



# “From the GM’s Desk”

## 5<sup>th</sup> April 2018



Well done to all those who contributed in any way towards the success of the Bourke Easter Weekend activities.

The Colour Run on the Friday attracted over 200 participants, the parade had around 50 floats and the Wool Bale Rolling had strong entries particularly in the teams division with some very competitive heats. My sons Cameron and Brenton had a go in both the individual and teams events and enjoyed their first attempt at the sport and friendly and supportive atmosphere amongst the competitors. A good crowd was on hand in the CBD for the parade, wool bale rolling and the markets. Also attracting a good crowd was the Rugby Union on the Saturday afternoon. Unfortunately the match saw a serious leg injury suffered by Dan Barton and I wish him a speedy recovery.

The Dawn Church service at the wharf also attracted good numbers and the Bourke Arts Council’s “Pop Up “quilt display saw good numbers through the doors along with the sale of a few quilts.

Once again the Back of Bourke Race Club put on an excellent day on the Sunday and the fact that the number of horses was down seemed to go relatively unnoticed by most people in attendance who had a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon and partied well into the evening.

The efforts of the club were recognised by Andrew Shier, the President of Western District racing who travelled out to announce that Bourke was awarded the Western District Racing Association’s Picnic Race Club of the year in 2017 and also announced that James and Cheryl Hatch’s Horse Stoney Rise was the Western District Racing’s Horse of the Year. Well Done!

There were a number of other events during the course of the weekend and it was very much a whole of town effort.

I think all visitors and locals alike had a good weekend and it is good to see a real hum about the town.

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At the Ordinary Meeting of Council held last week the recommendation from the Local Traffic Committee to introduce two (2) hour parking in Oxley Street between Sturt and Richards Street was considered and rejected by Council after a considerable amount of debate.

The proposal to introduce two (2) hour parking was borne out of the concerns raised that as part of the redevelopment of the main street as there will be some loss of parking and the introduction of time limited parking was seen as one means of ensuring that people do no park

in the main street all day. There is an ongoing concern that much of the parking is being utilised by employees and business owners and this leads to a perceived shortage.

One of the key concerns expressed by Councillors was the ability of Council to actively police the parking limit on an ongoing basis.

Work is continuing on the identification of additional parking within close proximity of the CBD with the opportunity for additional parking in Richards Street either side of Oxley Street already identified

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The members of the local RSL Sub Branch with the kind assistance from the Bourke Aboriginal Health Service, have purchased three new flag poles for the Cenotaph Precinct and these were erected by Council Staff and will be utilised for the first time on ANZAC Day 2018. The Flags will allow the Aboriginal Flag and Torres Strait Islander flags to be flown and for the first time the New Zealand Flag will also be flown. It is appropriate that the involvement of New Zealand in the ANZAC tradition recognised by the flying of their flag on what is a very important day for all Australians and New Zealanders.

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Yesterday marked the opening of the Commonwealth Games on the Gold Coast and no doubt all residents of Bourke will be watching at least some of the events with a keen interest.

In 1962 at the British Empire and Commonwealth Games Perth 1962 a twenty year old Bourke resident competed in the men's high jump and Percy Hobson not only won the gold medal but in doing so jumped a Commonwealth High Jump record of 6ft 11in (2.11m). Percy Hobson was the first Indigenous Australian to win a Gold Medal for Australia at the Commonwealth Games.

Percy Hobson Park was named after him to recognise his achievement. Unfortunately some of the signage detailing a little bit more about his achievements was vandalised. However, Council will now install a plaque in the park which details who Percy Hobson was and his achievements so that those utilising the park can be made aware of the reason behind the naming of the park.

With the beginning of the Commonwealth Games this week it seemed to be an appropriate time to have the plaque installed and mounted on a piece of local stone.

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At the meeting of Council held on Monday, 26<sup>th</sup> March 2018, Council approved a development application for the construction of the Pub at North Bourke which will be built on the site of the old "Northy" which burnt down several years ago. The approval is subject to a number of conditions that will need to be met prior to construction and during the operation of the facility.

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The Hon. David Shoebridge, MLC a member of the Greens Party was in town last week and I had the opportunity to catch up with him and his staff member Sandy Bates.

We had discussions around a number of issues including the availability of housing stock and the availability of suitable premises to allow the smooth operation of a number of programs which would like to expand in Bourke but restricted by premises issues.

David was involved in Local Government prior to entering State Parliament and has been a strong advocate against the forced amalgamation of Councils which is a stance he currently retains.

