



“From the GM’s Desk”

30th March 2017



Mayor, Councillor Barry Hollman travelled to Broken Hill late last week to attend a meeting of the Executive of the Western Division Councils at Broken Hill.

Representatives discussed a number of issues including the need to reinvigorate the Western Division as an active lobby group for Western NSW. As a starting point the organisation is looking at developing a Business Plan and/or a Strategic Plan to provide for a more structured approach and a clearer set of priorities consistent with contemporary requirements. Broken Hill City Council has undertaken to update the Western Division Website so that it is reflective both of current membership, contact details and issues impacting on the area.

Given the changes to the membership and other changes, including legislative changes I have been tasked with the revamp of the constitution to reflect these changes.

It is proposed that for the changes to work the reviews would need to be completed so that Councils could consider the information in preparation for the next meeting of Western Division scheduled for the 30th June in Cobar.

Another proposed change was to look at the need for increased allocation of funding for the employment of the Executive Officer for a significantly increased time to allow the opportunity for the person next appointed to the role more time in which to undertake the role with the current funding putting severe restriction on available time.

The current Executive Officer, Ruth Fagan will finish at the end of the month and in the interim Balranald Shire Staff will undertake the role, with the current Chair of Western Division Leigh Byron being the Mayor of Balranald.

The meeting also discussed the Far West Initiative and the need for Councils to be given some clarity as to its future direction.

The Manager of Tourism and Economic Development Phil Johnston was asked to attend a meeting with Ken Gillespie who has been appointed as the NSW Regional Infrastructure Coordinator by the Premier Gladys Berejiklian this week.

Ken’s role is an independent role and his task, in the first instance, is to provide a report to the Government on the progress and execution of its very substantial infrastructure commitment to regional NSW. To that end, he is working to identify opportunities to remove unnecessary impediments to delivery, improve project identification and approval processes, and to ensure that the Government’s delivery aspirations are achieved. His review will not consider metropolitan (Sydney, Wollongong and Newcastle) infrastructure.

He is currently on a tour of the state discussing issues relating to infrastructure and he will be taking the opportunity to meet with representatives of OROC and State Government agency representatives.

All Council staff were last week given the opportunity to have an input to the revision of the Bourke Council Community Strategic Plan (CSP).

Three (3) sessions were held that enabled staff to provide their opinions and suggestions for inclusions into the CSP. Our staff often hear constructive comments from the community about the priorities which have been put in place by Council and are ideally placed to have a positive input into the CSP and their contribution was very much appreciated.

Together with a number of other representatives, Manager of Works, Peter Brown and I attended the inaugural meeting of the Barwon Darling Stakeholder Advisory Panel which was held in Bourke last Thursday. The meeting brought together a range of stakeholders from Mungindi in the North to Wilcannia in the South.

The Department of Primary Industries – Water (DPI Water) is currently developing Water Resource Plans for the Murray Darling Basin areas of NSW. They feel increasing stakeholder knowledge, consideration and involvement in water planning is a critical part of developing these Plans. The Barwon Darling Stakeholder panel is one of a number across the state.

DPI Water will meet with each of the Panels while developing the water resource plans to inform them about current progress, methods and findings. The panel provides a chance for stakeholders to be directly informed by technical experts about their work and to provide feedback.

DPI Water are currently finalising membership of all Panels trying to ensure that the panels are representative of all stakeholders, but at the same time don't get too large and unwieldy.

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.

A reminder, that Council has reverted back to the 4th Monday for the conduct of its normal monthly meetings the April meeting has been previously changed to Wednesday, 26th April 2017 commencing at 9.00am and will be held on this day.

The low flow in the Darling River continues to provide the opportunity for an increase presence of blue green algae with reds alerts at Tilpa. At a meeting of the Barwon Darling Stakeholder Panel I was shown a photograph of the quality of water at Tilpa and I have to agree that a fresh in the river is badly needed and an increased flow would be very welcomed by the residents of the village and surrounding areas.

Bourke Rotary Club held a Trivia Night to assist the High School Student's Fundraising towards their trip to Japan. The Rotary District Assistant District Governor Stuart Astley from Dubbo had said on a previous visit that he would like to come up and support the next trivia night Rotary ran and true to his word Stuart and his wife Donna travelled up for the night. They joined with the "Men's Shed" team and who in fact were the winners on the night. Well done and a big thankyou to them both for such a big effort.

A reminder that the Bourke War Memorial Swimming Pool will close for the current swimming season tomorrow (31st March 2017). There has been a suggestion that the pool could remain open, however, the upcoming cooler weather and resultant colder water temperature which occurs at this time of the year has traditionally seen a significant drop off in attendance.

The approaches to the Len Mallon Bridge on the Burrawantie Road west of Enngonia are currently being rebuilt and this work will be followed by the installation of the new guard rail and the sealing work.

Residents will have noted the reseal work on the State Highways which has recently been completed and finalises the reseal program for the year, further work will be completed in the warmer months.

With an emphasis being placed on ensuring people take appropriate rest breaks new rest area signage is being installed on the highways advising motorists of the rest areas available ahead of them. The installation is expected to be completed over the next week or so.

The Green Reflector Programme continues throughout the state. This simple but effective scheme involves either a minor upgrade to the road shoulder or simply the installation of green reflectors to identify safe places for trucks to be able to pull over safely. New rubbish disposal facilities will also be installed at each of these locations.

Advice has been received that the Funding Deed with Restart New South Wales in relation to the funding for the new Sewage Treatment Pond has been signed off and work will commence on the project within the next few weeks. The work will be supervised by NSW Public Works and will as far as possible be undertaken by Council staff and local contractors. The completion of the additional pond will provide both an improved facility and a much easier mechanism for the clearing of the existing pond.

Residents with outstanding Rates and Charges last week would have received a reminder notice and a letter seeking immediate payment of all overdue amounts. Council at the February Meeting ask that staff develop a strategy to reduce the level outstanding debt. The reminders are the first step in the debt recovery process with the next step involving the outstanding amounts being referred to Council's debt collector. If the debt collectors are forced to institute legal proceedings the cost of all legal fees associated with the recovery of the outstanding amount are added to that amount with these fees being quite substantial. Any Ratepayer with outstanding amounts are encouraged to contact Council's Revenue Officer who will work with you to make suitable arrangements to repay the debt.

At Monday's Council meeting the Mayor Councillor Barry Hollman conducted the citizenship ceremony for local medical practitioner Dr. Sheik Hayder and his daughter Aura. The ceremony was also attended by Dr Hayder's wife Mabruka and sister-in-law Tamanne who only arrived from Bangladesh on Sunday. Congratulations to Dr Hayder and Aura.

Quote of the Week!

"Look for something positive in each day even if some days you have to look a little harder"

Ross Earl
General Manager