



“From the GM’s Desk” 24th November 2016



I travelled to Dubbo last Thursday night along with other General Managers from the OROC region to attend a farewell function for Greg Lamont the former General Manager of Narromine Shire Council. On the Friday we had the quarterly meeting of the General Managers Advisory Committee (GMAC) for OROC. Included on the agenda was the Member for Parkes Mark Coulton who was invited to hear members concerns regarding the allocation of the National Disaster Funding. Also on the agenda was an address from representatives from the Lower Macquarie Water Utility Alliance, Asset Management Working Group and plans to tailor and deliver an Asset Management course for Councillors to give them a greater understanding of the issues involved.

Also subject to discussion was the fact that as part of the review of the Local Government Act the external audit function for all NSW Councils will now be undertaken by the New South Auditor General who will in turn appoint suitably qualified and experienced auditors to undertake the actual audit on their behalf. They will, however, at all times retain responsible for the overall supervision of the audit process. The involvement of the Auditor General will no doubt add another layer of cost for Councils and it is likely that all Councils will see a significant increase in their audit costs from this year on.

In a change yet to be formally introduced all Councils will be a required to establish an internal audit function to review systems and processes within their organisations. A number of Councils introduced the internal function when it was a recommendation rather than being mandated. While recognising that there will be benefits to flow from the internal audit process, it will come at a cost and as long as the savings are quantifiable it is should be seen as a positive change. In an effort to ensure that costs are kept at a reasonable level Local Government New South Wales is looking at ways it may be able to help by sourcing and retaining a suitable pool of qualified internal auditors who would be available to service Councils across the state.

The meetings in relation to the review process for the update of the Community Strategic Plan (CSP) will commence next week at Wanaaring and then in the following week there will be meetings across the remainder of the shire.

The time table for the community consultation meetings is as follows:-

Wanaaring	30th November	10.00am
Louth	6th December	8.00am
Byrock	7th December	1.00pm
Bourke	7th December	5.30pm
Enngonia	8th December	1.00pm
Fords Bridge	8th December	9.30pm

PLEASE NOTE THE AMENDED TIME FOR WANAARING

I would encourage members of the public to attend the meeting and provide input into the future direction that should be taken for our community. Not all of the issues raised will be the responsibility of Council but are still important to the shire community and will be included in the CSP. In many instances whilst Council is not the provider of a service it can be a strong advocate for the community.

It is particularly important that the views of the residents in the outlying areas of the shire are received and considered.

Mayor Barry Hollman reminds the community that each Monday he will be available to meet with residents between 2.00pm and 4.00pm at the Council Offices. There have already been a number of people who have taken the opportunity to speak to Mayor Hollman on a variety of issues and where possible he will try and provide a solution or a way forward on the issues which are raised with him. Appointments will be made for 15 minute periods.

Nominations are now open for the 2017 Bourke Shire Australia Day Awards. Nominations will be accepted up until 11th January 2017.

Nominate someone and ensure that the unsung heroes within our community are recognised.

While there is a while to go before nominations close we are moving into the festive and holiday period and the reminder through the Western Herald won't be available and it is easy to miss the closing date.

I would once again urge people to use water responsibly. While at the moment there is a good flow in the river it is reducing rapidly.

Residents in Bourke are fortunate to have a dual water supply in Bourke and whilst the filtered water is metered the raw water is not and residents can effectively utilise as much as they require.

This, however, does not mean that water should be wasted and left on to flow into the gutters causing water to pond in low lying areas. Bourke is a flat area and drainage is difficult and the fact that water is allowed to flow into gutters not only causes inconvenience to the surrounding property owners but also causes damage to the road pavement and additional expense to Council, not to mention the costs involved in pumping the water in the first instance.

The cooperation of all residents is sought in ensuring that water is used effectively and not let flow wastefully into the gutters. Timer taps are a cheap and easy way to regulate water flow.

A reminder that the Bourke Public Library has a large range of material which is available for borrowing free of charge by residents (there is a refundable deposit on some items). Amongst the material available are copies of DVDs of some of the old favourite television comedy shows which always provide good entertainment. If you haven't been into the Library take the opportunity to visit to see the extensive range of books, magazines and DVDs that are available with new stock arriving regularly.

To provide the opportunity for residents to rid their homes and yards of unwanted rubbish and material prior to Christmas, Council will be holding two (2) “ Fee Free Weekends” at the Waste Management Facility, the first of which will be held this weekend 26th and 27th November and then again on the weekend of the 3rd and 4th December 2016. All domestic rubbish will be able to be deposited free of charge on that day. There are some minor exceptions, with a charge still applying to tyres, asbestos, chemicals, liquid waste, building and commercial waste.

The Minister for Local Government, the Hon. Paul Toole, MP has convened a meeting of the Far West Initiative Advisory Committee (FWIAC) via video-conference for today (24th November 2016). All members of the FWIAC should be participating. With the submissions in relation to the FWI due on the 16th December 2016 the meeting will be an important one for all those Councils involved. At an informal meeting with the Mayors and General Managers of the eight (8) councils in the FWI during the LGNSW Conference in Wollongong Minister Toole invited questions to be put to him in writing in relation to the FWI and no doubt many of these will be covered in his address.

I would encourage anyone who wishes to make a submission in relation to the FWI to ensure they do so by the closing date of the 16th December 2016. There have been extensive rounds of community consultation in respect of the FWI and it is important that the views of the residents of the FWI area are made known to the Minister and Officers from the Office of Local Government.

Following the conclusion of the Town and Villages Committee held last Thursday all available Councillors and Senior Staff visited the newly constructed infrastructure at Walkden’s Bore which was built to assist in drought proofing Bourke. I understand that all Councillors were extremely impressed with the work that had been completed and it provided them with a much greater understanding of the complexity and operation of the facility.

Whilst in Dubbo on Friday, I heard that Stuart MacLeod the Director of Technical Services at Dubbo Regional Council had announced that he would be retiring on the 16th December. Stuart has been an absolute champion in so many ways for the Lower Macquarie Water Utilities Alliance (LMWUA) and without his dedication and passion for the concept I doubt that the Alliance and its members would have achieved the results that they have to date and within such a relatively short timeframe. I join with all members of the LMWUA in thanking Stuart for his efforts and wish him well for the future. Certainly Bourke Shire has been a beneficiary of the achievements of the LMWUA and our ability to meet current best practice and all relevant standards has certainly been enhanced by our membership of the LMWUA.

Quote of the week!

“Listening is often the only thing needed to help someone”

Ross Earl
General Manager