



“From the GM’s Desk” 15th March 2018



After a considerable amount of discussion and various options proposed Bourke Shire Council has resolved that it will seek to join a Joint Organisation (JO) of Councils that is based on the current footprint of the current Orana Regional Organisation of Councils (OROC).

The Member Councils of OROC are Mid-Western and Dubbo Regional Councils, Warrumbungle, Gilgandra, Warren, Coonamble, Bogan, Coonamble, Narromine, Bourke, Brewarrina and Cobar Shire Councils.

Bourke Shire Council has also resolved to continue its membership of OROC and with some Councils still undecided regarding their membership of a JO and others indicating that they will not be joining a JO at this stage; the continuation of OROC seems to be a logical move.

Councils Corporate Planning Committee will be meeting on Tuesday 13th March 2018 to review the Draft Operational (Budget) Plan that has been prepared by staff. The Corporate Planning Committee will in reviewing the document make suggested amendments, if required, and the amendment document will then be presented to the Ordinary Meeting of Council on the 26th March 2018 for its consideration and approval for advertising.

The Draft Operational Plan is required, under the provisions of the Local Government Act to be advertised for a period of at least twenty eight (28) days during such period members of the public are able to make submissions. Any submission received by Council during the consultation period must be considered by Council prior to the formal adoption of the Operational Plan.

There is a considerable amount of work that goes into the preparation of the Operational Plan each year and as far as possible the suggestions that have come from the recent round of Community Consultations meetings are included in the budgetary decision making process. Councils Community Strategic Plan (CSP) provides the foundation of the document.

Council has a number of very comprehensive and well developed plans in relation to its operations and as far as possible the budget process incorporates the consideration of the Long Term Financial Plan and Asset Management Plan.

As mentioned over the past few weeks Council has worked with Walgett, Brewarrina and Central Darling Shire Councils in making representations to both the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holders Office and the Minister for Regional Water Hon Niall Blair MLC in an attempt to secure an environmental water flow down the Barwon Darling System.

The anticipated flow in the Barwon Darling system as a result of the widespread rain across Queensland may provide a little relief, but the flow is only relatively small and despite the embargo being applied to maximise the benefit to communities and landowners it is unclear whether the flow will have any substantive benefit south of Bourke Weir.

The flow reached Brewarrina over the weekend and is gradually making its way to Bourke filling up numerous empty sections of the river on its way and should be in Bourke early this week

Work is apparently continuing behind the scenes to make the environmental flow come to fruition and it is acknowledged there are a number of variables that need to be taken into consideration. The current flow in the river would be a benefit to any environmental flow that may be made available as the river bed will already be wet and this would reduce any losses to any environmental flow made available.

Council welcomed the news that it will receive additional funding under the Stronger Communities fund with the second round of funding being doubled. This has resulted in an additional \$760,000.00 becoming available with the focus of that expenditure to be the improvement of sporting facilities.

Council staff will be preparing a listing of potential projects for consideration by Council and it is hoped that a number of projects that have previously been identified in the community strategic Plan will be able to be undertaken.

The Funding made available to Councils under the Regional Growth Fund has been extremely well received and it has enabled many projects that had previously been on the "wish lists" of Council to be undertaken. The funding has seen a number of projects identified on the Water and Waste Water Backlog Program able to be funded and amongst these are the Bourke Water Treatment Plant which is estimated to cost around nine (9) million dollars.

In other welcome news it has been announced that the proceeds from the sale of the New South Wales Government's share of the Snowy Mountains Scheme to the Federal Government for a reported 4.2 billion dollars will be utilised for infrastructure spending in Regional and Rural New South Wales.

Details on how the money will be allocated and what projects may be deemed as priority is yet to be announced, but Bourke Shire Council will be monitoring the situation closely to ensure that it is well placed to take advantage of the any potential funding that may become available.

Council has lodged a number of applications for funding under the Public Reserves Management Fund Program and if successful will see further improvements to the infrastructure on Crown Reserves for which Council is the Trust Manager. Last year the Show Committee

successfully applied for funding under the same program for the re-roofing of the main pavilion at the Showground and the funding provided by that successful application was matched by Council. Work is currently being finalised on the roof and it should be ready for use at the upcoming race meeting.

