



“From the GM’s Desk” 7th June 2018



News that funding has been provided to re-establish an air service for Bourke, Walgett and Cobar has been enthusiastically received by the communities of all towns and also heightened the interest of a number of persons who had previously expressed interest in establishing an air service.

The details on how the tender process will be run will be finalised once the Joint Organisation (JO) of Councils is finalised, however, it is likely that the process will be run by the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) due to the complexity of the tender process and the ability of the DPC to draw upon the expertise that is available through the State Government.

The three (3) Councils involved in the JO would like to be part of the tender process to ensure as far as possible the needs of the individual communities are met.

I have fielded a number of emails and telephone calls regarding the proposal and am confident that we will have an air service in the not too distant future.

Councillor Barry Hollman Mayor of Bourke Shire Council in welcoming guests to the Northern Connectivity Event at Bourke on Thursday 31st May took the opportunity to thank all those who assisted in making the event come to fruition.

Councillor Hollman said that the support and cooperation shown by all levels of Government was outstanding. It had resulted in an Environment Flow that not only had significant environment benefits but also economic and social benefits to those communities and individuals along the river.

He added that the current drought gripping wide sections of the state including the west of the state had made life extremely difficult for both domestic stock and wildlife and the flow would have provided those along the river a surety of water supply in the short term.

He commended the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder’s Office for taking the lead on the project and positive outcome that had resulted.

He also noted the support of all state agencies and stakeholders who assisted and in particular were able to ensure that the water reached as far as possible along the river system.

Councillor Hollman also acknowledged the support of the New South Wales Minister for Regional Water and Primary Industry Hon. Niall Blair.

With Bourke Cobar and Walgett Shires all agreeing to be part of a Northern JO and Central Darling Wentworth, Balranald Shires and Broken Hill all re-affirming their agreement to be part of a Southern JO the Minister for Local Government will now take steps to have the two (2) JOs proclaimed as required by legislation . The proclamation cannot take place until 28 days after the last resolution which in the case of the North will be Bourke's Resolution on the 28th May and in the South the resolution of Broken Hill on the 30th May.

Given Cobar had previously agreed to be part of the Orana JO there will need to be a proclamation allowing them to exit that JO.

Once each of the JOs is proclaimed each of them has 30 days to prepare a plan detailing their future operation.

The members of the Northern JO will need to elect a chairperson, develop a Charter and develop a plan of operation.

There will be some initial administrative tasks to be undertaken including the establishment of a Bank Account, determine a name and apply for an Australian Business Number (ABN)

The Mayor Councillor Barry Hollman was invited by the Member for Parkes Mark Coulton MP to discuss the impact of the drought on our community. All Mayors within the Parkes Electorate were invited to attend along with representatives of the Rural Financial Counselling Service. The meeting was held on Monday 4th June 2018 at the Trangie United Services Memorial Club, this demonstrates the devastating impact that the drought is having on this part of New South Wales.

The meeting was attended by the Prime Minister, the Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP, who wanted to hear first-hand the concerns of drought-affected farmers. He was accompanied by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, the Hon Michael McCormack MP; the Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources, the Hon David Littleproud MP; the Minister for Regional Development, Territories and Local Government, the Hon Dr John McVeigh MP; and Minister for Sport, Rural Health and Regional Communications, Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie.

Further details of the meeting will no doubt be made available through the press

Bourke Shire Council will also be making representations through the New South Wales Minister for Primary Industries seeking his Government's support for farmers who find themselves impacted by drought conditions equal to those experienced through the millennium drought.

Many landowners are expending significant amounts of money on feeding of stock and expenditure of this type of money is not sustainable. The problem is being compounded by the lack of fodder that is available and the increasing cost of the limited supply that is available.

The Mayor Councillor Barry Hollman and I will travel to Coonabarabran to attend the next meeting of the Orana Regional Organisation of Council (OROC) on Thursday 7th June 2018. With nine (9) of the twelve (12) Councils electing to join a JO the future operation of OROC will need to be determined. Bourke Shire Council has resolved to keep its membership for at least twelve (12) months whilst others have suggested that decision as to the long term future should be made at the Annual General Meeting to be held in December 2018.

The next Meeting of the OROC General Managers Advisory Committee will be held in Bourke on Friday 6th July 2018 and will again provide the opportunity to showcase the town of Bourke and what it has to offer.

In an effort to let tourists know what is happening within the Shire, Council has adopted the suggestion of Councillor Bob Stutsel and will publish a "What's on in the Bourke District" flyer. Each week it will be sent to the accommodation and food outlets in town to be displayed so that things such as the Louth Races and the Brewarrina Big Fishing weekend can be publicised along with the details and times of operation of the tourist attraction within town.

