



“From the GM’s Desk”

16th March 2017



Last week the Treasurer of NSW, the Hon Dominic Perrottet, MP tabled legislation in the NSW Parliament to establish the Fire and Emergency Levy (FESL) the proposed levy was previously known as the Emergency Services Property Levy (ESPL) and the levy will be collected by Councils alongside Council rates from 1st July 2017. The FESL will replace the levy that was previously attached to insurance policies.

There has been a lot of work that that has been required to be undertaken by Councils in preparation for the introduction of the levy and Bourke Shire Council has been working with Local Government New South Wales to ensure that Councils in this part of the state are adequately compensated for both the preliminary work and the ongoing work.

The introduction of the levy requires all properties to be given a FESL Classification and Councils are required to notify landowners of the classification by 30th April 2017.

The Institute of Public Works Engineering Australia NSW Division (IPWEA) have been holding a series of Regional Forums with the ORANA Regional Forum being held in Bourke yesterday and brought together industry representatives from across the region and also representatives of the sponsoring organisations involved in the Forum. The representative of the Roads and Maritime Services was Jason Gordon, Manager Technical Operations and Support for the RMS. Jason is of course a local from Bourke having commenced his career at Bourke Shire Council.

Councillor Hollman as Mayor of Bourke Shire was asked to provide a welcome address and provide an outline of some of the work occurring within the Shire.

The group took advantage of the opportunity to take a cruise on the Jandra on Tuesday evening and they were joined by both Councillors and staff of Bourke Shire.

The Member for Barwon, Kevin Humphries, MP was in town yesterday and was one of the speakers at the IPEWA Regional Forum. Whilst he was in town Kevin met with Council and a number of issues were raised with him, including the Far West Initiative, the proposed funding for infrastructure projects which is expected to be announced shortly, Health Services and the Murray Darling Basin Plan.

Councillor Leigh Byron from the Western Division of Councils, has convened a meeting of the Executive at Broken Hill on the 24th March 2017 to look at options for the Far West Initiative and all Council Mayors and General Managers are invited to attend. Mayor Councillor Hollman is a member of the executive and will be attending.

Mayor Hollman is generally available between 2.00pm to 4.00pm of a Monday to discuss any issues with residents, except the 4th Monday of each Month which of course is Council Meeting Day.

The Mayor and I attended the quarterly meeting of the Orana Regional Organisation of Councils (OROC) held last Friday in Dubbo. The meeting touched on a number of issues including a report from Steve Loane the General Manager of Warrumbungle Shire on the recent fires that impacted on his Council, Upper Hunter and Mid-Western Councils and the magnitude of the losses incurred.

Peter Halyburton, Principal of Energy Management Services who has provided a consultancy role on electricity matters for OROC Members for a number of years, was on hand to give delegates an insight into the way electricity prices are calculated and the impact on the availability of generating capacity including coal, gas, solar and wind on the pricing both now and into the future.

Whilst in Dubbo the opportunity was taken to meet with the other three (3) Councils proposed for the Far West Initiative (FWI) being Cobar, Walgett and Brewarrina Shires, to discuss options leading up to the meeting of Western Division in Broken Hill on the 24th March 2017 and it was decided to seek a meeting with the Premier, Deputy Premier and Minister for Local Government to ascertain a clear direction for the four (4) Councils. The fact that each of the Councils had already spent considerable resources on reviewing a number of proposals and models over the past three (3) years with little in the way of tangible results has proven frustrating for all Councils. Each of the four (4) Councils had expressed a desire to retain their affiliation with OROC and the Orana Region.

Mayor Barry Hollman and I also met with Shane Hatton, the State Manager of Rural and Remote Medical Services (RaRMS) over breakfast to get an update in relation to the operation of RaRMS in Bourke. Shane happened to be in Dubbo last Friday and when learning of the fact that OROC was meeting in Dubbo we took the opportunity to facilitate the meeting which was very productive and provided the opportunity for both parties to raise issues of concern and get an insight into the provision of medical services in the town.

A reminder, that Council will be reverting to Mondays for the conduct of its normal monthly meetings. Meetings are to be held on the 4th Monday of each month commencing at 9.00am unless otherwise determined by Council.

The March Meeting will be held on the 27th March 2016.

Council had previously resolved that the April meeting will be held on Wednesday, 26th April this change will remain.

The flow in the Darling River although only relatively small, continues to go over the weir which is good news for all gardeners with the possibility of water restrictions averted for a little while yet. It is particularly good news for our Parks and Gardens Staff who are ensuring they have the town looking good for the Easter Weekend and in particular the Renshaw Oval (Racecourse) Complex.

Senior Citizens Week for 2017 wrapped up last Sunday with a barbeque lunch being hosted by Bourke Rotary with members of the Royal Far West and Bourke CWA combining to provide the deserts.

Each of the guests received a souvenir tea-towel to mark Seniors Day in Bourke 2017.

Local Barrister, John Thompson was guest speaker for the day speaking on the importance of preparing and keeping a Will updated and the various avenues available for the making of a Will.

On behalf of Council I would like to thank all those people within the community who assisted in the coordination and hosting of the events during Senior's Week 2017 and a special thankyou to Community & Governance Officer, Letiticia Tiffen for the overall coordination of the week long activities and Kellie Honeyman who provided assistance to Letiticia particularly during the two weekend functions.

The New South Wales State Government last week announced funding of \$300 million through Restart NSW Regional Growth- Environmental and Tourism Fund. The program aims to increase tourism visitation to regional NSW by investing in regional environmental and tourism infrastructure.

A briefing session in relation to the allocation of the first round of the funding which amounts to \$100 million will be held in Sydney today with the opportunity to participate in person or by Webcast. The briefing will provide prospective applicants the objectives of the initial round and the requirements for the expression of interest process.

The work at Enngonia that I mentioned in my column last week will also see the road into the Enngonia Cemetery sealed and a carpark established at the cemetery which will significantly improve the area.

The provision of facilities in the village areas is an ongoing project with public toilets to be built at both Wanaaring and Enngonia.

Council will seek to obtain funding for the construction of toilets on the highways and main roads leading into Bourke. During our recent trip to Wentworth we noticed that the RMS has funded a number of toilets facilities on the Wilcannia to Cobar Road and there is also a toilet block east of Nyngan. If Councils are to try and attract tourism to the regions it would be advantageous if similar facilities could be funded in this part of the state.

Quote of the Week!

"Smile in the mirror. Do that every morning and you'll start to see a big difference in your life"
Yoko Ono

Ross Earl
General Manager