



“From the GM’s Desk”

31st May 2018



Bourke Shire Council has resolved to join a Joint Organisation of Councils (JO) based in the North West of the State following an invitation issued by the Deputy Premier, the Hon. John Barilaro, MP.

Those Councils previously earmarked for the Far West Initiative now have the opportunity to be join a Northern or a southern JO.

The Councils in the South; being Balranald, Wentworth, Broken Hill and Central Darling Shires had previously agreed in principal to form a JO. In the North; Cobar had agreed to join the JO based on the Orana Region with Brewarrina and Bourke indicating that were not intending to join a JO whilst Walgett were waiting on further information.

As part of the invitation to form a JO and in recognition of the difficulties experienced by Councils in the Far West the Deputy Premier detailed a funding package that would be available to each of the proposed JOs to be formed in the West of the State which includes:-

- \$250,000 to each Joint Organisation to update existing western road plans in their region;
- \$500,000 to each Joint Organisation to employ an Executive Officer and any support staff required;
- \$250,000 to each Joint Organisation towards planning support with NSW Public Works;
- \$5 million to each Joint Organisation to invest in tourism and culture infrastructure projects to grow the visitor economy; and
- Funding to re-establish Far West Air Services to Cobar, Bourke and Lightning Ridge or Walgett with the opportunity to upgrade airport facilities in both the north and south.

Following the conduct of Council meetings of those Councils in the North of the State it is apparent that a JO will now be formed with Cobar Walgett and Bourke electing to join a JO with Brewarrina Shire re-affirming its previous decision not to join a JO. In the case of Cobar they will now have to be removed from the Orana JO via proclamation.

The resolution indicating its willingness to join a JO Bourke Shire Councils also resolved as follows:-

- That Bourke Shire Council indicated an expression of interest to become an Associate Member of the Joint Organisation based in the Orana Region.
- That Bourke Shire Council seeks an assurance from the Deputy Premier that the participation on the Joint Organisation will not impact on the structure of the current elected body nor their ability to maintain their own General Manager.
- That Bourke Shire joins with Councils in the other Joint Organisations in asking the State Government to consider the provision of ongoing funding of the Joint Organisation.
- That Bourke Council retain its membership of both the Orana Regional Organisation of Councils and Western Division for a minimum period of twelve months whilst the roles and responsibilities of the various Joint Organisations proposed to be formed are finalised.

The fact the Government is considering financial assistance towards the introduction of air services in the towns of Bourke, Walgett and Cobar has met with a very positive response from both the Councils and the communities in these towns.

Since the last tender process conducted by the State Government there have been a number of potential operators who have expressed some interest in establishing an air service to Bourke. No doubt the level of assistance that will now be made available will see this interest heightened not only from some of the smaller operators wishing to establish themselves in the market place but also the larger operating air services who may look to expanding their current routes.

Bourke Shire Council looks forward to being able to work with the NSW State Government to restore an air service to Bourke. The service will complement the excellent facilities that currently exist at the Bourke Airport including a very modern terminal, recently upgraded lighting and recently resealed runway.

At the Meeting of Council held on Monday, 28th May 2018 Council adopted its Operational Plan for 2018/2019, following the consideration of some minor amendments following a period of advertising.

The Meeting of Council also saw it support a proposal put forward by Cobar Shire Council seeking the introduction of a range of incentives to encourage and attract health services to the western area of the State.

At their Council Meeting Cobar Shire Council resolved as follows:-

"That Council seek an urgent meeting with the Deputy Premier and the Minister for Health to seek a commitment from the NSW Government to establish and provide incentives and programs for the attraction and delivering, Doctors, Specialists and other staff to rural communities such as Cobar and in particular the Western Area of NSW.

That Council seek a Letter of Support from neighbouring Councils, representatives of OROC, RDA, the President of LGNSW to support our representation to the Government on the matter"

Consideration of the letter was timely as Council understands that the only permanent Doctor in Bourke with Visiting Medical Officer (VMO) rights will be shortly leaving Bourke and leaving a void that will need to be filled again by Locums.

Additionally there have been some difficulties in the attraction and retention of nursing staff and the lack of any real incentives being identified as part of the problem, with many people not prepared to live and work in the Far West of the state where the tyranny of distance often proves to be an impediment.