The Mayors and General Managers of the North West New South Wales Councils of Bourke, Cobar Brewarrina and Walgett and South West Queensland Councils of Balonne, Paroo and Bulloo Shires met on Tuesday, 29th May 2018 to gauge the interest in identifying and developing a number of cross border tourism and promotional opportunities.

The Member of Barwon, Kevin Humphries, MP has been supportive of the concept and had been able to coordinate a visit to the area by the New South Wales Minister for Tourism, the Hon. Adam Marshall, MP who was able to attend the meeting along with the General Manager of Destination Country and Outback New South Wales, Rhonda Taylor and The New South Wales Cross Border Commissioner, James McTavish.

The meeting was held at the Back O' Bourke Exhibition Centre and there was an overwhelming agreement that the Councils should join together to promote the tourism opportunities that exist on both sides of the border. Those present highlighted the fact that the border should not be an impediment to an increased level of cross border collaboration.

Minister Marshall in his support for the initiative said that he would be meeting with his Queensland counterpart the Hon. Kate Jones MP and would look to gain support at a cross border ministerial level.

The support from Minister Marshall will hopefully be replicated by Minister Jones once she has had the opportunity to gain an overview of what is being proposed.

All Councils acknowledged the role that they play in tourism activities within their respective areas and as a collective sought to progress the concept. A motion put to the meeting detailing the actions to be undertaken to ensure this progression including:-

- The undertaking of a product audit utilising a template to be developed by Destination Country and Outback NSW detailing what Local Government Area has to offer in the way of tourist facilities and attractions
- The provision of seed funding by each Council of \$5,000.00
- The need to obtain the “buy-in” of all local tourism operators
- Develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) amongst the Councils involved to assist in recognition of the ongoing commitment
- Develop a framework around how the operating entity should be structured with the framework to include a brief strategic plan
- Issue a press release across the area to be covered by the group detailing the plans for the cross-border initiative.

The motion was carried unanimously.

In the interim I indicated that Bourke Shire would progress some of the issues to allow the further development of establishing the Cross Border Tourism Promotion Group.

The concept is being seen as a much needed initiative which should result in increased visitation, the length of visits and importantly considerable economic benefit.

All roads will lead to Louth this weekend for the Bi Annual Field Day and it once again promises to be a good day.

Bourke Shire Council will have its Noxious Weeds Officer Russell Tiffen in attendance to answer queries in relation to the control of Noxious Weeds and whilst they may not be a major issue under the current drought conditions they are an ongoing issue for all landowners and will once again emerge with rain.

I encourage everyone who is in town over the weekend to go to Louth and support this wonderful community event.

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.

On Saturday 2nd June Manager of Corporate Services Leonie Brown and I met with the Chief Executive Officer of Rural and Remote Medical Services (RaRMS) Shane Hatton to discuss issues relating to the availability of doctors for Bourke. Doctor Hayder is currently the only permanent Doctor with Visiting Medical Officer status at the hospital with the other on-call roll being filled by a locum. With the impending departure of Dr. Hayder there has been some community concern regarding VMO services and other services. Shane has indicated that RaRMS are well aware of the issues and are working hard to ensure that the issues are addressed. In the short-term Shane

indicated that he hoped that RaRMS will supply locums who will return on a regular basis, with a doctor already secured to work two weeks each month and with others to be recruited to work on a similar basis which will provide an increased level of continuity. Doctor Marcus is now working fulltime with the Bourke Aboriginal Medical Service and RaRMS will have two locums in town to support Doctor Sadaf.

The ability to attract doctors to rural and remote areas is an Australia wide problem and one that needs to be addressed nationally.

RaRMS and Bourke Shire Council will work together to try and address the issues and will be trying to arrange a meeting with the Minister for Health Hon. Brad Hazzard MP to outline the problems.

During the course of our discussion, the re-establishment of air services was raised and Shane reinforced that the lack of an air services was a significant impediment in attracting and retaining doctors who would like to have ease of access to the capital cities both from a family point of view but also the ability to undertaken the important professional development courses.

The potential impact on the medical services with the opening of the abattoir and anticipated increase in population as a result, was also discussed and arrangements are well advanced to ensure that RaRMS are prepared to handle any increased level of service that may be required.

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. Any queries in relation to the tender process should be directed to Councils Environmental Services Department.

Quote of the week!

There is nothing more contagious than the laughter of young children; it doesn't even have to matter what they are laughing about- Chris Jami

Ross Earl
General Manager