



“From the GM’s Desk” 20th October 2016



The Mayor, Councillor Barry Hollman and I attended the 2016 Annual Conference of Local Government NSW South Wales held in Wollongong from Sunday, 16th October 2016 to Tuesday, 18th October 2016.

The Sunday session of the conference involved a meeting of all General Managers in New South Wales to discuss the introduction of a new State Award in 2017 and also the impact of the new Local Government legislation currently being rolled out. At the same time the elected members had the option of going to one of three (3) seminars looking at either the changes to the Local Government Act, Planning matters or the principles of good governance.

The Mayor of Wollongong hosted a welcome function on Sunday evening which was followed by a dinner with the Western Division Councils.

The Western Division Councils also held a briefing meeting at 7.30am on Monday prior to the opening of the first day of the business section of the conference. The afternoon session of the conference was attended by the Premier of NSW, the Hon Mike Baird MP.

On Monday night the Minister for Local Government, the Hon Paul Toole, MP hosted the Mayors and General Managers of the eight (8) Councils involved in the Far West Initiative (FWI) at a small function during which we had the opportunity to informally meet with the Minister to discuss the current status of the FWI.

Minister Toole also spoke to the conference on Tuesday morning.

There a number of changes on the horizon for Local Government and the conference highlighted a number of those changes.

The next Meeting of Bourke Shire Council will be held on *TUESDAY*, 25th October 2016 commencing at 9.00am.

As usual the opportunity exists for members of the public to address Council during the public forum which is held at 10.00am on each meeting day.

Whilst there is no need to book it would be advantageous if you could advise the Executive Assistant, Kai Howard- Oakman of your proposed attendance and matter of concern so that if required, necessary background information can be prepared.

The Remembrance Day commemoration service will be held at the Cenotaph in Central Park on the 11th November. Persons intending to participate in the services are asked to be at the cenotaph no later than 10.50 am. The Bourke Remembrance Day Service is coordinated by the Local RSL and enquiries can be directed to Victor Bartley.

Mayor Barry Hollman reminds residents that on each Monday he will be available to meet with residents between 2.00pm and 4.00pm at the Council Offices. Residents who have any issues or concern can take the opportunity to raise these with him.

Nominations are now open for the 2017 Bourke Shire Australia Day Awards. Nominations close on the 11th January 2017.

While nominations will not close until January the opportunity exists for organisations and individuals to consider nominating someone for these important awards which recognise the contributions many people make to ensure our community enjoys the services and amenity it does. The categories are:

- Citizen of the year,
- Young citizen of the year (under 25),
- Sportsperson of the Year
- Junior Sportsperson (under 25) of the year,
- Service through employment Awards,
- Village Service Award
- Emergency Services Volunteer of the Year

It is proposed to introduce a new section to the awards with a section to be added to recognise the community event of the year. There have been a number of events held throughout 2016 that would be worthy of a nomination.

It is important that the quiet achievers within our community are recognised and the Australia Day Awards can provide this recognition.

Don't say someone will nominate a person be that "someone"!

The construction of the splash park at the Bourke swimming pool continues with works on the foundations and laying of the pipeline that will supply the water. We would expect that later this week the concrete pour will begin with work also soon to start on the new filtration plant. Further updates will be provided as the construction continues.

We would ask all members of the public to stay clear of the worksite and remain behind the site fencing that is in place.

Bourke Shire Council hosted the Human Resources (HR) Officers Group based in the Orana Regional Organisation of Councils (OROC). The meetings are held throughout the region on a regular basis and provide the opportunity for the Human Resources staff from each of the Councils to build networks, share problems and identify solutions. The meetings also feature a guest speaker with expert knowledge on one of the number of areas under the HR banner.

Council recently signed a contract with CIVICA for the upgrade of our current accounting software to a system known as Practical. Practical is used by a number of other Councils in the region and should be able to provide much improved reporting capabilities and facilities. Council was fortunate to secure funding through the Office of Local Government's Innovation fund and this will be utilised to assist in the costs incurred in improving Council's software across the organisation.

Council's Auditors, Hills Rogers, from Sydney have completed the "on site" component of their audit in relation to the preparation of Councils 2015/2016 Financial Reports and are working with our accounting staff to finalise the reports in readiness for their publication.

The Financial Reports are required to be lodged by 31st October each year and need to be presented to a meeting of Council. It is anticipated that Council's Audit Financial Statements will be presented to Council on the 28th November 2016.

Council's input has been sort in relation to the introduction of the new Emergency Services Property (ESPL) which will apply from 1st July 2017. The idea is that ESPL will ensure that ALL landowners fund the cost of emergency services and not just those who are insured. However, the expectation that Councils will both charge and collect the levy as part of its rating system has not been universally embraced by the Local Government sector although it seems that it will happen regardless.

The issue for Local Government now centres on the ongoing operation of the ESPL. There are still a number of issues to be finalised including the requirement to classify individual blocks of land, the level of payment to Councils for the levy and collection, the handling of complaints and the method of collecting outstanding amounts and the apportionment of amounts collected.

Representatives from the National Broadband Network and their construction partner Downer were in town last week to further develop their plans for the construction of the network in Bourke. Council staff met with these representatives to discuss the fibre installation including the timing, reinstatement after the build and layout of Council infrastructure. It is expected that the installation of fibre will begin in Bourke in November with much of the work completed by Christmas. Details of the availability of this network to retail customers will follow.

Quote of the week!

"Team work divides the task and multiplies the success"- Unknown

Ross Earl
General Manager