



“From the GM’s Desk”

14th June 2018



With the Councils of Cobar, Walgett and Bourke agreeing to form their own Joint Organisation (JO) of Councils there is a considerable amount of work to be undertaken prior to the actual formation taking place.

The establishment of a JO needs to be done via proclamation by the Governor following a recommendation from the Minister and this is not likely to happen prior to early July and the proclamation will need to include the withdrawal of Cobar from the Orana JO.

It is anticipated that a meeting of the Mayors and General Managers of the three (3) Councils will take place as soon as practical to go through some of the issues that need to be clarified with the week beginning 18th June shaping up as the most likely time for that meeting.

It is anticipated that this meeting will develop a plan for the undertaking of some of the preparatory work needs to be done in readiness for the first board meeting.

At the first meeting, membership of the board will comprise voting representatives (the Mayor of each member Council) and a non-voting representative (a person nominated by the Secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet).

The meeting will open with the election of the Chairperson, which will be presided over by the Returning Officer appointed by the Chief Executive of the Office of Local Government. Once a Chairperson is elected, they will assume the chair and preside at the meeting.

It is suggested that joint organisations deal with the following items at the first board meeting in the following order:-

- electing the chairperson
- adopting the Draft Joint Organisation Charter for consultation with member Councils
- appointing an interim Executive Officer
- delegations to the interim Executive Officer
- adopting a Code of Conduct and Administrative Procedures
- appointing a panel of Conduct Reviewers
- adopting a Code of Meeting Practice
- adopting a draft Expenses and Facilities Policy
- for consultation with member Councils
- meetings schedule (Joint Organisations can consider scheduling more regular meetings early on to facilitate the decision making necessary to establish operations)
- any other matters that have been identified in the agenda for decision at the first board meeting.

The establishment of JO ushers in a new era for the Councils and it is important that the JO gets off on the right foot.

As part of the package available to the eight (8) Councils invited to participate in the two (2) JOs in the Far West was a significant allocation of funding to re-establish air services in Bourke Walgett or Lightning Ridge and Cobar with the opportunity also available to upgrade airport facilities in both the north and south of the far west.

Since the announcement of the availability of the funding for the air service there has been considerable interest shown, with many people enquiring as to the likely start date of the proposed services.

There is a considerable amount of work to be done prior to the recommencement and as a result it is difficult to determine a date, however, there is a preliminary meeting scheduled for later this week with Department of Premier and Cabinet and things maybe a little clearer at that time.

Council has undertaken a considerable amount of work at the airport over the past couple of years with the runway being resealed and new lighting being installed. These improvements coupled with the excellent terminal building means that from a Council perspective we are relatively well prepared for the re-establishment.

The Member for Barwon, Kevin Humphries, MP was in Bourke last week to announce that the Bourke PCYC was to receive \$500,000 to undertake some significant upgrade works at the facility which is owned by Bourke Shire Council and is operated by the PCYC.

One of the key uses for the funding will be for the upgrading of the air conditioning at the building.

The State Government have invested heavily in the PCYC facilities across the state and this is no doubt in recognition of the benefits that the PCYC provide to all communities in which they are located. The Manager of the local PCYC, Mark Hollman was ecstatic with the news which will mean significant benefits to all user groups and provide relief from the hot Bourke summer temperatures.

Bourke PCYC is used by a broad cross section of the community and the announcement of the availability of the funding very well received.

Last week, I had the opportunity to attend a meeting of the Darling River Run Committee to discuss the publication of their latest magazine as well as a number of other issues. The Darling River Run is an organisation aimed at encouraging tourist travel along the Darling River and involves the Councils of Brewarrina, Bourke and Central Darling together with Outback Beds and the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

There is a desire to expand the Council involvement in the Darling River Run promotion and also include Wentworth, Cobar and Walgett Shires and I have indicated that I will be making contact with my peers in these other Councils on behalf of the Darling River Run Group to try and gauge their level of interest in participating in future promotions.

