



“From the GM’s Desk” 15th December 2016



Next week consulting firm Morrison Low based in Sydney will be visiting Bourke on behalf of the Office of Local Government (OLG) to review Councils Asset Management Plan (AMP) and carry out an infrastructure audit. They will undertake a physical inspection of some of Councils assets and compare their assessment with Council’s Asset Management Plan.

Early next year T-Corp will be undertaking a review of Councils financial position and look at that position in light of a number of the financial indicators which were used under the Fit for the Future Process.

The result of the T-Corp assessment will in part determine whether Council is eligible to access the loan borrowing facility for Local Government which has been established for those Councils that have been deemed “Fit for the Future”. The facility will be offering loans with interest rates lower than those currently available through traditional lending sources.

The wild winds last Thursday night not only caused damage to a number of trees and cars but also resulted in the postponement of a number of events due to the blackout that occurred as a result. Whilst very disappointing the organisers of the functions regrouped and rescheduled and although this meant some people could not attend it did not dampen the enthusiasm of those who did attend.

One of the functions postponed was the Maranguka dinner to recognise their achievements over the past twelve months and to also express their appreciation to those who have assisted them over that period. I had the opportunity to attend the postponed function at lunchtime on Friday and receive a certificate of appreciation on behalf of Council.

The blackouts provided a reminder of just how much we depend of electricity for our everyday activities and whilst it did cause some inconvenience it would have been much more uncomfortable if it had occurred when the temperatures were around the 45 degree mark.

Council staff members were quickly on the job to remove the fallen trees and clean up some of the debris around town. I also understand that the SES responded to a couple of calls for assistance with some sections of roofing on a house coming loose.

The Rural Fire Service (RFS) has advised that Bourke and Brewarrina Shire Council as members of the Barwon Darling Zone of the RFS will receive a grant of a \$47,075.00 as an offset against the additional costs incurred by the introduction of the new methodology utilised to calculate the contributions by Council. Both Councils have been very vocal in their opposition to the introduction of the new methodology and the impact on the 2016/2017 budgets. The grant is a “one off” grant and the Councils will still be faced with the significant increase in the 2017/2018 operational plan and in the following years.

Once again there seems to be an increase in the amount of graffiti around town which certainly detracts from the appearance of the town. It costs a considerable amount of money to remove the graffiti and this is money that could be productively utilised on the ongoing beautification of the town.

The same situation applies to the amount of litter that is dumped on the ground despite bins in most instances being available. Again valuable resources are being utilised unnecessarily simply because of a lack of care or laziness, or both.

The Splash Park continues to take shape and although it has taken a little longer than initially anticipated I am sure that the wait will have been worth it.

The Senior Citizens Christmas Party hosted by the Bourke Rotary Club was again a very successful event with around 75 of our seniors in attendance and all enjoyed a two (2) course meal and refreshments. The Bourke Choir provided great entertainment and led all in attendance in the singing of a number of Christmas carols. With the temperature outside reaching 44 degrees the comfort afforded by the air conditioned auditorium at the Bourke Bowling Club was very much appreciated by everyone and thanks go to the club for making their facilities available.

The Sisters of the Missionaries of Charity will leave Bourke shortly for placement in other areas of need across the globe. The Sisters have been part of the Bourke Community for the past 47 years and their contribution during that period will be remembered for many years to come. I am sure that you will join with me and all the Bourke Community in thanking the Sisters for their dedicated efforts during their stay in Bourke. A function to recognise the contribution of the Sisters to Bourke will be held on Sunday, 18th December 2016 at 11.00am at the Multipurpose Centre at the High School.

I often notice the advertisement in the Western Herald which says “ghost towns happen when you don’t shop locally”. Over the Christmas period I would encourage residents to try and shop locally if possible. Our local shops not only create employment and the convenience of being able to shop without travelling but importantly are strong supporters of a number of charities and community organisations within the town. We all expect sponsorship and support from our business community and it is only fair that this support is reciprocated. If a shop doesn’t stock a particular product there is every chance that they can order it in for you.

Council has been finalising its submission in relation to the Far West Initiative this week as the submissions are due for lodgement on Friday, 16th December 2016. ~~The~~ General Managers of a number of the FWI Councils held a video conference last Friday to discuss each of the individual Council's approach to the submission process.

The Office of Local Government would also like to receive submissions from members of the public in respect of the proposed establishment of the FWI and these also need to be lodged by Friday, 16th December 2016.

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 Bourke Public Library.

The team installing the infrastructure to allow the connection of the NBN in Bourke have been working long hours to get the work completed and in very warm conditions. The work has included the boring under roads and the installation of new connection pits and the work has been completed with minimum disturbance to the surrounding area and any damage to paths and nature strips etc. has been quickly rectified.

The last of the community meetings in relation to the review process for the update of the Community Strategic Plan (CSP) were held last week and the response to the meetings has generally been good. The attendance in Bourke itself was relatively disappointing but despite the low numbers there was some valuable input received. The attendance at Louth, Byrock and also at Ford's Bridge was excellent given the size of the respective communities and once again the input was valuable.

There will be other meetings held early next year with these meetings targeting specific groups within the community including, the rural sector, Youth Services, Sporting Groups, Children's Services, Aged Services and Disability Services to mention but a few.

I would encourage members of the public to attend the meetings and provide input into the future direction that should be taken by Council on behalf of our community.

As in previous years there will be some changes in the operation of Council over the Christmas-New Year period. The Council Offices, Library and Service New South Wales Office will shut from the afternoon of the 23rd December and won't re-open until the 3rd January 2017. A full list of any changes to Council's normal operations have been advertised in the Western Herald and are also on Councils website www.bourke.nsw.gov.au

Councils in NSW are required each year to produce an Annual Report by the 30th November following the close of the preceding financial year. Bourke Shire Council has completed and lodged its Annual Report with the Minister for Local Government and copies of the Annual Report are also available for viewing at Council's Offices and on the website www.bourke.nsw.gov.au

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

Please take the time to nominate someone and ensure that the unsung heroes within our community are recognised.

Although there is still a while to go before nominations close we are moving into the festive and holiday periods and the reminders issued through the Western Herald won't be available and it is easy to miss the closing date.

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

Quote of the week!

"Christmas is the spirit of giving without a thought of getting" - Thomas S Monson

Ross Earl
General Manager

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