



“From the GM’s Desk” 22nd February 2018



On Thursday, 15th February 2018 representatives of the Councils along the Barwon Darling River, including the Mayor, Councillor Barry Hollman and General Manager, Ross Earl of Bourke Shire, Mayor, Ian Woodcock and General Manager, Don Ramsland of Walgett Shire and Jeff Sowiak, General Manager of Brewarrina Shire met with the Assistant Secretary, Wetlands, Policy and Northern Water Use Branch Commonwealth Environmental Water Office, Mark Taylor. This meeting was held to request the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder to consider the provision of water from their holdings for an environmental flow in the Barwon Darling River System.

Mr Taylor took the time to detail the amount of water currently held by the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder. He highlighted the complexities involved in making a flow available and the level of coordination that goes into the provision of an environmental release given that whilst the water is owned by the Commonwealth Environmental Water holder it is held within State owned storages and needed to be transferred via the state owned resources and facilities.

When environmental water holders try to coordinate a flow through multiple water resource areas there needs to be protection of the flow from pumping which would be legal under most Water Resource Plans (WRPs). Once the flow hits a new water resource area it is “re-regulated” and available to anyone with a water access license and the right to pump. A legal embargo under the WRP or a series of voluntary agreements with entitlement holders would be preferable in order to ensure as much of the release as possible gets through to connect the pools and bring flow back to the communities south of Bourke.

Notwithstanding the challenges, Mr Taylor indicated that preliminary work had been done to try and expedite a release recognising the concerns that the Councils had expressed on behalf of their communities and whilst stopping short of any firm commitment he did provide the Councils with a degree of optimism that something may be able to be done to alleviate the current situation.

The three (3) Councils will be in contact with the Minister for Regional Water, the Hon. Niall Blair, MLC to ensure that there is no anticipated impediment from the State’s point of view and the flow is able to be guided through the system so that as much of the release as possible reaches the areas such as Wilcannia.

There are a number of variables that can influence the effectiveness of a release including of course rain fall. It is important to get a release flowing on top of existing water in the system to minimise the impact of losses through absorption.

Representatives from Central Darling, Walgett and Bourke Shires will also try to meet with Minister Blair at the Western Division Conference next week in Balranald.

Council allocated \$26,889.00 from the Infrastructure Renewal Reserve to allow for the completion of the new roof on the main pavilion at the Renshaw Oval Complex. The Bourke Show Committee was successful in their application for a grant to contribute towards the undertaking of the works. The allocation of the additional money will enable the engagement of a contractor to undertake the works rather than rely on voluntary labour. It is hoped to have the works finished by Easter to allow the facility to be able to be used for the Back O Bourke Races.

With the Show Committee having been previously successful in securing a new kitchen for the complex it is important that that asset is adequately protected.

Council also allocated \$40,000.00 from the Infrastructure Renewal Reserve to complement the \$126,550.00 received from The New South Wales Government's Boating Now Program for the replacement of the North Bourke Boat Ramp. Consultants have been engaged to undertake the development of plans for the ramp and also undertake the Review of Environmental Factors (REF). Once these are finalised it is proposed to call for quotations and have the work completed whilst the river is low.

Council has decided that it will hold the Ordinary Meeting of Council in August in Louth. A number of Councils have routinely taken their meetings to the villages areas within their Shires and Bourke Shire will trial the concept with the possibility of taking additional meetings to another of the villages at a later date.

Whilst there is some logistical issues to overcome it will provide the residents of those villages the opportunity to further understand the way in which Council operates.

Council resolved to sign and affix the seal of Council to the funding deed in relation to the grant of \$11,162,000.00 received from the Fixing Country Roads Program for the sealing works on the Wanaaring Road.

Once the Deed is countersigned by the NSW Government, Council will be in a position to commence the works.

The Mayor, Councillor Barry Hollman, Councillor Victor Bartley and myself will be traveling to Balranald on Sunday to attend the Annual Conference of the Western Division Shires. Council has a number of motion for submission to the Conference covering a broad range of issues including, Road Funding, Access to Mental Health Facilities, Support for Environmental Flows in the Barwon Darling River System, the proposed provisions relating to the webcast of meetings and the requirements for Professional Development for Councillors.

The Member for Barwon, Kevin Humphries, MP will be in Bourke next week to discuss with the community organisations, the potential use of the current TAFE buildings once the New Connected Learning Centre proposed for Bourke has been constructed.

Mr Humphries will be accompanied by senior Staff of TAFE who will no doubt be very interested in the suggestions put forward.

Councillors and staff took the opportunity last Monday prior to the Council meeting to undertake an inspection of the progress at the new abattoir complex and were all very impressed with the work that had been completed since their last inspection.

At its meeting held on Monday, 19th February, Council resolved to agree in principal that it would join a Joint Organisation of Councils and to that end has scheduled an Extraordinary meeting of Council to be held at 5.00pm, Tuesday, 6th March to discuss the following three (3) options.

- A JO based on North West Area
- JO based on the current OROC footprint
- Associate membership of Broken Hill based JO

Council also reaffirmed its continued membership of the Orana Regional Organisation of Councils (OROC).

The Australia Day Ambassador for Bourke was Katryna Robinson who is the founder of a Charity called "Every Little Bit Helps. It is their belief that every Australian should have access to a toothbrush and a bar of soap, and that by providing basic toiletries to people in need they are providing them with not only the essentials, but also a little bit of dignity.

By receiving donated hotel toiletries, airline amenity kits, as well as make-up and cosmetic samples and sanitary items "Every Little Bit Helps" are able to supply these products, packed into care packages to the homeless, asylum seekers and victims of Domestic Violence plus many others.

"Every Little Bit Helps" has now officially launched a collection point at the Bourke Community Library which has been established to support the local community. This is the result of discussions during Katryna's visit to Bourke for Australia Day. Staff at the Bourke Library have indicated a strong support for the project and will be hosting a collection point with little Red Bins available for that purpose. The ladies at the Bourke Country Women's Association will be assisting with the sorting and packing of the care packs for the local community.

Clean Up Australia day will be held on Sunday, 4th March 2018, to coincide with this important community based event Bourke Shire Council will conduct a Tip Fee - Free Weekend on the 3rd and 4th March 2018 to assist residents who are keen to participate in this important Annual Event.

The Day will also provide the opportunity for residents to clean up their yards in preparation for the Easter weekend and get rid of unwanted clutter.

It should be noted that the Tip Fee Free Weekend applies to **Residential** properties **ONLY**, no commercial or building waste will be accepted free of charge. **The following items will NOT be accepted free of charge** tyres, batteries, asbestos, liquid waste chemicals and building and commercial waste.

Bourke Shire Council is pleased to be able to support Clean Up Australia and encourages all residents to join in "Clean Up Australia Day".

The Welcome to Bourke Night is scheduled for Wednesday, 28th February 2018 and I 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.

Each new resident will be given a new residents pack with information regarding the town and attractions.

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

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.

Location	Alert	Location	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		

There are presently no Red Alerts in place for the Far West Region.

An explanation of what the respective alerts mean is on the Water NSW Website www.watarnsw.com.au/water-quality/algae

Stock and domestic water users in Amber Alert areas should be on the lookout for surface scums and consider alternate water sources if available.

Presently the river systems in the far west are experiencing very low flows, these low flows coupled with the summer weather conditions, are likely to promote algae growth.

Quote of the Week!

No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than it's opposite.

Nelson Mandela

Ross Earl
General Manager