



“From the GM’s Desk”

6th April 2017



It has been a very busy period for Council staff with a number of submissions required to be lodged over the past week, these have included a response to the Department of Planning on the Far West Regional Plan. The recently appointed NSW Infrastructure Coordinator, Ken Gillespie has also called for information in relation to local and regional priorities for infrastructure delivery and whether these priorities match published programs. Mr Gillespie has also asked for the identification of impediments, or potential impediments in the delivery of this infrastructure.

A submission was also provided to DPI-Water regarding the Status and Issues Paper published in relation to the Barwon-Darling Watercourse Water Resource Plan.

At the same time the Operational Plan (Budget) is being finalised as are both the Community Strategic Plan (CSP) and the Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP). Work is also continuing on the proposed upgrade of Council’s accounting software along with preparations for the introduction of the Fire and Emergency Service Levy (FESL) which has involved a considerable amount of time.

This is in addition to the normal workload of staff.

Mayor, Councillor Barry Hollman is generally available between 2.00pm to 4.00pm of a Monday at the Council Chambers to discuss any issues with residents, except the 4th Monday of each Month which of course is Council Meeting Day. He will be available on Monday, 24th April 2017.

A reminder, that while 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.

Plans are progressing for the Easter Weekend activities with the program having been finalised. The weekend offers something for everyone. A number of the activities will require volunteers to assist and if you have some spare time you might like to contact any of the event organisers to see how you may be able to assist.

Details of planned events are available at the Visit Bourke website <http://www.visitbourke.com.au> and have been shared to Bourke Shire Council’s Facebook site as well as the Easter Festival Facebook site or <https://www.facebook.com/EasterinBourke> I would also encourage community groups, families and businesses to get involved with the parade which will once again be held on Easter Saturday prior to the wool bale rolling competition.

The Races for the Sunday have generated a lot of interest and hopefully we will have both good fields and a very good crowd.

A lot of work goes into the staging of these events and in the case of the Race Club work on next years’ event effectively starts immediately after the last race this year.

At the Conference of the Western Division of Councils held at Wentworth, the Deputy Premier, the Hon. John Barilaro, MP, indicated that there should be a significant amount of funding becoming available for Regional NSW. The appointment of Ken Gillespie as the Infrastructure Coordinator for NSW is indicative of the State Government commitment to ensure the effective delivery of the projects from the \$6 billion dollars which has been apparently allocated to Regional NSW. Bourke Shire Council will be ensuring that it lodges applications of a high standard to provide the best chance of success. There are a number of projects that Council will consider for funding depending of course on them meeting the guidelines when published.

Under changes to the Local Government Act which were introduced late last year, the Auditor General is now the Auditor for all Councils in New South Wales with the Auditor General in turn appointing experienced firms to conduct the Audit on their behalf. There will be changes in the audit process and this is designed to provide an increased level of consistency across the state.

Hills Rogers who have been Council's Auditors for some time have been reappointed to undertake that role on behalf of the Auditor General and will be visiting Bourke in the first week of May.

This is the first time that the audit will be carried out with the overall audit function being the responsibility of the Auditor General and no doubt there will be some variances in the information that is required and the way it is to be presented. I am very confident that our staff will have any information required available before the audit and that the organisation will quickly adjust to any new audit requirements and procedures

Recently, Phil Johnston, Manager of Tourism and Economic Development travelled to Hillston to represent Bourke at the meeting of the Kidman Way Promotional Committee which was attended by Griffith, Murrumbidgee, Cobar, Bourke and Carrathool Shires. The Kidman Way is an extremely important linkage in relation to tourism for our shire with the sealing of the road around twenty years ago providing a significantly increased level of traffic from the south parts of Australia into this region. The collaboration of the promotional efforts of the involved Councils has been working well with the group combining their resources to ensure that the group is represented at a number of Caravan and Camping shows which are an important conduit into the tourist market.

Also in regards to tourism Council staff has also been actively participating in the promotion of the Kamilaroi Highway which runs from Bourke to Willow Tree on the New England Highway. This east-west route also proves popular with visitors with important links to Brewarrina, Walgett Shire and towns such as Lightning Ridge, Narrabri and Gunnedah. Other initiatives are also underway such as increased promotion of the loop trails in and around Bourke and the important Darling River Run.

The increase in visitor numbers is starting to be more noticeable with the cooler weather and as we approach Easter.

Work will commence shortly on the construction of a new disposal cell at the Bourke Waste Management Facility. Each cells generally lasts for around five (5) years, however, that life span would increase significantly if we could establish a recycling service that proved to be cost effective.

The Environmental team has indicated that there was a significant reduction of material going into land fill when the recycling service was operational in town. The introduction of the Container

Deposit Scheme (CDS) later this year just may assist in the viability of a recycling scheme depending on the way it operates.

A reminder to those residents who have not visited the Bourke Public Library for some time that the Library has a vast range of material in both the fiction and non-fiction sections, magazines, talking books, DVDs of some of the old favourite TV shows plus the friendly staff are able to help out with any enquiries of an historical nature, including family history. Access is also available to the internet and this service has proved popular with tourists in particular.

Council has invited The Hon. Pru Goward, MP, Minister for Family and Community Services, Minister for Social Housing and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault to visit Bourke so that Council can have an opportunity to discuss some of the systemic issues that have been evident within our community for a number of years. In the invitation to Minister Goward the Mayor gave a commitment that Council wanted to be part of the solution recognising that it will take a coordinated effort by a number of parties.

The Mayor has also issued an invitation to the Attorney General, Mark Speakman, MP to visit Bourke to once again highlight concerns relating the reoffending by persons who are on bail for other offences. It is important that our decision makers take the opportunity to visit remote areas so that they can fully appreciate the tyranny of distance and also the impact that high levels of social disobedience have on a community.

Quote of the Week!

"Striving for success without hard work is like trying to harvest where you haven't planted"

Steven Bly"

Ross Earl
General Manager