



“From the GM’s Desk”

16th February 2017



At the meeting held last week to discuss the preparation of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) the need for additional disabled parking facilities in some sections around town was raised.

Also raised was the fact that there have been occasions when persons clearly not entitled to park in disabled spots have done so and in doing so take that space away from people with mobility issues. There are significant penalties that can be applied to motorists who park in disabled spots when not entitled to do so.

In the introduction of the need for the establishment of the DIAP the following quote from Stephen Hawking provides a very good summary of the needs of people with a disability and for those disabilities to be considered in planning for any works or construction.

“In twenty years, men may be able to live on the moon. In forty years we may get to Mars. In the next 200 years we may leave the solar system and head for the stars. But meanwhile, we would like to get to the supermarket, the cinema, restaurants.”

While there is only a limited flow in the Darling River at the moment, the flow is sufficient to ensure that water restrictions not be introduced at this stage.

Given the fact that the river is low and the threat of restrictions over the town it is extremely disappointing that many people are not “water wise” or simply don’t care and let water flow into the gutter system where it can pond causing damage to the road pavement. Residents should to move sprinklers on a regular basis or utilise timers which are available at a number of local retail outlets. Water is a precious resource so let’s treat it as such.

The February Meeting of Council will be held on Tuesday, 21st February 2017 commencing 9.00 am. The first item on the agenda will be the presentation of the Far West Regional Plan by the NSW Department of Planning.

This will be followed by the Public Forum which will commence shortly after 10.00 am.

Councils meetings are open to the public except when the item being discussed is deemed to be of a confidential nature in accordance with section 10(2) of the Local Government Act.

A reminder that 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 (2) consultation sessions one for Bourke Shire Councillors and staff at 9.00am on the 21st and as detailed above this meeting will form part of the February Council Meeting and the second session will be at 5.30pm. 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.

There is still no news regarding the NSW Government's plans in relation to the amalgamation of those Councils which were identified to amalgamate but had been subject to court proceedings, nor is there any indication as to what may be being considered in relation to the possible reversal of some of the amalgamations that have already taken place.

A reminder to all new residents regarding the "Welcome to Bourke Night" on Tuesday, 21st February 2017 (next Tuesday) at the Bourke Swimming Pool. All new residents are invited to attend and take the opportunity to learn a little more about what Bourke has to offer.

A number of local organisations have indicated their intention to be represented to provide information regarding their meeting times and activities.

We are fortunate to have the *Darling River Dirt River Band* playing on the night in what will be their last performance with the current members of the band.

Additionally, local poet Andrew Hull has offered to give a sample of his comprehensive repertoire of poetry relating to Bourke and the outback which is sure to be well received.

Each new resident /family will receive an information pack on Bourke.

It would assist with catering if persons wishing to attend could notify Council's Community & Governance Officer, Letitia Tiffen at Council office or by calling 0268308000.

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

The Asset Management Workshop held in Bourke last Friday was well attended and the clear and concise presentations very well received. It was clear that both Bourke and Brewarrina Councils have made significant inroads in relation to the development of Asset Management Systems with Bourke Shire Council having the second best system in the Orana region which is a credit to all those involved at Council. Charlotte Finch is the Council Officer responsible for the overall coordination of the Asset Management System but receives great support from all managers who have taken ownership of the project recognising its importance in the overall sustainability of Council. The workshop was one of a series across the Orana Region and an initiative of the Lower Macquarie Water Utilities Alliance (LMWUA).

Friday night saw the water pumps fail at Enngonia and as a result the village temporarily ran out of water. Council Water and Wastewater Team Leader, Shane Hopley was joined by local electrical contractor, Darren Jackson who travelled to Enngonia to fix the problem very late on Friday night and into the early part of Saturday morning. With the temperature approaching record levels I am sure that the Enngonia community appreciated the fact that the water was restored as quickly as possible.

Mayor Barry Hollman did a live interview with ABC News 24 on the weekend to talk about the heatwave conditions and the impact on Bourke and its residents. The interview was done utilising Skype.

The issue of a “red alert” for blue green algae at Louth and the issue of amber alerts for a number of other locations, including Bourke is a reminder to all residents to exercise caution in those parts of the river. Full details in relation to what the alerts mean for domestic, recreational and stock use is contained on the New South Wales Department of Water website www.dpi.nsw.gov.au

Whilst in Sydney for the seminar in relation to the Water and Wastewater funding and the various programmes that are in place, I took the opportunity to meet with a number of staff at Local Government New South Wales in relation to a number of matters and it is always good to meet with people with whom you deal with by phone on a regular basis. I also took the opportunity to meet with our workers compensation insurers StateCover Mutual.

The compilation of the Operational Plan (Budget) for Bourke Shire for 2017/2018 has commenced and all managers are working with Brian Tickle a consultant accountant who has been with us each for a couple of years now to assist in the preparation of the Budget.

It is proposed that the first draft of the Budget will be available in the first week of March.

Council is seeking input from residents on any items that they would like to see considered for inclusion in the Operational Plan and these could range from major projects to requests for financial assistance from small organisations with the shire. Additionally, any suggestions for the increase or decrease in service levels will be given consideration. All requests should be in writing marked for the attention of the Manager of Corporate Services.

Easter is fast approaching and plans are well progressed for this year’s “Back to Bourke Easter Festival”.

While plans are still being finalised there will again be a parade and the Wool Bale Rolling competition which has been very successful since its revival two (2) years ago and seen Charlie Brown taking the title for those two (2) years. Bourke Rotary Club will again be coordinating both events and details in relation to both events, including times and registration will be finalised shortly.

Organisation and businesses are encouraged to put in a float or other entry. Enquires can be directed to Council’s Manager of Tourism & Development, Phil Johnston at Council’s Offices.

Quote of the week!

“Difficult roads often lead to beautiful destinations”

Ross Earl
General Manager