



“From the GM’s Desk”

21st December 2017



Councils currently manages Crown Reserves under Crown Lands Legislation and they also manage Council owned public land under the Local Government Act (1993). Following changes to the Crown Reserve Management under the Crown Lands Management Act 2016 Councils will now manage Crown Reserves under the Local Government Act. Ownership of this land will remain with the State with the Minister for Lands and Forestry retaining certain oversight functions; Council managed Crown Reserves will generally be classified as community land and categorised under the Local Government Act.

The Office of Local Government will be producing guidance material and training programmes to support Councils through the transition which will roll out in 2018. A Council reference group including representations from LGNSW will be established to ensure that the material meets the needs of Councils. With a significant number of Reserves being under the management of Councils in the Far West of the State it will be important that Bourke Shire Council gets on the front foot with these changes.

An important change in the new legislation is the requirement for Council Crown Land Managers to employ or engage trained Native Title Managers who will be responsible for providing advice on certain dealings for land that may be affected by native title.

The water supply at Byrock received a significant boost with the good rain a couple of weeks ago and an assessment by Council Staff has indicated that the level currently within the storage should be sufficient to last until March 2018 without additional inflow.

Together with the Manager of Works, Peter Brown and I met with Andrew Huntley of Essential Energy in regards to the way the trees in and around Bourke had been pruned from around the power lines. Council had received numerous complaints regarding the way in which the trees had in many instances been lopped that had effectively damaged the shape of the trees and dramatically impacted on their aesthetic appearance.

The discussions were amicable and it was clear that there needs to be much better communication between Essential Energy, Council and the contractors if the work to be carried out is to meet with the approval of Council.

Council has a street tree replacement and maintenance policy and some of the issues currently being experienced can be minimised by a better tree selection in the future. That said Essential Energy has agreed to work with Council in the tree replacement programme going forward.

Bourke Shire will be looking for future tree trimming to be much more sympathetic to the needs of the community and whilst understanding the need to keep the trees away from power lines amid safety concerns there needs to be an increased focus on the appearance of the streetscape and the shaping and ongoing health of the trees which have taken years to grow.

Today marks an end of an era with today's publication of the Western Herald being the last unless something happens in relation to the purchase of the paper over the Christmas break.

The Western Herald has been an excellent conduit for the dissemination of news and other information over 130 years and its value to the community possibly not recognised or fully appreciated until the news of its impending closure was announced.

We will wait with a degree of expectation to see what unfolds over the next few months.

I think that it is appropriate that we acknowledge the efforts of the past and presents owners and staff that have combined to make the "Western Herald" an icon in Western New South Wales over the period of its publication.

Nomination forms for the 2018 Australia Day Awards are now available from Councils Offices and can also be downloaded from Council's website www.bourke.nsw.gov.au

If you think there is someone, an organisation or an event that you feel is worthy of a nomination don't say **"someone should nominate them - be that someone."**

Council is still awaiting details in relation to the 2018 Australia Day Ambassador and hopefully this information will be forthcoming shortly.

The Australia Day Function in Bourke for 2018 will follow a similar format to previous years and I encourage everyone to come along and celebrate everything great about being Australian.

A reminder that changes to the normal operational arrangements for Council over the Christmas periods have been extensively advertised in the local paper and the details are also on Council's website www.bourke.nsw.gov.au

I looked at the weather forecast in Quebec Canada where one of our daughters and her family live. While we are likely to see temperatures 40 degree plus over the next few day they have been experiencing temperatures as low as minus 20 degrees. I have often thought that a white Christmas would be great but I am not so sure if I can handle the cold that goes with it, however, if we get the 10 days of over 40 degrees it may well be very tempting to give it a try.

Early in the New Year Councillors and staff will be embarking on the annual round of Village tours. This provides the opportunity for members of the communities to address Councillors and staff with their concerns and suggestions on how Council may be able to improve its services and ensure that it is meeting the needs of the communities across the Shire.

The Meetings will take place PRIOR to the finalisation of Councils Operational Plan (Budget) for 2018/2019 and while Council has set its strategic direction via the Community Strategic Plan (CSP) there is still the opportunity to include some additional projects in the Budget. The funding currently being made available by the State Government Under the Growing Local Economies Fund is unprecedented and Bourke Shire Council will continue in its attempts to secure part of that funding and would welcome community input in that regard.

While I understand that many people don't like attending meetings and the timing of the meetings will not always suit everyone it is important to have your say.

While still to be confirmed meetings are likely to be held in Fords Bridge, Louth, Wanaaring, Enngonia and Byrock. A meeting will also be held in Bourke.

I would encourage everyone to take care on the roads whilst travelling over the Christmas break and ensure that you take the appropriate breaks. If you intend to have a couple of drinks ensure that you have a "Plan B" in place.

2018 is shaping up as a very big year for Bourke and Bourke Shire Council with the opening of the Small Stock Abattoir, the commencement of the construction of the Water Treatment Plant, the undertaking of the redevelopment of the Central Business District, the projects under the Stronger Communities Fund including the upgrade works in Central Park, the North Bourke Improvements, the upgrades of both Davidson and Cooligan Ovals and the commencement of the work on the Wanaaring Road which will see an addition 36 kilometres sealed.

There are a number of other projects for which Council is actively seeking funding to continue with the program of ongoing improvements to the economy and social and sporting amenity of the Shire

As generally happens at this time of year a number of people will be accepting transfers in their employment and will leave Bourke; on behalf of Bourke Shire and the Community I would like to thank you all for your contribution to Bourke and trust that you all have fond memories of the area and look forward to welcoming you back in the future.

I would like to join with Mayor Barry Hollman, his fellow Councillors and Staff of Bourke Shire Council in wishing everyone a joyous Christmas and a Safe, Happy and Healthy 2018.

Quote of the Week!

"Peace on earth will come to stay, when we live Christmas every day". Helen Steiner Rice

Ross Earl

General Manager