



“From the GM’s Desk”

20th July 2017



The Hon. John Barilaro, MP, Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales and Minister for Skills, last week announced that funding of \$320,000 had been made available for the employment of a Project Officer to assist in the implementation of Bourke Aboriginal Employment Prosperity Strategy which is a multi-faceted initiative aimed at substantially increasing employment opportunities and awareness in Bourke Shire. While the abattoir will provided a substantial increase in employment opportunities it is anticipated that as well as those directly employed by the Abattoir a similar number will be required in ancillary and other service industries.

The Strategy looks at improving linkages between employers and unemployment and identifying any impediments to providing local solutions to labour requirements. This will of course mean access to training. Additionally the strategy will look to provide a local jobs board to increase local awareness of the jobs which are available recognising some roles are only advertised on websites. One of the more innovative components of the Strategy is to work towards breaking down the size of a number of State Government Contracts to make it easier for local tradespersons to access the work and in doing so increase the opportunities for an increased in the number of apprentices employed locally. At this stage some of the local employers would find it hard to tender for contracts which involve huge sections of the state and multiple sites which would mean an increase in staff and equipment.

The funding is for an initial period of two (2) years and if successful, the opportunity exists for the strategy to be replicated elsewhere across the State.

The Deputy Premier also presented more information regarding the Regional Growth Fund and in particular the Stronger Country Communities Fund which will see all Councils in Regional NSW, (which excludes the Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong regions) receive a base funding amount of \$750,000 per year, for two (2) years. This funding is to be spent on projects which meet the criteria; I feel this will easily be able to be met. Projects will need to be on at least \$100,000 in value up to \$1,000,000. Councils in the first tranche, which includes Bourke Shire, will have until the 9th August to submit projects. One of the requirements of Council to obtain the funding will be the ability to be able to prove a high level of community support of the project which will be demonstrated by community consultation. There will also be surveys undertaken by independent survey firms to verify the level of community acceptance of any projects proposed.

Another part of the Regional Fund is the Regional Sports Infrastructure Fund. This is to foster the benefits of sport in communities. The fund will invest in new and existing venues to improve the participation and performance in sports at all levels. The availability of this funding adds an increased level of significance to the development of the Sporting and Recreational Facilities Master Plan being developed by Council.

Bourke Shire Councillors and members of the Management Team participated in a workshop on Tuesday to review the projects that are already contained within the Community Strategic Plan, The Operational Plan and Delivery Program to determine their eligibility for funding. Council will then determine a priority listing so work can commence on reviewing estimates of construction costs and completion dates.

Council had the opportunity to meet both Ashley Albury the Regional Coordinator of the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) and Ian Smith the Director of Regional Operations from the Office of Regional Development of DPC to discuss the way in which the funding available under the Regional Growth Plan will operate.

Essential Energy has advised of a planned power outage for the Wanaaring and Fords Bridge Areas on the 25th July 2017 between the hours of 9.30am and 3.30pm. Residents of these villages should be aware of the outage and conserve water usage during that period with supplies in both villages reliant on electricity for pumping.

Council has been advised that as the lead Council on behalf of the Outback Shires Alliance (involving Bourke Brewarrina and Walgett) its application for funding for a Council Roadside Reserve Environmental Grant for \$96,000.00 was successful. The Council Roadside Reserves project is funded by the NSW Environmental Trust and Managed by Local Government NSW to help Councils towards best practice roadside environment management.

As mentioned last week Mark Coulton MP our Federal Member for Parkes will be in town next Monday and will take the opportunity to visit the Abattoir construction site on the Tuesday morning. Following the inspection of the abattoir complex Mark will be meeting with constituents in both Louth and Tilpa. Mark will be in Louth at 11.30am before heading to Tilpa to meet with locals there at 2.30pm and from there will then head to Broken Hill. Just another day in the life of a politician whose electorate covers fifty percent of the New South Wales; the thought of obtaining a pilot's licence must be on Mark's mind on many occasions.

Peter McCue, Director, Sport Development and Support, Sport and Recreation Group Office of Sport accompanied Mark Horton to Bourke last night when Mark facilitated the second of the Workshops to develop a Strategic Plan for the Development of Sport and Recreational Facilities in Bourke. Peter also had meetings at Walgett and Brewarrina prior to coming to Bourke with further meetings scheduled at Wilcannia and Broken Hill in what will be a very busy period few days for him.

Annette and I will be attending the wedding of our eldest son Cameron to Kristina Salvestro in Gundaroo, which is just outside the ACT, on Saturday and we are looking forward to celebrating the day with them and as well as catching up with other family members and friends.

Long serving Plant Foreman Neil “Dribbles” Driscoll leaves Bourke Shire Council tomorrow (Friday) after 32 years of dedicated service to Council. I would join with the Mayor Councillors and staff both past and present in wishing Neil all the best for a healthy and happy retirement. Renowned for giving 110% all the time Neil’s contribution to Council has been appreciated and will be missed but he will no doubt continue his other valuable work within the Bourke community.

The July Meeting of Council will be held this Monday, 24th July commencing at 9.00am and will include a public forum at 10.00am.

Greg Edwards the Area Manager Far West for Juvenile Justice will take the opportunity to address Council on the operation and role of that Department during the course of the meeting.

The Housing Services Division of Family and Community Services will be conducting clean-up days during the week commencing Monday the 7th August 2017 and skip bins will be located in certain areas within Bourke to allow residents of those areas to dispose of rubbish and/or unwanted items.

Council will conduct a “Fee Free Weekend’ on the 5th and 6th August 2017 to complement the housing services initiative.

Please note that **No Car Tyres, Fibro, Asbestos, White Goods, Paint or Batteries** are to be placed in the skip bins and these items are **not included** in the list of items able to be disposed of free of charge as part of the “Fee Free “weekend.

The team from SIMTEC were in town last week installing further upgrade to the CCTV installation within Bourke. The quality of the picture from the new camera is apparently fantastic and this will no doubt assist in helping the police in identifying offenders. There is still additional work to be completed from the last round of funding and this is anticipated to be finalised over the next month.

Bourke Rotary Club will celebrate its 60th year on the 29th August having been chartered in 1957 and over that 60 years has seen members come and go but at all times provided a significant level of service to the Bourke Community.

Quote of the Week!

“We are not a team because we work together, we are a team because we respect, trust and care for each other”

Ross Earl
General Manager