



“From the GM’s Desk”

27th October 2016



Bourke Shire Council has renewed calls for the re-establishment of the Birthing Unit at the Bourke Hospital. Council at its meeting on Tuesday, 25th October 2016 resolved to write to the Minister for Health, the Hon Jillian Skinner, MP calling for the immediate re-establishment of the Birthing Unit at Bourke with copies of the letter to be sent to both the Member for Barwon, Kevin Humphries, MP and the Chief Executive of Western Area Health, Scott Mc Laughlin.

Council has previously lobbied to have the Birthing Unit re-established but to no avail and the Council will again intensify its efforts in this regard.

Council will be also writing to the New Wales Department of Health expressing concern at the lack of incentives available for attracting and retaining nurses and Allied Health Professionals to Bourke and Western New South Wales. Other agencies have utilised incentives with great success.

Despite ongoing issues in ensuring an adequate numbers of trained nursing and Allied Health Professionals are available in this part of the state there has been little provided in the way of incentives such as the provision of subsidised housing or ongoing professional development opportunities

An investment in these incentives would in all probability be offset by a reduction of costs involved in the employment of agency nurses, the ongoing cost associated with recruitment and inductions.

In an effort to increase its communication and contact with all sectors of the community Bourke Shire Council has launched its own Facebook page.

The Facebook page will complement the information currently available in the website and will include such things as road condition reports, Council’s Events, notification of planned water outages and seek feedback in relation to planned activities.

<https://www.facebook.com/bourkeshireCouncil>

Council has received a number of calls from residents regarding young children jumping into the river from the wharf and expressing concern at the potential danger of the practice. Council has erected signs which prohibit the practice and would seek the co-operation of all people in actively discouraging the practice which could lead to a tragedy. In all warnings in relation to flood waters people are discouraged from entering the water due to the danger that it presents.

In all SES bulletins in relation to flood waters it is emphasised that people should not attempt to drive or walk through flood water and this certainly includes swimming or jumping in flooded water ways just for fun.

Council has received its first progress payment from the Commonwealth Attorney's- General Department under the 2015-2016 Safer Streets Programme for the upgrade of the CCTV cameras in and around the Bourke Township. The project includes the installation of seven (7) new cameras and the upgrade of another eight (8) with most of those to be upgraded currently utilising out-dated technology.

Work has already commenced on the installation of the poles to house the new cameras.

The total grant was for \$146,020 and Council's contribution will be \$45,050 making the total project amount \$191,060.

The Darling River was still rising as of Wednesday morning, with a height of 10.27 meters having been reached earlier this week. I was interested to note the statistics on the front page of last week's Western Herald regarding the amount of water that is actually passing through Bourke at the moment. When you consider that two (2) weeks at the current flow levels would fill Sydney Harbour it gives an indication of the amount of water that most people can relate. The flows should see Menindee Lakes once again full and the communities and lanowners downstream of Menindee, benefitting from the increased flows.

At the conference of Local Government New South Wales held in Wollongong last week one of the key speakers was Kitty Chiller who delivered a powerful and inspiring presentation about the challenges she faced as Australia's Chef de Mission for the 2016 Rio Olympics. Following her speech Kitty received a standing ovation from the crowd which was thoroughly deserved.

She is certainly a very inspiring woman and her efforts in undertaking what is essentially a voluntary role for a period of four (4) months with such dedication and passion is to be applauded.

The next meeting of the Local Emergency Management Committee (LEMC) is to be held on the 8th November 2016 with all agencies involvement in the provision of emergency services represented.

Last week the Waste and Resource Recovery Amendment (Container Deposit Scheme) Act 2016 was passed by Parliament, providing a legislative framework for the scheme to commence in July 2017. This is a landmark event given that Local Government through their peak bodies and individually have advocated for a container deposit scheme for more than 20 years. Many of the finer details of the scheme's operation are being worked through, including the process for providing refunds for containers collected through kerbside. Bourke Shire Council has been a strong advocate for the Container Deposit Scheme and will be closely following the progress to ensure that the implementation of the scheme recognises the difficulties of the Councils in the west of the State in relation to population density and distances.

The long-anticipated Crown Land Management Bill 2016 was introduced into the NSW Parliament on last week and it will see significant changes to the management of crown land throughout the state. Like all Councils across the state Bourke Shire Council will be supporting the stance of Local Government New South Wales in ensuring that any transfers of Crown land to Councils should be subject to Council agreement, in order to protect Councils from cost and responsibility shifting.

Recently at the Local Government New South Wales Conference I had the opportunity to catch up with a number of people with whom we deal with on a regular basis but with whom face to face contact is rare and it is good to be able to put a face to a name. I also caught with ex- Bourke residents Ashley Wielinga now General Manager at Warren and Gary Lavelle now General Manager at Temora both of whom started their Local Government careers at Bourke Shire.

The Remembrance Day commemoration service will be held at the Cenotaph in Central Park on the 11th November. Persons intending to participate in the service are asked to be at the cenotaph no later than 10.50am. 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 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. On Monday, Mayor Hollman had a number of persons who were keen to bring to his attention issues or concerns.

Nominations are now open for the 2017 Bourke Shire Australia Day Awards. Nominations will close on the 11th January 2017 at 4.00pm.

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 currently enjoys.

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
- Community Event of the Year

A new section to the awards, the category being 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 provided a mechanism for these valuable contributors to our community are recognised.

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

Bourke Shire Council will once again be an active participant in the Asbestos Awareness month in November, Council staff through the month of November will be actively promoting the importance of Asbestos Awareness across our LGA not only households but for businesses and trades people.

A key component of the campaign is the community education tool, Betty. Betty is a house on wheels designed to raise awareness of the dangers of asbestos in homes and buildings and she's very effective. Bourke Shire Council Staff has secured 'Betty' to visit the township as part of Asbestos Awareness Month.

Betty's Visit to Bourke

Day and Date: Tuesday, 22nd November 2016

Display Time: 11:30am – 1:30pm

Quote of the week!

"Always laugh when you can. It is cheap medicine -Lord Bryon

Ross Earl

General Manager