



## “From the GM’s Desk” 8th February 2018



Following the recent press release calling for the release of water held for environmental purposes by the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holders Office the Mayor and I have had discussions with the Acting Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder Mark Taylor regarding the matter. We have arranged to meet with him and any available representatives of Central Darling, Brewarrina and Walgett Councils in Dubbo on the 15<sup>th</sup> February 2018.

In the brief discussions I have had with Mark he indicated that there are a number of factors to consider prior to making such a release. While our discussions will focus on the current situation it may provide the opportunity to develop a strategy that would enable releases to take place when we find the river in a similar situation with flows across all weirs servicing the towns at a standstill.

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Cobar Shire Council hosted a meeting of all councils in the Orana Regional Organisation of Councils (OROC) to a seminar on Joint Organisation of Councils (JOCs) as the date for Councils to make a decision as to their membership of a JO draws nearer.

Tim Hurst the Acting Chief Executive of the Office of Local Government and Melisa Gibbs the Director of Innovation were the presenters. Shaun McBride a Senior Policy Advisor from Local Government New South Wales was also in attendance to ensure that information relayed at the seminar was able to be disseminated to other Councils if appropriate.

Ten of the twelve Councils in (OROC) were represented and each had the opportunity to raise a number of questions in relation to the formation and operation of the JOs.

With the exception of those Councils in the Far West Planning Region, Councils can only form a JO with Councils within their own planning region. Bourke Shire is located within the Far West Planning Region.

Currently there are two (2) Regional Organisations of Councils (ROCs) in the Orana Central West Planning Region and whether these develop into JOs along the same boundaries is yet to be fully determined. There are Councils in each of the current ROCs who have already indicated that they will not be joining a JO.

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The Mayor Councillor Barry Hollman, who is Vice President of Western Division Councils and Councillor Victor Bartley, also made the trip to Broken Hill on Monday for a meeting of the Western Division Councils regarding the plans of the member Councils of that organisation in relation to potential membership of a JO. Together with members of Staff and other Councillors I took the opportunity to join the seminar via video conference as did representatives of Walgett and Cobar Shire.

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Next week sees the start of the Community Consultation Meetings with meetings scheduled across the Shire. The timetable for the meetings is as follows

Day	Date 2018	Location	Time
Wednesday	14 <sup>th</sup> February	Louth - Breakfast at 8.00 am	Meeting 9.00am – 11.00am
Wednesday	14 <sup>th</sup> February	Wanaaring - Lunch 1.00 pm	Meeting 1.30pm-3.30pm
Thursday	15 <sup>th</sup> February	Byrock - Lunch 1.00pm	Meeting 1.30pm – 3.30pm
Tuesday	20 <sup>th</sup> February	Bourke	Meeting 6.00 pm – 8.00pm
Thursday	22 <sup>nd</sup> February	Enngonia - Breakfast 8.00am	Meeting 9.00am -11.00am
Thursday	22 <sup>nd</sup> February	Fords Bridge - Lunch at 12.15	Meeting at 1.00pm – 3.00pm

Council encourages as many people as possible to attend the meetings and have their say in the operation of Council and the prioritisation of expenditure within the locality.

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Council has adopted a timetable for the preparation and consideration for the Operational Plan (Budget) for 2018/2019 and this is detailed below

January 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Preparation Commenced
March 6 <sup>th</sup>	MANEX Meeting to Finalise Preliminary Document
March 9 <sup>th</sup>	Draft Document Distributed
March 15 <sup>th</sup>	Meeting of Corporate Service Committee to consider preliminary documents
March 26 <sup>th</sup>	Draft Document to Council for approval to proceed to advertisement
April 6 <sup>th</sup>	Period of Public Notices Commences
May 4 <sup>th</sup>	Closing Date for Submissions to be lodged
May 28 <sup>th</sup>	Submissions presented to Council for consideration
May 28 <sup>th</sup>	Subject to any amendments the Operational Plan is to be adopted
June 11 <sup>th</sup>	Final Document published and distributed

Anyone who would like to have something considered for inclusion in the Draft Budget is invited to forward their request/suggestion to the Manager of Corporate Services Leonie Brown

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Plans are gradually taking shape to the Easter Activities in Bourke for 2018 with a family reunion planned coupled with a reunion of the Cornerstone Community, both of which will ensure a number of visitors to the town.

