



“From the GM’s Desk”

1st February 2018



The Mayors of Walgett, Brewarrina and Bourke Shires and the Administrator of Central Darling Shire have issued a joint press release calling for the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder to release some of the water currently being held in storage by them for environmental purposes.

All Councils agree that with the cessation of flow in most of the Barwon Darling the situation is quite dire and with the hot weather forecast to continue in the short term there is every likelihood that there will be an increased instance of blue green algae detected.

A flow in the river would go a long way to overcoming the problem. The Councils point out that it will take any release up to two (2) months to reach Wilcannia so it is important to take proactive action now and not wait until environmental damage occurs or is imminent.

All Councils across the area covered by the Orana Regional Organisation of Councils (OROC) and in Western Division are closely considering their options in relation to the potential membership of the proposed Joint Organisation of Councils.

Cobar Shire Council is hosting a seminar on Thursday, 1st February 2018 for the Councils who are currently members of OROC whilst Broken Hill will be hosting a similar seminar of the 5th February 2018 for the Councils in Western Division.

Representatives from Bourke Shire including the Mayor Councillor Barry Hollman and I will attend the Cobar Seminar and Bourke Shire have arranged to video conference in on the Broken Hill Seminar.

The Bourke Weir pool continues to drop at a rate of around 1 centimetre per day and this means that unless we get an inflow either via a release from one (1) of the storages, rainfall locally or in the upper catchment that level two (2) restrictions are likely to be in place sometime during February.

Residents are reminded that Level One (1) restrictions, are in place and to be “water wise” at all times and “make every drop count”.

The Ordinary Meeting of Council scheduled for last Monday, 22nd January was adjourned until the 31st January 2018 due to the absence of a number of Councillor. The meeting on the 31st will commence at 4.00pm. The meeting is open to the public as normal and will include a public forum at 4.30pm.

Council will consider a possible change to the February Meeting date at the January Meeting with the meeting currently clashing with the Western Division Conference.

The Rural Fire Service (RFS) conducted a Local Government Forum in Bourke on Tuesday and it was attended by Mayors, Councillors and staff from a number of Councils in the west of the state including Bourke, Brewarrina, Cobar, Warren, Carrathool, Central Darling Shire and Coonamble Shires.

The Mayor Councillor Hollman, Manager of Corporate Services, Leonie Brown, and I represented Bourke Shire.

It would appear that despite the large distance that people had to travel to the Bourke Forum, it was the best attended of all those which were held across the state which is indicative of the importance placed on fire-fighting capability in this part of the state.

The Forum provided an opportunity for Councils to hear about issues impacting on the RFS and to seek clarification of any issues in relation to staffing, resourcing and funding.

Preparatory planning work is being undertaken for the sealing works on the Wanaaring Road which will commence towards the middle of the year following the notification of the \$11 million funding from the Fixing Country Roads Fund. The planning work is focussing on ensuring that there are adequate resources available and materials on hand to complete the works in accordance with the scope of works and timetable for completion.

Council staff members have a teleconference scheduled with Infrastructure New South Wales to finalise a few aspects of the project this week so that the funding deed in respect of the project can be finalised.

The Draft Timetable for the village consultation meetings for 2018 has been developed and has been extensively advertised and is also on our website www.bourke.nsw.gov.au

Council encourages as many people as possible to attend the meetings and have their say.

The Australia Day celebrations held in Bourke last Friday were again well attended.

Awards were made in all categories and all winners are to be congratulated. It is important to recognise that there are multiple entries in most categories and all entries were of a very high standard.

The winners were as follows:-

Citizen of the Year	Wally Mitchell
Young Citizen of the Year	Bailey Harrod
Village Community Service	Tim and Sue Davis
Emergency Service Volunteer of the Year	Jonathon Amos
Community Event of the Year	Bourke Show
Community Service through Employment	Barry "Nooka" Harris
Young Sportsperson	Sally Simmonds
Sportsperson	Liam Rice

All recipients were very much deserved winners of their respective categories.

Our Australia Day Ambassador Katryna Robison was very approachable and an inspiring speaker and her work in assisting those less fortunate than ourselves is to be commended. The charity she founded "*Every Little Bit Helps*" will hopefully have a presence in Bourke both by the availability of the care packs distributed but also as a collection point for of unwanted hotel toiletries, inflight amenity kits, and cosmetic and make-up samples.

Katryna was accompanied by husband Michael and daughter Annabelle on the visit and they took the opportunity to spend a week in the west of the state and indicated that they will be back.

The next Meeting of the General Managers Advisory Committee (GMAC) for the Orana Regional Organisation of Councils (OROC) will be held in Narromine on the 16th February and no doubt the proposed establishment of Joint Organisations of Councils will be high on agenda. I was recently elected Chair of GMAC and am looking forward to an increased involvement in matters at a regional level.

Early last year former Army Chief, Lieutenant General Ken Gillespie was appointed as New South Wales first Regional Infrastructure Coordinator, a position tasked with accelerating infrastructure roll-out across the state's regions. His focus is to identify and overcome any roadblocks to the roll-out of the current infrastructure program.

Another ex-army colleague Don Murray was appointed as the Executive Officer and both gentlemen have made presentations to both OROC and GMAC over the past twelve (12) months.

The team report direct to the Premier and Deputy Premier.

Ken and Don have recently been joined by Nick White who comes from a strong commercial background as they attempt to cover the state on a more regular basis visiting Councils to both identify their infrastructure needs and identify impediments to the delivery of the identified infrastructure.

Nick previously made a commitment to visit Bourke and rang last Wednesday to say that he will be in town on the afternoon of the 30th January to have discussions with staff and Councillors regarding our infrastructure needs and priorities. The meeting with Councillors and members of the MANEX team is scheduled for 4.00pm.

The appearance of the town has attracted some positive comments over the holiday period and is generally looking very good, but with a whole of community effort could be made much better.

One of the areas where a dramatic improvement could be made is the appearance of the footpath/nature strips outside residential and commercial property.

I would ask that everyone make a concerted effort to mow and trim the area as it makes a significant difference to the appearance of the streetscape and should only take a few minutes each week. If you have a vacant house next door take five minutes to mow that stretch of lawn as well.

With the introduction of water restrictions it will make the task a little harder but keeping it mowed and trimmed would be a great start.

Member for Parkes Mark Coulton, MP and his wife Robyn were in Bourke last week for a meeting with some of his constituents and took the opportunity to have discussions with Councillors and Staff regarding a number of matters including progress in the improvement of mobile telephone service within the Shire, the availability of grant funding for roads and general issues relating to water.

Quote of the week!

Thousands of candles can be lighted from a single candle, and the life of the candle will not be shortened. Happiness never decreases by being shared. – Buddha

Ross Earl
General Manager