



“From the GM’s Desk”

10th August 2017



I travelled to Sydney last Wednesday night for a series of meetings on Thursday with the first of those being held at 8.00am on Thursday morning at Martin Place with the Deputy Ombudsman Aboriginal Programmes, Danny Lester, Peter Gibbs, Advisor to Sarah Mitchell, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Emma Logan, the Senior Policy Advisor to the Deputy Premier, the Hon. John Barilaro, MP. This meeting was to progress the Bourke Aboriginal Employment Prosperity Strategy and the implementation of the project including the recruitment of the person to undertake the Project Officer’s Role. The recruitment of the Project Officer is an essential foundation stone for the project and the person appointed will be key to the overall success of the project. The position will be hosted by Bourke Shire Council and will work closely with the existing Council staff to make a tangible difference to employment opportunities within Bourke Shire.

Following that meeting I then walked to Parliament House for a meeting with Laura Clarke who is the Deputy Chief of Staff for the Deputy Premier, the Hon. John Barilaro, MP. Our discussions focussed around the future of the Far West Initiative (FWI) and the next steps for those Councils who had previously been earmarked for the FWI. There are a number of issues still to be resolved for those Councils as well as a number of other Councils who had been deemed “Fit for the Future” as Rural Councils; a concept which would appear to no longer exist. In our discussions Laura indicated it was hoped that clarity of the “where to now”, in respect all proposed changes that are still to be finalised will be provided prior to the Local Government elections to be held on 9th September 2017. These elections are for those Councils who had their elections deferred last year. It would appear that the concept of the FWI as previously planned will no longer be pursued.

Councils will be able to maintain their association with any existing Regional Organisation of Councils or other body that may be formed.

Following the meeting with Laura, I went to the quarterly meeting of the StateCover Advisory Board at their Offices in Margaret Street. The meeting was aimed at reviewing proposals that would ensure that StateCover continues to meet the needs of its member Councils into the future. StateCover provides Workers Compensation for over 90% of New South Wales Councils. The Advisory Board has only been in operation for twelve (12) months and from all indications has had a positive impact and as such it has been determined that it will continue for another twelve (12) months with the existing membership likely to remain unchanged. Members of the Advisory Board are from a broad cross section of Councils across the state representing the interests of Metropolitan, Regional and Rural Councils. I am the only representative from west of the Newell Highway and Bourke Shire is by far the smallest Council with representation on the Advisory Board.

The StateCover offices are in the same building as Local Government New South Wales (LGNSW) so I took the opportunity mid- afternoon to catch up with a number of the staff at LGNSW prior to going back to Macquarie Street and Parliament House where I briefly caught up with our Local

Member for Barwon, Kevin Humphries, MP and the Parliamentary Secretary for Natural Resources and Western New South Wales, the Hon. Rick Colless, MLC.

Discussions revolved around the funding being made available under the Regional Growth Fund and in particular the funding currently being allocated as part of the Stronger Regional Communities portion of that funding.

On the Friday morning I was up very early to travel by car down to Mudgee with Rick Colless to attend the quarterly meeting of the Orana Regional Organisational of Councils (OROC) in Mudgee hosted by Mid-Western Regional Council which started at 9.00am

The OROC meeting was again well attended and productive with the Auditor General, Barbara Crawford in attendance and she was accompanied by David Nolan, Director Financial Audit Services and Jo Manion, Senior Performance Analysts. David is responsible for Bourke Shire Council's overall audit process which is still being undertaken by Hill Rogers. Also on the agenda were the Deputy Commissioner Regional Field Operations, Gary Worboys and the Assistant Commissioner for Western Region, Geoff McKechnie. The Deputy Commissioner detailed his plans to try and make the operation of the various Local Area Commands (LACs) a little more effective and indicated that there would likely be giving consideration to boundary changes in relation to the existing LACs and in particular those with lower numbers of Police. Mr Worboys did indicate that prior to any changes there would be a considerable amount of consultation with all stakeholders, including the impacted communities.

On Sunday afternoon, I will be travelling to Dubbo for a Monday morning meeting with Peter Whitely the Regional Manager of Training New South Wales to finalise the funding agreement in relation to the employment of the Project Officer to be employed to implement the various components of the Bourke Aboriginal Employment Prosperity Strategy. I will be accompanied by Charles Liggett, Council's Manager of Tourism and Economic Development.

In the afternoon, once again in Dubbo, I will be attending a meeting of the Cross-Sector Leadership Group which has been convened by the Minister of Family and Community Services, the Hon. Brad Hazzard MP, whilst Charles will be meeting with Megan Dixon from Regional Development Australia- Orana at the same time.

The Cross-Sector Leadership Group brings together the leaders of the various organisations that provided services to the community of Bourke to identify issues that need to be addressed by a more collaborative approach. The meeting will also provide the opportunity to be updated on the Justice Reinvestment Initiative and the work of Maranguka.

Brad Hazzard was appointed the "Champion of Bourke" by the previous Premier Mike Baird with part of this role to ensure the more coordinated approach to service delivery for Bourke.

Bourke Shire Council was the lead Council in a joint application with Walgett and Brewarrina Shires under Round 2 of the Division of Local Government's Innovation Fund and on Thursday night at the Local Government Awards Night the Minister for Local Government, the Hon. Gabrielle Upton announced that the joint application was one of those successful in obtaining funding.

The Funded project called “Harmonisation of Human Resource Management: Engaging, Developing and Utilising Local Workforce Capability and Capacity” has attracted funding of \$130,550 which will be utilised in the development and implementation of workforce package to increase capability and capacity across three (3) shire regions. Focus will be on performance improvement, capacity building and resource sharing, integrated human resource management practices and integrated work, health and safety framework. Part of the project will see the development of updated position descriptions and other generic forms that can be used across the three Councils and reflect the contemporary needs of the Councils.

The success in Round 2 builds on the \$380,000 the three (3) Councils obtained in Round 1 of the Innovation Fund for Aboriginal Community Based Environmental and Waste Management. Bourke Shire Council was also successful in obtaining a further \$75,000.00 in Round 1 to assist in the integration of its software applications.

The 59th Annual Louth Races are on Saturday and the hard working committee lead by Jim and Annabelle Strachan have once again put a lot of work into the day and the races should once again attract a huge crowd. The Louth Races are a result of a combined effort of all sections of the Louth community and is indicative of what can be achieved by communities who are all working together.

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!

“A bad attitude is like a flat tyre - If you don’t change it you’ll never go anywhere”

Ross Earl
General Manager