The Back Of Bourke Race Club will have their Annual Race Meeting on Easter Sunday whilst there will be a parade and wool bale rolling on the Saturday both of which will be coordinated by the Bourke Rotary Club . There is a very full program already developing and looks to offer something for everyone.

A full programme is on both the Council website [www.bourke.nsw.gov.au](http://www.bourke.nsw.gov.au) and also visit Bourke website [www.visitbourke.com](http://www.visitbourke.com)

If you have an activity planned and would like it included on the program or wish a little more information please contact Jodie Sontag at the Visitor Information Centre located at the Back O Bourke Exhibition Centre.

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Bourke Shire Public Library is pleased to host author, Patsy Kemp, on the 15th February. Patsy will be speaking in the library at 5:30pm, refreshments will be provided. Patsy is the author of *The Drover's Daughter*.

Travelling through north-east Australia as one of seven kids with two adults, 5,000 sheep and at least six horses and 8 dogs, *The Drover's Daughter* offers a fascinating insight into life in the outback.

Drovers hold an iconic place in Australia's history, but what about the family that travelled with them?

This is the first of a number of visits by authors that will hopefully take place over the next few weeks and is an opportunity for the avid readers and other interested people with the community to meet with the authors and discuss the books. No doubt there will be books available for sale and the ability to secure an autographed copy.

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The Far West Algal Coordinating Committee released their latest report last Friday, with the following areas within or adjacent to Bourke Shire subject to an alert. All testing locations within Bourke Shire are currently on an Amber alert

Bourke Wharf- Amber Alert  
Bourke Boat Ramp- Amber Alert  
Bourke Weir- Amber Alert  
River at Rose Isle – Amber Alert  
Louth- Amber Alert  
Tilpa Weir - Green Alert

An explanation of what the respective alerts mean is on the Water NSW Website

[www.waternsw.com.au/water-quality/algae](http://www.waternsw.com.au/water-quality/algae)

Presently the river systems in the far west of the state are experiencing very low flows, these low flows coupled with the recent hot weather is likely to promote rapid algae growth

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The Ordinary Meeting of Bourke Shire Council which was initially scheduled to be held on the 26<sup>th</sup> February will now be held on the 19<sup>th</sup> February to avoid a clash with the Western Division Conference in Balranald. The Meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> will commence at 9.00 am with a public forum scheduled for 10.00am

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National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) advise that a draft plan of management has been prepared for Toorale National Park and Toorale State Conservation Area near Bourke. See a copy at:

- National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) Bourke Office (51–53 Oxley Street, Bourke NSW)
- Bourke Public Library (46 Mitchell Street, Bourke NSW)
- Bourke Tourist Information Centre (Kidman Way, Bourke NSW)
- Cobar Visitor Information Centre (Barrier Highway, Cobar NSW)
- Tilpa Hotel (1 Darling Street, Tilpa NSW)
- Shindy's Inn (Bloxham Street, Louth NSW)
- Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) Customer Centre (Level 14, 59–61 Goulburn St, Sydney)
- Or it can be downloaded it at <https://engage.environment.nsw.gov.au/consult>

The exhibition of the draft plan provides an important opportunity for members of the community to have a say in future management directions for the parks. Submissions must be received by **7th May 2018**.

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The Welcome to Bourke Night is scheduled for the 28<sup>th</sup> February 2018 and I would encourage all new residents to come along and take the opportunity to meet representatives from the various sporting and social organisation within Bourke and find out more of what the town has to offer.

The Welcome to Bourke Night is an initiative of Bourke Shire supported by Bourke Rotary Club.

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Council hosted Nick and Jenny White from the NSW Regional Infrastructure team last week when they visited Bourke as part of their tour of Western New South Wales. Council took the opportunity to detail our strategic priorities. Council also took the opportunity to highlight the problems presented by the large area covered by Council and the duplication of services throughout the area. It was noted that all towns required a reliable water supply and other basic amenities such as a Hall, Waste Disposal facility, street lighting, cemetery and sealed streets. Those villages only accessible via unsealed roads needed a sealed airstrip and lighting to cater for medical emergencies. The provision of these facilities is important but all come at a cost.

*Quote of the week!*

*You will never plough a field if you only turn it over in your mind. —Irish Proverb*

**Ross Earl**

**General Manager**