It was good to hear his views on a number of matters involving Local Government and in particular Joint Organisation of Councils (JOs). David indicated that there was still a lot of work to be done in the development of these new organisations.

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Bourke Shire Council's Draft Operational Plan (Budget) for 2018/2019 is currently on display with submissions in relation to the plan able to be lodged any time during the display period which concludes on the 6th May 2018. Council will again consider the Plan at its Ordinary meeting of Council to be held on Monday, 28<sup>th</sup> May 2018.

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The Bourke Public Library hosted three (3) authors on Monday, 26<sup>th</sup> March 2018 and it provided the opportunity for Bourke residents to meet with the authors and discuss with them their books and motivation for writing those books.

Each of the authors gave a background into the reasons behind the writing of their books and at times the stories told generated a great deal of emotion.

The authors who attended were; 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".

There was a very good crowd in attendance with a broad cross section of our community represented. Mayor Barry Hollman was on hand to welcome the authors and to thank them for making the trip to Bourke. Many of those in attendance took the opportunity to purchase a book from the authors and have it signed.

Whilst in town Donna visited the Bourke Community Health Facility and met with the staff at the facility. She was readily recognisable in her "Groovy Booby Bus" complete with distinctive markings and an equally distinctive air horn.

The Bourke Public Library has copies of each of the books and will look forward to purchasing the sequel to "Serpent Song" when Toni Grant releases it around Mother's Day 2018.

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The authors were all guests at the meeting of Bourke Rotary Club later that evening and were joined by Trudy Hanlon from the National Association for Loss and Grief (NALAG) in making presentations to the meeting. NALAG held an exhibition of photographs at the Men's Shed on the Tuesday and there were some excellent photographs on display.

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Council will be hosting the 2019 Western Division Conference next year and at the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on Monday, 26<sup>th</sup> March 2018 reaffirmed its membership and support of that organisation which will provide a forum for issues impacting on that area of the state.

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In response to a resolution of Council, a workshop has been convened to allow Councillors to obtain a better understanding of the water issues that impact the Barwon-Darling system. The issues are relatively complex and include the operation of the Murray Darling Basin Plan, Water Sharing Plans and water allocations and thresholds. Council has considered a number of matters on water and felt that due to the importance of the issue each Councillor would benefit from an explanation of those with a more in depth knowledge. The Workshop is scheduled for the 9<sup>th</sup> April 2018 and this is the night before a Water Stakeholder Meeting scheduled for the 10<sup>th</sup> April 2018 and it provides the opportunity to have speakers at the workshop who will have already been in town.

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Bourke Show is on the 28<sup>th</sup> April 2018 and I would encourage everyone to consider entering one of the various categories available for exhibits and attend on the day. There is a small and dedicated band of volunteers who work the entire year round to ensure the show's success each year and I would like to thank them for their contribution to our community. The Bourke Show won the award for the Best Community Event at the 2018 Australia Day Awards.

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The Minister for Planning, the Hon Anthony Robert's MP, released the Far West Regional Plan 2036 in August 2017. This plan outlines the NSW Governments strategy for guiding planning decisions for the region for the next 20 years.

The Far West Regional Plan 2036 includes a priority action to undertake modelling with local communities to better understand the implications and factors contributing to population change. The Building Future Communities project has been designed to address this action.

Bourke Shire has been selected as the pilot Council for the project.

The project aims to equip communities with the knowledge, resources and confidence to create a strong vision and corresponding actions that will ensure communities are sustained for years to come. The project considers and recognises the vision and actions of the Far West Regional Plan, Councils Strategic Plans and the social and economic opportunities that Bourke is best placed to respond to.

Council will assist in the project but an important component of the project is to get strong community support, participation and involvement and the input from all sections of our community is encouraged.

There will be two (2) workshops which will be held at Council on Tuesday, 10<sup>th</sup> April from 1:00-2:30pm and from 5:00-6:30pm.

For further details on the project please contact Jessica Holland, Team Leader, Western Region at the Department of Planning and Environment on (02)6841 2180.

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At the meeting held on the 26<sup>th</sup> March 2018 Council awarded a contract for the construction of a second bore to supplement the supply from Walkden's Bore as part of the drought proofing strategy with funding provided by the State Government.

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*Quote of the week!*

*"If I cannot do great things, I can do small things in a great way."*

*Martin Luther King Jnr.*

Ross Earl  
General Manager