



“From the GM’s Desk”

13th October 2016



Officers from the Office of Local Government, Melissa Gibbs and Erin Hale accompanied by Independent Facilitator, Mark Conlon and Gerry Collins from the Department of Premier and Cabinet conducted two (2) consultation meetings in relation to the proposed establishment of the Far West Initiative last Thursday and Friday and also visited both Louth and Enngonia to conduct similar sessions yesterday.

There was around a total of 60 people attending the Bourke sessions and there was some good questions posed and generally those in attendance were seeking a little more clarity in regards the actual functions to be performed by the Statutory Body, the way it would be funded and how it was proposed to engage the other tiers of Government in the process.

Mayor Barry Hollman and Deputy Mayor Lachlan Ford attended all four (4) sessions held to date whilst there was a very good attendance by Councillors and Staff at all sessions.

The Far West Initiative (FWI) consultation will soon wind up with visits to those areas impacted by road closures including Wanaaring, Ivanhoe and Tibooburra to be held as soon as the road network allows. As soon as the dates are finalised they will be publicised throughout Wanaaring and District via the Progress Association network

The proposed changes to Local Government involving the introduction of a statutory body to undertake a number of functions regionally will need to be carefully considered. Local Government plays an extremely important role in the western section of New South Wales and it is important that any changes enhance that role and not reduce 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. Residents are encouraged to provide feedback visiting the online facility <http://www.fitforthefuture.nsw.gov.au/far-west-initiative>

You will need to scroll down to the bottom to access the feedback form. If you need any help you are invited to contact one of the customer service staff at Council or at the Library.

Council has received notification of the success of two (2) grant applications, one for the establishment of an exercise park in the north eastern corner of Central Park and the second for the installation of Playground equipment in Jones Park. Funding has been made available from the Social Housing Community Improvement Fund through the Department of Family and Community Services.

Most of the General Managers of the Councils involved in the Far West Initiative (FWI) met in Brewarrina last week to discuss the progress and consultation phase of the Far West Initiative and to exchange the views of their respective Councils. Michael Boyd from Central Darling joined the meeting via video conference which worked reasonably well, whilst prior engagements meant James Roncon from Broken Hill was unable to be present. It was a big effort from my counterparts from Wentworth and Balranald and also Leigh Byron Mayor of Balranald and also President of Western Division to travel up to this part of the state. They were keen to gauge for themselves the feeling of the communities in the north of the state so they took the opportunity to attend the consultation meetings at Brewarrina and Bourke.

Mayor Barry Hollman and I were able to join our visitors for dinner and informal discussions on the Wednesday night which provided an insight into the direction and feelings of our southern members of the FWI.

The issue of the return of air services to Bourke is still very much on the agenda and Bourke Shire Council is working cooperatively with Walgett Shire in this regard as well as the Department of Premier and Cabinet. The member for Barwon Kevin Humphries, MP continues to be a strong advocate for a return of the air services and his support is certainly welcomed.

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 each Monday. The meetings started on Monday, 10th October 2016 and Councillor Hollman would welcome anyone who wishes to meet with him.

Bourke Memorial Pool opened last Saturday and with the hot weather experienced earlier in the week would have been welcomed by those seeking to cool off. A number of the regular early morning lap swimmers have been looking forward to the opening for some time and the pool is open in the morning between 6.00am and 8.00 am. Patrons are reminded that 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.

The Darling River rose to 9.70 metres yesterday with good flows still anticipated for some time yet and with most storage facilities full there is a degree of optimism for a very good cotton crop which will certainly be welcomed by those who have had reasonably lean time over the past few years. The upturn in the rural sector provides huge benefits for the commercial and retails sectors of the Bourke Community with the business sector heavily influenced by the ongoing success of rural industries and equally, buoyancy in the rural sector also provides employment opportunities in all, sectors of the community.

A reminder that Bourke Shire Council Union Picnic Day is being held TOMORROW, Friday, 14th October and as such the Office, RMS Office, Depot and Library will be closed for the Day. Whilst all staff will have the opportunity to attend the picnic day there will be staff "on call" for all emergencies and the contact number for Bourke Shire Council "On Call Duty Officer" is 0419722055.

Some Council functions will NOT be affected including:-

- Garbage Collection as per normal
 - Swimming Pool open as per normal
 - Waste Management Facility as per normal
 - Bourke Visitor Information Centre (VIC) as per normal
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Bourke Shire Council has undertaken a review and update of its Emergency Management Plan (EMPLAN) which has been circulated to all members of the Local Emergency Management Committee (LEMC) prior to its presentation of the next LEMC meeting to be held on the 8th November 2016. Once the Bourke LEMC endorses it will then go to the Regional Emergency Management Committee. There is a lot of work that goes into the development of such plans but they are a vital tool in times of flood and other emergency.

The Annual General Meeting of Barwon-Darling Water will be held at the Walgett CWA Rooms in Wee Waa Street, Walgett on Monday 17th October 2016 from 10am.

This will be followed by an ordinary meeting of Barwon-Darling Water.

The guest speaker at the AGM will be Deputy Director General of DPI – Gavin Hanlon.

Councillor Ian Cole and the Manager of Works Peter Brown will represent Council at the meeting.

Barwon Darling Water brings together the major users of water along the river system and Local Governments along the system are a major user.

I noticed that the legal action taken by Cabonne Council in relation to their proposed amalgamation with both Orange and Blayney Councils was unsuccessful and similarly the situation of the case by Oberon Shire in relation to their proposed merger with Bathurst City. The parties have, I understand a period of seven (7) days from the date of the decision which was last Friday to lodge an appeal.

A reminder that if you are having difficulty in meeting your payment of rates you should discuss the situation with the Council's Revenue Officer or the Manager of Corporate Services so suitable arrangements can be put in place and the substantial legal costs involved in recovery proceedings avoided.

Quote of the week!

"Running away from any problem will only increase the distance from the solution"

Ross Earl
General Manager