



“From the GM’s Desk”

9th February 2017



Council’s Manager of Tourism & Development, Phil Johnston represented Council at a meeting held yesterday in Nyngan to assist Councils with the revision of their Community Strategic Plan. The seminar was one of a number being conducted by the Office of Local Government (OLG) across the state and it is good to see the OLG committing resources to such an important task and equally pleasing is the fact that they have assisted Councils by bringing these seminars to the west of the state.

I travelled to Sydney and back on Tuesday to attend an industry briefing in relation to the Restart NSW water security for Regions – Regional Water and Waste Water Backlog Program hosted by DPI water and Infrastructure NSW. The NSW government has allocated \$110 million in Restart NSW funding under the program to clear a backlog of projects in regional towns affected by ongoing water quality and sewerage problems. Bourke Shire has attracted funding of \$339,000 to install a new pond at the sewage treatment facility and has an application pending for the construction of a new water treatment plant. It is anticipated that the outcome of the grant application will be known very shortly. It was a good opportunity to meet with representatives of infrastructure NSW, with whom we deal with on a regular basis.

Bourke Shire Council has prepared draft applications in respect of the upgrade of the majority of our village water supplies which are an extremely important facility in each of these villages.

While on the subject of water, the issue of water restrictions has been raised and whilst they looked almost certain to be introduced a couple of weeks ago there has been some minor increases in flow which has seen the river at Bourke rise slightly. Council staff are monitoring the flows in the upper reaches of the system and there it would appear to be an ongoing flow, however, it is a little difficult to determine how much will reach Bourke and the timeframes involved.

The NSW Department of Planning will be in Bourke on the 21st February 2017 to explain to the residents of Bourke the various aspects of the Far West Regional Plan. The Department will be hosting two consultation sessions one for Bourke Shire Councillors and staff at 9.00am on the 21st with this meeting forming part of the February Council meeting and the second will be at 5.30pm and an open invitation has been made to anyone who would like to attend.

Both meetings will be held at the Council Chambers and the presentations should take around an hour.

A confirmed attendee for part of the Western Division Conference in Wentworth will be the Hon. Rick Colless, MLC the Parliamentary Secretary for Natural Resources and Western NSW.

Rick has only just taken over the role of Parliamentary Secretary for Western New South Wales and the conference provides an ideal opportunity for western Division Councils to be able to discuss with him the issues impacting on this section of the state.

Council is required to develop a Disability Access Plan before the end of the financial year and to assist Council in undertaking the preparation of the plan a number of meetings will be held with those involved in the provision of disability services so that the plan reflects the needs of the Bourke Community. The first of these meetings was held yesterday and there was some excellent feedback received.

There is a lot of media speculation regarding the NSW Government's plans to scrap the amalgamation for those Councils which were identified to amalgamate but had been subject to court proceedings and also look at the reversal of some of the amalgamations that have already taken place.

There are a lot of communities anxious to see a final determination made in this matter.

The previous Minister for Local Government, the Hon. Paul Toole, MP gave an assurance that those Councils that were to form part of the Far West Initiative would not be subject to any amalgamation. This decision recognised both the size of the areas and the importance both socially and economically of the Councils to their regions and it is expected that the new Minister, the Hon. Gabrielle Upton, MP will continue to honour that commitment.

Council has commenced its review of the Community Strategic Plan (CSP) with the majority of the meetings involving special interest groups having been conducted over the past two (2) weeks. There are meetings planned to engage with the youth in town and these will be conducted later in the month.

If you haven't been able to take the opportunity to attend one of the meetings held late last year or early this year please contact Council's Community & Governance Officer, Letiticia Tiffen or Manager of Tourism & Development, Phil Johnston. Council values the input from all members of the community noting that CSP is a **COMMUNITY PLAN** not a Council plan.

Bourke Shire Council has a total of 37 bridges throughout its road network and over the past ten years Council has invested considerable funds to replace all the timber bridges that formed part of that network. The replacement of the bridges was part of a strategic plan aimed both at improving the road network and reducing maintenance costs.

During 2016 Council undertook the construction of three (3) new bridges to replace the last of the timber bridges, with these being Whiskey Creek Bridge, Len Mallon Bridge near Enngonia and Cuttaburra Bridge No 2. The approach works to all three (3) bridges is planned to be completed during the current financial year which will see Council being one of the very few rural Councils to have replaced all of its timber bridges.

Council in conjunction with Bourke Rotary will be hosting the Annual welcome to Bourke Night on the 21st February 2017 at the Bourke Swimming Pool. All new residents are invited to attend and this would include anyone who has been in Bourke less than twelve (12) months. Given there are a number of new people in town it will provide the opportunity to showcase the town and the facilities and sporting and social groups that are available. It would assist with catering if intending,

attendees could notify Council's Community & Governance Officer, Letitia Tiffen by calling 02 68308000.

There will be a meal and drinks provided as well as entertainment.

Council will be joining with Councillors and staff from Brewarrina in attending an Asset Management Workshop in Bourke tomorrow. The workshops are an initiative of the Lower Macquarie Water Utilities Alliance (LMWUA) and aims to give Councillors a greater appreciation of their role in and the complexity involved in asset management.

Changes to the Local Government Act late last year saw minor changes in the timeframe for Councils to adopt their Policy in relation to the Payment of Expenses and Provision of Facilities to Councillors. The policy is now to be adopted in the first twelve months of each term of Council. Bourke Shire Council has resolved to advertise the policy and call for submissions in relation to the policy. Copies of the policy are available from Council Offices and the policy is also on the Council website www.bourke.nsw.gov.au. Submission should be received by Council by Monday, 13th March 2017.

Stuart Johnston, well known for his involvement in the tourist industry will be representing Bourke at the 2017 Melbourne Caravan and Camping Show in Melbourne later this month. A lot of the tourists coming to Bourke are travelling with caravans so the show is a great opportunity to promote the town and its attractions.

Quote of the week!

"Being honest may not always get you a lot of friends but it will get you the right ones"

-John Lennon

Ross Earl
General Manager