITIATIVE AND THE ROLE IT WILL PLAY IN THIS PART OF THE STATE

Mayor Barry Hollman has indicated that he would like to conduct informal interviews/meetings with residents who wish to raise issues and concerns with him between 2.00pm and 4.00pm on a Monday starting on 10th October 2016.

The Bourke Memorial Pool will open this Saturday, 8th October 2016. There may be some minor inconvenience due to the commencement of construction works for the “splash park”. Council would ask that the public be mindful of the works being undertaken and as far as possible keep away from the construction area.

A meeting of OROC was held in Dubbo last Friday and on the evening prior to the meeting a farewell function was held for the outgoing Chair Bill McAnally who had given six (6) years dedicated service to OROC and was an outstanding leader and a very strong advocate for the member.

On the agenda was a presentation from Ian Scott, Community Affairs Manager of NBN providing details of the expected roll out of the NBN across the Far West, together with the progress to date.

I have again issued an invitation to Ian to visit Bourke to provide the community with additional detail in relation to the roll out of the NBN in Bourke which is scheduled to commence later this year and will be operational in the second quarter of 2017. A visit is hopefully being scheduled shortly. The invitation was issued following a request from the Local Business Group in relation to the type of service to be provided in Bourke and the speed of that service which will to a degree impact on future planning for a number of businesses.

The next meeting of OROC will be the Annual General Meeting on the 2nd December and will be held in Bourke. The opportunity will be taken to invite all Bourke Shire Councillors to join with the OROC Board for dinner on the evening prior to the meeting so that they have the opportunity to meet with other Local Government leaders within our region to discuss areas of concern.

Councillor Sarah Barton, Manager of Corporate Services, Leonie Brown and I travelled to Cobar on Wednesday evening to attend the farewell for Chris and Robyn Favelle who will be leaving their roles as part of the Western Region of the Rural Fire Service. Both Chris and Robyn have made a significant contribution to the area and their efforts are in no small way responsible to the improvement in fire-fighting capabilities in this part of the state.

Representatives from most Local Government areas that form part of the Western Region attended the function and together with Robyn and Chris’s peers all spoke in glowing terms of their contribution. Shane Fitzgibbon Commissioner of the NSW Rural Fire Service made the trip up to Cobar for the occasion and he too acknowledged the contribution of both and in particular Chris which has flagged his intention to retire after he completes a period of extended leave.

Both the Manager of Corporate Services and I had the opportunity to speak casually to Commissioner Fitzgibbon and in the course of the conversation he indicated that he was aware of Council's concern regarding the substantial increase in contributions incurred by Bourke and Brewarrina Shires as members of the Barwon Darling Zone. The Commissioner indicated that he would be reviewing the matter on our behalf and to determine why such a significant spike in contributions occurred as a result of the new formula.

The Darling River continues to rise with an anticipated peak of around nine (9) metres expected tomorrow. At this stage there is not any major concerns in relation to flooding within the Shire, however, the situation will again be monitored if there is any further substantive falls in the catchment.

Around 40 Rotarians and partners from Gunnedah visited Bourke over the long weekend and members of the Bourke Rotary Club joined them for dinner at Diggers on the Darling on the Saturday evening. For many it was their first visit to Bourke and I received considerable positive comment regarding the town generally. Also joining the Rotary members for the evening were Frank and Beverley Brennan from Dubbo with Beverley having family ties to Bourke, Father Magnus and Richard Stutchbury the landscape architect doing the new work on the entrance area at the Back O' Bourke Exhibition Centre.

Annette and I hosted Liz Rushby of Moree and Wendy Allen from Pilliga over the long weekend with Liz and Wendy having been work colleagues of Annette when she worked as the Palliative Care Nurse at Moree Community Health.

It was the first trip out this way for both and they were impressed with the appearance of the town and the facilities available. Liz was very appreciative of the outstanding service she received from the staff at Towers Dug Store in obtaining emergency supplies of medications she required.

Councillor Cec Dorrington will join Mayor Barry Hollman and myself as delegates to the Local Government NSW Annual Conference to be held in Wollongong on the 16th, 17th and 18th October 2016.

Councillor Ian Cole will represent Council at the Annual General Meeting of the Murray Darling Association to be held in Dubbo on the 26th and 27th October 2016.

The Bourke Shire Council Union Picnic Day is being held on Friday, 14th October and as such the Office, RMS Office, Library and 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.

Bill Parker the newly appointed CEO of Rural and Remote Medical Services (RaRMS) and Operations Manager of RaRMS Shane Hatton, addressed Council during last week's meeting in response to Council's concerns regarding the fact that Bourke still relied on a number of locum doctors to service the town. RaRMS indicated that they were confident that permanent doctors would be in place prior to Christmas with provision also made for limiting the number of individual locums being utilised and thus ensuring that there is an increased level of continuity of care for patients.

Quote of the week

"The use of video evidence is not always conclusive, but it sure beats the memory bank of most witnesses"- Jack Gibson

Ross Earl
General Manager