Other agencies such as the Police and Education have a range of incentives available and it may be time that similar incentives are introduced by Health.

Whilst in Sydney for the meeting with Deputy Premier on the 16th May 2018 regarding the formation of a Joint Organisation; the Mayor and I took the opportunity to catch up with Bill Ho the Manager of Water and Sewerage with the NSW Department of Industry and Roshan Lyadurai also from the New South Wales Department of Industry regarding the plans for the New Water Treatment Plant at Bourke.

Discussions in part, centred around the capacity of the proposed plant and to confirm that the plant will meet the requirements of Bourke well into the future. The construction of a Water Treatment Plant is generally only something that would happen every thirty or forty years or longer in each town.

There was a positive outcome from the meeting and both the Mayor and I were appreciative of the fact that both Bill and Roshan had made their time available at relatively short notice.

The Mayor and I also visit Local Government New South Wales (LGNSW) and met with Kylie Yates, Director of Advocacy at LGNSW around a number of issues. The proposal to establish the two (2) JOs in the Far West of the State figured prominently in the discussion. Also discussed were the motions that Bourke Shire Council had presented to the Annual Conference of Western Division and whether those motions were covered by existing policy of LGNSW or needed to be presented to the Annual Conference of LGNSW.

With multiple users requiring the use of Councils ovals it is important that the usage of the ovals for both playing and training is coordinated and to ensure that this is able to occur the booking of the facilities is essential. If you need to utilise Councils facilities please contact Council's Engineering Support Officer who will do her best to accommodate all requests.

If the Oval has been booked for use by a team or organisation it means that they have exclusive use unless otherwise agreed and those not being part of the team or organisation should respect that entitlement of use.

Rate instalment notices and water charge notices were issued recently and are due on the 31st May 2018.

If you are having trouble meeting your obligations in respect to the payment of rates and charges please contact Councils Revenue Officer to see if a mutually acceptable payment plan can be put in place prior to legal action being taken and further costs incurred.

Our 2018 Australia Day Ambassador Katryna Robinson founded the Charity "*Every Little Bit Helps*" who provide care packs for those people in need including those who are homeless victims of domestic violence or perhaps refugees to detail some of those who benefit. The care kits are comprised of unwanted hotel toiletries, inflight amenity kits, and cosmetic and make-up samples.

Bourke Shire Library is a collection point for these items and from there the care packs are made up by the local CWA. It is a great initiative, so if you travel and stay in motels and don't use the toiletries supplied why not collect them so they can be utilised by those in need.

Council has placed advertisements in the local press calling for expressions of interest from someone keen to take over the running of the Back O' Bourke Café. The Café in my view presents a great opportunity for someone keen to try their hand operating their own business with limited outlay required in what is a modern, well equipped and fully furnished facility. Enquiries can be directed to the Back O' Bourke Exhibition Centre.

The Bourke Public Library may only be small but it carries an extensive range of material and the books and other resources are continually being updated. They also have plenty of DVD's available for loan. Some of our newer series include The Coroner, Arrow, Marvel Agents of SHIELD, Breaking Bad, House Husbands, Poldark and The Musketeers. For those who may have a favourite show the library have the complete series of Game of Thrones, Midsomer Murders, Merlin, Sleepy Hollow, Downton Abbey, Call the Midwife and many more. Movies sets include Jurassic Park, Fast & Furious, Indiana Jones, and James Bond.

Don't forget they also have an eBook and eAudio service. This is a great new service which has been able to be provided through Bolinda. If you would like to use this, all you need to do is download the BorrowBox app on your device and log in with your borrower number (on the back of your library card), and your date of birth as the password. If you would like any more information, or some help logging on, just call in to the library or give them a ring on 68722751.

Bourke Shire Council is calling tenders for the management of the Bourke War Memorial Swimming Pool for the next three (3) years. The tender documents are available from Council's Offices and on Council's website at <http://www.bourke.nsw.gov.au/council/tenders-and-quotations> Any queries in relation to the tender process should be directed to Councils Environmental Services Department.

Quote of the week!

Don't regret the past, just learn from it. Ben Ipock

Ross Earl
General Manager