



“From the GM’s Desk”

6th July 2017



The Deputy Premier, the Hon. John Barilaro, MP will visit Bourke next week accompanied by our Local Member, Kevin Humphries, MP to discuss with Councils within the Barwon Electorate the availability of funding under the Regional Growth Fund. The meeting will provide the opportunity for Councils to hear firsthand how the funding application process will work. The meeting will be held at the Bourke Council Chambers on Wednesday, 12th July 2017.

I will be travelling to Dubbo this afternoon to attend the quarterly meeting of the Orana Regional Organisation of Council’s (OROC), General Managers Advisory Committee (GMAC) to commence at 9.00am tomorrow, Friday, 7th July 2017.

Tonight there will be a farewell for Ashley Wielinga the General Manager of Warren Shire who will be retiring on Friday, 14th July 2017 after a long and distinguished career. The farewell will provide an ideal opportunity to acknowledge Ashley’s contribution to the industry.

Ashely has had a significant input into OROC and his tireless work has seen all member Councils obtain some considerable financial benefits particularly in the area of energy costs.

Ashely commenced his career at Bourke Shire Council prior to moving to Warren and I would like to join with all his colleagues within Local Government in wishing him well for a happy and healthy retirement.

The initial census figures from the 2016 census have been released with Bourke Shire unfortunately showing a decrease of 233 people which equates to an 8.2% decrease.

On a regional basis, the Orana Region has had a net gain of 2.6% primarily driven by the growth of Mid-Western Region (Mudgee) of 7.9% and Dubbo Region 5.9%.

All other Local Government Areas (LGAs) experienced losses Bourke – 8.2%, Bogan -7.2%, Brewarrina – 6.5%, Walgett -5.4%, Gilgandra – 3.0%, Coonamble -2.8%, Warrumbungle -2.1%, Narromine -2.1%, Cobar – 1.4% , Warren -0.9%).

Whilst it is extremely disappointing to once again to see this drop in population it is hoped that with the opening of the abattoir early next year this trend will be reversed.

The Deputy Premier, the Hon. John Barilaro MP who will be visiting Bourke next week, is also the Minister for Regional Development, Council will take the opportunity to impress on him the need to continue with the current efforts to revitalise rural New South Wales and stop the drift of population towards the eastern seaboard.

It is interesting to note that from figures obtained from local schools it would appear that despite the overall population loss in Bourke School enrolments have increased marginally.

The level of population is very important as there are a number of grants, such as the Financial Assistance Grant and Library Grants which are in part determined on a per capita basis.

The cost of providing services does not generally proportionally reduce with a decrease in population and the reduced income has the potential to put increased pressure on all sections of our budget.

Council received advice from our State Member, Kevin Humphries, MP that Bourke Shire Council have received grants from the NSW Government as part of the Community War Memorial Fund for the Project – Bourke and District War Memorial (replacement of the missing lead, emblem and letters), of \$1,754.55. These memorials have significant heritage value and meaning for the Bourke community, with some commemorating conflicts as far back as the Boer War and the Great War.

This grant will complement the Federal Funding announced last week of \$3,636.00 towards the same project.

The Member for Parkes, Mark Coulton, MP has indicated that he will be in Bourke on the evening of the 24th July and is keen to inspect the new Abattoir Construction and will do so on the morning of the 25th July 2017 . The Federal Government of course provided a \$10 million grant for the project from the National Stronger Regions Fund to assist in the provision of enabling infrastructure.

Following the inspection of the abattoir complex, Mark will be calling at Louth to meet with locals at that village mid- morning and then call in at Tilpa before making his way to Broken Hill that night.

Mark has indicated that he will firm up the actual times for his village visits closer to the day and ensure that the residents are made aware.

Mark's seemingly inexhaustible energy and willingness to ensure that he keeps in contact with all constituents including those in the smaller centres is to be applauded.

Together with the Mayor Barry Hollman, I attended the Mid-Term Meeting of the Western Division Councils in Cobar last Friday and it was an excellent meeting with a lot of information relayed to those present.

With around 40% of the land mass and only 1% of the population in New South Wales it is important that the Western Group of Councils remain a strong and effective lobby group.

The Parliamentary Secretary for Western New South Wales Hon. Rick Colless MLC was among those in attendance and his obvious interest in this part of the state has greatly assisted in providing a conduit through to Cabinet.

At the Meeting Bourke Shire Council sought and received the support of all members of the Western Division in seeking a coordinate approach by both State and Federal Governments in the Management and Control of Wild Dogs which are threatening the ongoing viability of a number of graziers both in New South Wales and Queensland. Council will formally move a motion at the Annual Conference of Local Government New South Wales in December.

Other Speakers at the conference included the President of Local Government New South Wales, Keith Rhoades who updated delegates on Local Government on a state basis, the Department of Premier and Cabinet Regional Director, Ashley Albury and the Acting Manager, Regional Growth Planning (Department of Planning and Environment) who gave an update on the development of the Western Regional Growth Plan.

Julie Briggs of JBMS Consulting who has been working with the Executive of the Western Division on a Strategic Plan for the organisation was also available to update members on the importance of the document and work done to date.

Bourke Shire Council will join with Cobar Shire Council is making representations to the Minister for Roads to have toilet facilities constricted on the Kidman Way between Cobar and Bourke with no such facilities existing along the 165 kilometres stretch of road.

In supporting the motion to make representations other members highlighted that the request should be extended to ensure that toilet facilities should be provided at least every eighty (80) kilometres on all roads within the Western Division.

The provision of such facilities, are not only important for both the local travellers and transport industry but it is essential that we provide adequate facilities to cater for the increasing number of tourists.

The second of the Workshops to develop a Strategic Plan for the future development of Sport and Recreational Facilities in Bourke Shire will be held on Wednesday 19th July 2017. The workshop will commence at 5.30pm and finish by 7.30pm. It is important that we get a good representation of all sections of the sporting community to be involved in this planning process.

Following an extensive recruitment process, I wish to advise that Charles Liggett has been offered and accepted the position of Manager of Tourism and Economic Development at Bourke Shire Council. Charles will start work with Council on or before 17th July 2017 and possibly as early as the 10th July 2017.

Charles has experience in the Tourism and Economic Development field and had been the Manager of Tourism and Economic Development at Scenic Rim Regional Council based in Beaudesert in Queensland for nearly five (5) years having finished in that role in April 2017.

Charles has worked in a variety of roles and localities that have equipped him with a good background and experience to undertake the role with Bourke Shire Council.

Quote of the Week!

“Be strong enough to stand alone, smart enough to know when you need help and brave enough to ask for it.”

Ross Earl
General Manager