



“From the GM’s Desk”

20th April 2017



I was contacted by the Chief of Staff for Hon Pru Goward MP, Simon Fontana, informing me that Minister Goward has accepted the invitation of the Mayor to visit Bourke and she will do so as soon as a suitable date is determined. Not only is Minister Goward the Minister for Family and Community Services but is also Minister for Social Housing and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. Minister Goward has previously held the position of Minister for Family Community Services so should be aware of the issues impacting on Bourke with her expanded portfolio covering a number of areas of concern. Bourke Council looks forward to meeting with her and trying to formulate a strategy to address some of the long standing issues within our community.

Council is still awaiting a reply from the Attorney General, the Hon Mark Speakman, MP following the invitation issued to him to visit Bourke.

The Easter festivities in Bourke went really well with good crowds at all events and a number of ex-residents taking the opportunity to return for the weekend. I would like to thank everyone who contributed to the success of the weekend and in particular Phil Johnston who undertook the responsibility for the overall coordination of the weekend. Bourke Rotary was once again responsible for the Parade and the Wool Bale Rolling Competition. The Back of Bourke Race Club once again provided a very well organised and patronised race meeting with 2018 not coming quickly enough for some race goers who had a great day.

The long table dinner attracted a great crowd who enjoyed perfect weather on the evening as did those who attended the Dutch Racette Dinner on Thursday night.

With other activities such as the Mud Run, Rugby Union, Markets, Pop- up Art Gallery there was something for everyone.

Well done to Council staff who assisted in ensuring things went smoothly on the weekend and did a lot of preparatory work beforehand. The organisation of the weekend takes weeks of work with a lot of things needing to be coordinated.

There were a number of visitors in town for the weekend and it was good to see a number of them joining in on the long table dinner and I had the opportunity of meeting a couple from Yorkshire in England who saw the event advertised and decided to come along.

Easter is often seen as the starting point for the tourist season and it would appear that 2017 will be no exception with a number of tourists availing themselves of the facilities within Bourke and an obvious visible increase in the number of caravans in the street and along the highway.

Council Staff have prepared a new Community Strategic Plan (CSP) which has involved a series of meetings with all sections of the community to ensure that all sections of the community have had the opportunity for input. The new document will be presented to Council at the April Meeting. The CSP underpins the strategic operation of Council and reflects the views and aspiration of the community.

All Councils are required to produce a Disability Inclusion Action Plan and a Draft Plan for Bourke Shire Council has been prepared and again it will be presented to the April Meeting of Council.

All Councils are also required to have in place a Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP) and Asset Management Plan (AMP) and Workforce Plan (WFP). While considerable work has been done on both the LTFP and the AMP as part of the Fit for the Future Process the review of the Workforce Plan was possibly overdue.

The LTFP and the AMP have both been reviewed by T-Corp as part of their assessment of the sustainability of Council and their report will be with the Office of Local Government by the end of April and hopefully be with Council shortly thereafter. Similarly, an evaluation of Councils Assessment Management Plan was undertaken by consulting firm Morrison Low late last year and in part involved comparing the detail in the Assessment Management Plan with a physical inspection of the assets to ensure that the document reflected a true evaluation of the condition of Councils assets and the estimated costs of maintaining those assets to an acceptable standard.

There is a realisation that the level of what is deemed to be an acceptable standard in part is gauged by the individual community and can be dependent on things such as usage patterns and the size of the population serviced by the asset.

Morrison Low were commissioned by the Office of Local Government to undertake the exercise for all the eight (8) Councils identified for membership of the Far West Initiative. Again it is hoped the results of the work done by Morrison Low will be made available to Council sooner rather than later.

The Workforce Plan has highlighted that the average age of Council's staff is getting older and this is consistent with Local Government across the state. Council Management team are conscious of the aging workforce and the need to ensure that some degree of succession planning is put in place to retain the skills base within Council.

I have said on numerous occasions that the introduction of the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework has produced some very tangible benefits for all Councils and has led to a much more structured approach to Councils planning and operation.

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

The flow in the river seems to be holding and with good flows reported in the upper parts of the Barwon Darling River system the flow should continue for a while yet which is good news for everyone. It is anticipated that we will also see some addition flow into the system that will come via the Culgoa River.

While there is good flows at the moment and further flows anticipated I still would like to again encourage residents to be water wise and ensure that water is utilised effectively.

Representatives of the RSL Sub-Branch have finalised arrangements for this year's ANZAC Day Services in Bourke and other services have been organised throughout the district by organisations and individuals from within the various villages across the shire.

The Dawn Service in Bourke will again be held at the Cenotaph Precinct in Central Park with everyone asked to be there by 5.50am for a 6.00am start.

The ANZAC Day March in Bourke will commence at 10.40 am from Diggers on the Darling with the marchers asked to assemble at 10.30am. The March will proceed along Oxley Street and conclude at Central Park with the ANZAC Day Service to commence at 11.00am. Any enquires should be directed to Victor Bartley on 0429 306 633.

An ANZAC Day Service will also be held at Wanaaring on ANZAC Day commencing at 10.30 and enquiries should be directed to Diane Lakin at the School.

Louth have for some time conducted dusk ANZAC Commemoration Services and it will again be held this year starting at 5.00pm. For details in relation to the service you can contact Jane Murray on 68 747 401.

The Village of Enngonia will host a sunset ANZAC Commemoration Service at the Enngonia War Memorial Hall commencing at 5.30 pm. Any enquiries should be directed to Greg Oates on 68 747 577.

Mayor Hollman is generally available between **2.00 pm to 3.00pm** 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 24th April 2017. He is also available by appointment by contacting Kai Howard-Oakman at Council's Offices.

Quote of the Week!

Worrying = a waste of time. Good and bad things will happen in life. You just have to keep living and not stress over what you can't control.

Ross Earl
General Manager