The work undertaken at the Renshaw Oval Complex by both the User Groups and Council has resulted in a significant improvement to the facility as a whole and the efforts of all those who have assisted during the undertaking of these improvements are greatly appreciated and have combine to create a much more user friendly and well serviced community amenity

I accepted an invitation to attend the Special General Meeting of the Louth Chamber of Commerce last Friday night which saw Stuart Le Lievre being elected to the role of Chairperson with Garry Mooring as the Deputy Chair. Cherise Duncan is again the Treasurer, with Kim Chandler continues in the Secretary's role.

Annette accompanied me to Louth and she was hopeful of being able to catch the effect of the light reflecting off the monument of Mary Mathews but unfortunately the cloud cover didn't allow this to happen. Annette is determined that she will see this effect at some stage so there may be a few more night trips to Louth.

The Louth Chamber has a number of projects on the go at the moment with their field Day planned for the June long weekend. Plans are also in place to upgrade the Flying Doctor's Facility at Louth and they plan to undertake some improvement work on the Tennis Club House.

In a whole of community project the Chamber has joined with the local fishing club with each donating \$2000.00 to assist with the restocking of fish within the river system in the area. It is hoped that this money will be matched by a grant by the State Government. This is a great effort for a small community.

The recent rain within Bourke Shire has been of great assistance in providing soil moisture to allow grading to take place and be much more effective. Grading has been taking place on both the Wanaaring and Louth Roads. The understanding of the residents utilising both the roads of the fact that grading in extremely dry conditions is basically ineffective is appreciated.

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.

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

Tilpa Weir - Amber Alert

There are presently Red Alerts in place at both Wilcannia and Caulpaulin

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

The Mayor Councillor Barry Hollman and I will be travelling to Dubbo on Thursday to attend a workshop regarding the possible formation of a Joint Organisation (JO) of Councils and to look at a number of issues on a preliminary basis. These include:-

- JO Charter – operational and governance principles (and others)
- The methodology for determining annual financial contributions to any JO
- A transition plan from the current ROC status to a JO

It is early days yet and a number of Councils are still considering their options in regard to potential membership of a JO. The workshop is intended to identify some of the issues that will need to be resolved in the early stages of the establishment of any JO.

Friday is the quarterly Board Meeting of OROC and there is once again a fairly full agenda, plus no doubt there will be a continuation of the discussions regarding Jos.

Council's Manager of Tourism and Economic Development Charles Liggett has advised of his resignation. Advertising will commence shortly for a replacement for Charles. He has indicated that he will stay on until a replacement is found to assist in facilitating a smooth transition in the role.

The National Association for Loss and Grief (NALAG) will be hosting an exhibition of photos by locals from Bourke taken in conjunction with NALAG's recent Photographic Story Telling Work Shop. The Opening is scheduled for 10.30 starts with the opening at 11.00 am on Tuesday 27th March 2018 with light refreshments to be served. The venue will be the Bourke Men's Shed in Mitchell Street.

A reminder that the Bourke Public Library will be hosting three (3) authors on Monday, 26th March 2018 and it will provide the opportunity for Bourke Residents to meet with the authors and discuss with them their books and motivation for writing those books.

The authors who will be coming will be Jennifer Cowley who wrote "Grandpa's Hat, Toni Grant who wrote "Serpent Song" and Donna Falconer who wrote "My Time- through breast cancer and beyond"

Each of the authors will be at the Library between 3.30 pm and 5.30 pm and will then be guest speakers at the Meeting of Bourke Rotary Club.

I would encourage residents to come along and have a chat to these three accomplished authors.

Councils Offices including the Service New South Wales Agency, Bourke Public Library, the Back O' Bourke Exhibition Centre and Waste Depot will not open until 11.00am on Friday 16th March to give all staff the opportunity to attend a Staff Development and Health and Well-being day. The Council Depot will be closed all day.

Staff will still be available to attend to emergency works and notification of emergencies should be made to the Council Duty Officer on 0419 722 055

Quote of the week!

"I'd rather attempt to do something great and fail than to attempt to do nothing and succeed".
Robert H. Schuller

Ross Earl
General Manager