



“From the GM’s Desk” 18th May 2017



Congratulations to the Committee of the Bourke Show who once again put together a great days’ entertainment with the wide range of activities catering for all age groups and interests. The tractor pull was a new feature this year and given the interest in the event will probably become a regular feature.

There is an incredible amount of work that goes into the preparation of the show which while primarily undertaken over the week or so before the event does take a commitment over the full year with a considerable amount of coordination and planning taking place.

The facilities at Renshaw Oval continue to improve and will no doubt further improve with the increased patronage of the area. The improvements have been undertaken by all the users together with Council staff and it is this cooperative spirit that has led to the overall improvement.

I will shortly look at convening a meeting of all the regular users to develop a plan for the prioritisation of further improvement work so that any works undertaken are done so in consultation with all users.

The Chairman of the Orana Regional Organisation of Councils, Councillor Rex Wilson, Mayor of Warren, Deputy Chair, Councillor Doug Batten, Mayor of Gilgandra and Executive Officer Belinda Barlow travelled to Sydney earlier this month and met with the Deputy Premier, the Hon. John Barilaro, MP and the Minister For Local Government, the Hon. Gabrielle Upton, MP to discuss a range of issues. In particular, those relating to the Local Government reform process and the proposed establishment of the Joint Organisation of Councils and the proposed Far West Initiative.

The delegation also met with the Minister for Primary Industries the Hon. Niall Blair, MLC on a range of issues pertaining to his portfolio as well as catching up with the President of LGNSW, Keith Rhodes, AFSM and Chief Executive Officer, Donna Rygate.

Work is continuing on the development of a Strategic Plan for the Western Division of Councils with a draft proposal to be developed and forwarded to all member Councils for their comment prior to the finalisation and release of the plan.

The Hon. Troy Grant, MP, the Minister for Police and the Minister for Emergency Services was in Bourke yesterday and among his commitment for the visit was an inspection of the Darling Street facility occupied by the State Emergency Service (SES). The Local SES has made representations to Council with a view to have Council construct a new facility at the current location. The existing facility is unable to be readily modified to suit the new vehicle which the Local SES expects to take delivery of in the near future. The existing facility is also in need a significant upgrade.

Council has written to the SES seeking options that may be available to assist in the funding of the new facility.

The Mayor, Councillor Barry Hollman, Manager of Roads, Mark Gordon, Roads Assistant, Mathew McCorkle, Manager of Corporate Services, Leonie Brown and I met with the Regional Manager of the Roads and Maritime Services, Phil Standen and other Officers from the RMS on Monday afternoon to discuss the proposal to allow access for Type (2) Road Trains (BAB Configuration) from North Bourke to Nyngan and Trangie.

The proposed route would utilise Mocolta and Tarcoon Streets past the High School and Hospital and would involve three (3) intersections in Bourke each of which has been determined as suitable following recent trials.

Council has advertised the proposal and called for submissions and will be considering any submissions received when further reviewing the matter.

I attended the Meeting of the OROC General Managers Advisory Committee (GMAC) at Dubbo last Friday with the meeting featuring a number of guest speakers including the Department of Planning who detailed the progress on both the Central West and Far West Regional Plans. Local Government Procurement (LGP) were in attendance to explain the benefits and costs savings to be gained by being involved in LGP and in particular avoiding in some instances the need to go to tender and negating the costs of expensive advertising that go with that process. Bourke Shire avails itself of the opportunity to utilise the services of a number of group purchasing organisations, including LPG which in the main results in a cost effective outcome.

Statewide Mutual also attended to explain to the General Managers present at the meeting the changes in the current insurance market and highlighting the fact that the Mutual was set up to enable Councils to obtain affordable Public Liability Insurance when it was very difficult to obtain in the 1990's.

The quarterly meeting of the Far West Region Emergency Management Committee will be held in Bourke on Tuesday, 23rd May 2017. The Regional Meeting brings together all the organisations that are required to provide services to the far western section of the State in times of emergency.

The area covers much of the footprint of the Far West Initiative Councils and given the size of the area which is in excess of 40 percent of the State including Wentworth, Broken Hill, Bogan and Brewarrina Council areas but excludes Walgett Shire which is in a different region.

The meeting is generally chaired by Assistant Police Commissioner, Geoff McKechnie and brings together the Regional Managers of Emergency Agencies and other groups who would be impacted in times of emergency.

The news in the Budget that the freeze of the Financial Assistance Grants (FAGs) had been lifted was much welcomed by Local Government Organisations across Australia. Also welcomed was the announcement that the Roads to Recovery Funding (R2R) was to continue until at least 2020/2021 and was subject to an increase. R2R has made a huge impact on Council's ability to undertake much needed works and Bourke Shire Council would wholeheartedly support Local Government New South Wales' efforts to see a permanent doubling of the allocation.

Council has received a response from the Office of the Attorney General, the Hon. Mark Speakman, MP, indicating that he is prepared to travel out to Bourke in the second half of this year to discuss some of the issues of concern that have been raised by Council. These include the fact that a number of offenders are repeatedly bailed following their arrest for crimes and continue to commit offences.

This behaviour is not only is frustrating for the community but must also be frustrating for the Police.

The Mayor of Bourke Shire Council, Councillor Barry Hollman joined with his counterpart from Brewarrina Shire Council, Councillor Phillip O'Connor in issuing the invitation to the Attorney General with both communities experiencing similar problems.

Next Monday will see the monthly meeting of Council with Council having reverted to the 4th Monday of the month for the conduct of its ordinary meetings. All meetings are open to the public with the exception of those deemed to be of a confidential nature in accordance with section 10 (2) of the Local Government Act 1993.

A Public Forum is scheduled at each Council Meeting at 10.00 am. If you wish to speak at the Public Forum it would be appreciated if you could contact Kai Howard-Oakman on 68308000 or by email at khoward@bourke.nsw.gov.au so that your item can be placed on the agenda and if necessary any background information can be obtained.

Manager for Roads at Bourke Shire, Mark Gordon has being working with the Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) to secure additional funding to undertake additional shoulder widening works on the Cobar Road. The works in total are valued at around two (2) million dollars which is a very welcome boost to Councils overall budget and will ensure that our construction gangs are kept very busy over the next few weeks.

Council undertakes a lot of work on behalf of the RMS and the ability of our Engineering Staff and works crews to deliver quality work "on time and on budget" has helped foster a very good working relationship between the two bodies.

Council staff are currently finalising the construction of the approaches to the Cuttaburra Bridges so they are ready for sealing. The sealing works should hopefully be undertaken before the end of this Financial Year.

Quote of the Week!

"Don't ruin a good today by thinking about a bad yesterday - let it go"

Ross Earl
General Manager