



“From the GM’s Desk”

3rd August 2017



The announcement last week that the State Government would not be proceeding with the forced amalgamations of a number of city Councils came as somewhat of a surprise, but for those Councils involved a very welcome surprise. Each of the candidates for the upcoming elections can now stand with the certainty that they will be able to serve their community without the potential threat of being removed from office via amalgamation part way through their term.

There have been a number of comments being made regarding the future of the Far West Initiative (FWI) with a strong leaning to the belief that it will not proceed.

Council has written to the Deputy Premier, the Hon. John Barilaro, MP and the Minister for Local Government, the Hon. Gabrielle Upton, MP, seeking clarification of the current status of the FWI and the way forward for those eight (8) Councils who had been earmarked to be part of that Organisation.

There are still a number of issues to be clarified including whether the formation of a Joint Organisations of Councils (JOs) will proceed and if so the role of the JOs, their membership and the conditions under which all Councils will be able to access the borrowing facility established by T-Corp.

The concept of improved service delivery in the Far West of New South Wales has, from a Local Government perspective, taken a back seat to potential Local Government Reform. This has been unfortunate as it is clear that the delivery of services from both State and Federal Government are in dire need of improvement. Local Government, in my view, is well placed to assist in this regard, being the major stable organisation in each of the communities with the capacity to have a positive influence.

Bourke Shire Council is one of the NSW Councils in tranche one of the Stronger Country Communities Fund. Councils in tranche one have to have their application submitted by the 9th August 2017. Council staff have been busy working on the application and there have been a number of workshops at senior management level and others with Councillors to determine the priorities for the application for the first year. Council has \$765,000 available to allocate to approved projects over the next two (2) financial years.

Following the Councillors workshop and further consideration at the July Council meeting Council will be submitting two (2) applications in the first year and these are as follows:-

1. Central Park Upgrade

This will involve the installation of toilet facilities, a half- court basketball court, a shade sail over the skate park and improvements to the fencing around the tennis courts.

Improvements to the tennis court amenities and the improvement of lighting generally within the complex.

Central Park is a focal point for our community and is utilised by both visitors and locals alike and provides a broad range of facilities to cater for all sections of the community and there is a strong desire that the facilities provided are commensurate with the expectations of all members of the community.

2. Improved lighting at the Davidson and Coolican Oval and the upgrade and refurbishment of the existing canteen facilities

This project will see the upgrade of lighting facilities at both complexes as well as improvements to the canteen facilities.

The Davidson and Coolican Oval Complexes are the focal point of sporting facilities in Bourke.

The improvement of lighting at Davidson Oval has been one of the requests that has been put to Council over many years and will not only provide a much better facility for local groups but will also provide the opportunity to host representative matches. The lighting at Coolican Oval will provide additional training facilities and reduce the current high demand for usage of Davidson Oval.

The next meeting of Council is scheduled to be held on Monday, 28th August commencing at 9.00.

At this meeting the Chief Executive Officer of Maranguka, Alistair Ferguson has been invited to attend and give an update as to the current activities of Maranguka and their plans for the future.

Council meetings are open to the public and Council encourages the input from our community and conducts a public forum at 10.00am on each meeting day.

The Housing Services Division of Family and Community Services will be conducting clean-up days during the week commencing 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. The Housing Services will notify the location of these skip bins.

Council will conduct a **“Fee Free Weekend” on the 5th and 6th August 2017** to complement the Housing Services initiative.

Please note that **No tyres, fibro, asbestos, white goods, paint or batteries** are to be placed in the skip bins. 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 Tour de OROC which sees a bicycle ride around the Local Government areas that form the OROC region will again be held in 2017. The Tour de OROC aims to raise money towards the construction of Macquarie Homestay which is planned accommodation for people patients and families of patients seeking treatment at the Dubbo Base Hospital. The event commenced in 2013 and was again successfully conducted in 2015 with over \$300,000.00 being raised to date. Each of

the participants pay an entry fee and obtain sponsorship; whilst at a local level each of the communities along the way seek to supplement the funds raised by the riders by hosting fundraising events. The local communities also provide accommodation for the riders.

The event will be staged from 2nd to 7th October 2017 with a stopover planned for Bourke on the night of Thursday the 5th October 2017. Bourke Shire Council will be joining with Bourke Rotary Club in coordinating arrangements in Bourke.

Bourke Shire Council has written to the Western Local Health District seeking further information of the "Model of Care" that has been developed in relation to maternity services in Bourke. The "Model of Care" deals with both ante and post-natal care and was developed in part due to the concerns raised by both Council and the Community of Bourke regarding the potential erosion of maternity services with the closure of the "Birthing Unit" services. The model of care has apparently been the subject of presentations both within the Local Health District and outside the district as well. Council is keen to review the documentation in relation to the "Model of Care".

During the discussions at the last Council meeting regarding the application for Stronger Country Communities Fund one of the ideas put forward was the construction of signs to the entrance of Bourke. The discussions lead to the need for the development of a "Signage Plan" for Bourke Shire to ensure that all signs erected were of a consistent standard and reflected a consistent theme throughout the whole of Bourke Shire. Signage forms an important marketing tool for the community and is an essential element to a tourism strategy.

The dry weather has posed a number of difficulties for Councils in the west of the state with large unsealed road networks, as they are finding it difficult to do effective maintenance grading with a lack of moisture in the soil.

The first instalment for the rates is due on the 31st August 2017.

If you are having difficulties meeting your obligations in relation to the payment of rates please contact the Revenue Officer at Council so that, if possible, suitable arrangements can be put in place.

Quote of the Week!

"One day you will be a memory for some people-do your best to be a good one"

Ross Earl
General Manager