



“From the GM’s Desk”

31st August 2017



Bourke Shire has received advice, that they will receive funding of \$102,857.00 to undertake a Flood Plain Risk Management Study at Louth. The funding has been made available by the Office of Heritage and Environment. Council has been waiting for some time for the funding to become available and it will allow a comprehensive study of the area to be undertaken and identify any work that may need to be undertaken to improve the levy around the village.

Council has also received advice from Minister for Lands, the Hon. Paul Toole, MP via the Member for Barwon, Kevin Humphries, MP that an application submitted to replace the roofing over the Pavilion at the Showground was successful with an amount of \$27,000.00 being made to Council as the Reserve Trust Manager. The application for funding was prepared by the Bourke Show Committee on behalf of the user groups at the Showground at the Renshaw Oval Complex.

The funding received complements the funding the Show Committee have recently received to upgrade the toilet facilities and they were also the recipients of a new kitchen.

The first instalment for the rates is due today, 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.

Council has for some time been concerned with the increased level of outstanding rates and staff have been working hard to reduce that level with the assistance of our collection agency. If attempts by Council staff fail to see the outstanding rates and charges paid or a suitable payment plan put in place they are referred to the collection agency for their action. Once the debts are referred to the agency it generally means additional costs will be added to the outstanding amount. If these additional costs are to be avoided, ratepayers with outstanding amounts should call into our offices to make suitable arrangements.

Council has a number of properties that are able to be sold under the provisions of section 713 of the Local Government Act 1993 to recoup the outstanding debts and it is proposed that the process for these sales to take place will be commenced shortly with the sales likely to take place in early 2018.

The Men’s Health Education Rural Van (Mherv) will be in the area during September with the van being in Cobar on the 8th and 9th September, Bourke on the 12th and 13th and Brewarrina on the 15th and 16th. Mherv provides the opportunity for men to undergo some basic health tests and

potentially identify any problems. Mherv is supported by Rotary and is a great initiative. I encourage all the men of Bourke to take advantage of the service it provides.

It's a five minute ... non-invasive group of tests:-

- Blood pressure just to check the heart isn't too stressed.
- Blood sugar levels ... just a pin-prick in the finger, to make sure there's' no type two diabetes...this is manageable even if there is.
- Cholesterol ... just another pin-prick to see if levels are high and need attention.
- There's also a test for bowel cancer ... we'll provide the kit, but that needs to be done later at home.

The new exercise equipment in Central Park is now available for use. A number of positive comments have been received regarding the facility and it is anticipated that it will get a considerable amount of use. Council staff is establishing grass around the concrete slab on which the equipment is located which serve to improve the overall appearance of the area.

The development of the Far West Regional Plan has been undertaken over the past two (2) years and covers the Local Government Areas of Balranald, Bourke, Brewarrina, Broken Hill, Central Darling, Cobar, Walgett and Wentworth together with the Unincorporated Area.

A draft plan was prepared and was on public exhibition for the period from December 2016 to March 2017 and the Department of Planning representatives visited each of the Councils during that period.

There were also a series of community consultations carried out during that period and the opportunity provided for comment. As a result there were some changes incorporated in the final plan.

The Far West Regional Plan is one of nine (9) plans that have been developed across the state by the Department of Planning.

The Far West Regional Plan was officially launched by the Minister for Planning, the Hon. Anthony Roberts, MP at a function at Walgett on Tuesday, 22nd August 2017 and the launch was also attended by the Hon. Rick Colless, MLC the Parliamentary Secretary for Natural Resources and Western New Wales and the Chief Planner for New South Wales, Gary White.

The Mayor, Councillor Barry Hollman and I joined with representatives from both Brewarrina and Walgett Shires and staff from both the Sydney and Dubbo Offices from the Department of Planning in attending the launch.

Copies of the plan are available on line on the Department of Planning website.

<http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Plans-for-your-area/Regional-Plans/Far-West>

The low rainfall that the Shire has experienced this year has resulted in the water supply available to the residents of Byrock being significantly depleted and at this stage it would appear that the village supply will run out of water at the end of September without any significant rainfall, and a review of the long term forecast indicates that rain is unlikely at this stage.

To ensure that arrangements are in place to be able to commence carting of water Council has written to the Minister for Water, the Hon. Niall Blair, MLC seeking approval for the funding to enable the commencement of carting as soon as it becomes necessary. The Minister has in previous years has provided approval for 12 month periods and a similar approval has been requested this time. The cooperation and assistance from the NSW Office of Water has in the past been excellent as they recognise the problems faced by a number of village communities in the west of the state.

Byrock water supply is an all ground water catchment and totally dependent on rainfall with other villages supplies being provided by bores.

Council has had a bridge construction specialist undertake a further inspection of the Cuttaburra Bridge on the Hungerford Road near Yantabulla to see the most effective way of undertaking the required repairs to rectify the structural deterioration that has been identified. A 10 tonne load limit will remain until those repairs have been undertaken and certified. Any enquiries in relation to the load limit should be directed to the Engineering Department of Bourke Shire Council.

Ongoing improvements works are continuing at the Bourke Airport with the new security fencing adjacent to the terminal completed, including automatic gates and new security facilities also installed around the complex. The carpark has been resealed and will shortly be line marked, whilst there has also been a considerable amount of work been undertaken to improve the landscaping in and around the terminal area.

Work is being undertaken on the Financial Reports for the 2016/2017 financial year and it is anticipated that Councils Auditors will be in Bourke next week to commence the audit. Our Auditors Hills Rogers from Sydney undertak the audit on behalf of the Auditor General who is now responsible for all the Local Government Audits in New South Wales and the Auditor General or her delegate will sign off on the audit once it is satisfactorily completed.

Quote of the Week!

Stay positive, work hard, make it happen!

Ross Earl
General Manager