Speaking of tourism promotion activities I am pleased to note that Bourke Shire Council was represented at the Brisbane Caravan and Camping as part of their involvement with the Kidman Way Promotional Committee. Jody Sontag one of our tourist officers represented Council and being the first on the roster was largely responsible for the setup of the display. Carrathool, Murrumbidgee, Cobar Shire and Griffith Regional Council also had representatives man the display over the period of the Show. There has been a call to reinvigorate the Kidman Way Promotional Committee as over the past few years there have been multiple changes to staff at all levels and in addition amalgamations affecting some of the Councils and as a result the Committee has struggled a little over the past few years. However, there is still a strong interest in the group and the obvious benefits that flow from the joint promotion activities.

Jody in the heart of Queensland at State of Origin time was daring enough; to wear a bright blue dress with NSW emblazoned across it which would have no doubt raised an increased awareness of the Kidman Way stand.

Destination New South Wales hosted the 2018 NSW Aboriginal Cultural Tourism Experience Development Workshop in Bourke last week and brought together persons involved in Aboriginal Tourism from across the State and was coordinated locally Jason and Joseph Dixon who operated the Bourke Aboriginal Cultural Tours. From all reports it was a very successful event.

The Board of Destination Country and Outback led by Chairman, Stephen Bartlett and General Manager, Rhonda Taylor were in town to participate in the workshop and also to conduct their Board Meeting. It was Rhonda's third visit to Bourke this year and she was most recently in Bourke to attend the Cross Border Tourism Initiative Meeting last week.

Together with the Manager of Environmental Services, Dwayne Willoughby, Manager of Corporate Services, Leonie Brown and local musician, Andy Garland, I had the opportunity to meet with the full Board to discuss the potential sources of funding for the staging of "a Day on the Dirt". The "Day on the Dirt" is proposed to be run next year as part of the Easter Celebrations with the afternoon and evening on Good Friday being identified as the likely time for this new event. The concept involves the obtaining of a "headline act" and have that act be supported by local and regional bands utilising the verandah of the Back O' Bourke Exhibition Centre Café as the Stage. It is very early days yet but as they say "from little things big things grow" and we have seen over the past few years the growth and success of the Elvis Festival in Parkes and the Abba Festival in Trundle and there is no reason why something similar can't be equally successful in Bourke.

The Bourke Bowling Club conducted their Annual Classic Pairs Bowling Tournament over the long weekend and attracted entries for all over the region and as far as the Port Stephens area. Events such as this also contribute significantly to the tourism economy of the town with each of the participants no doubt spending money on accommodation, food and petrol.

Council who are members of Local Government New South Wales (LGNSW) have continued to express a desire for engagement on a regional basis similar to what existed under the Divisional Meetings held when the Shire Association was the peak body for Rural and Regional Councils.

The LGNSW Board decided to explore the issue as part of the member research that was completed in 2017. In response to a subsequent Board motion to the 2017 Conference, LGNSW is now coordinating a series of 12 Council Summits in 2018 to be held in various centres across NSW.

These summits will provide members with the opportunity to raise matters important to them and their local communities with the President, Board members and senior staff.

This will also give Councils the opportunity to discuss and share initiatives and experiences with neighbouring Councils within their region.

There will be a summit held in the Far West with the host Council being Cobar Shire Council and it will be held Tuesday, 3rd July, 1pm -3.00pm

The Bi-Annual Louth Field Day was once again very successful with a great variety of stallholders many of whom had travelled a considerable distance to be present. The organisers would have been very happy with the large attendance who kept the exhibitors busy with both sales and enquiries.

At the conclusion of the day there was an auction with each of the exhibitors donating an item for auction and the generosity of people in this region never ceases to amaze me with people digging deep to purchase the donated goods with all the money going to the Royal Flying Doctors Service (RFDS).

The community of Louth value the services provided by the RFDS and are very happy to provide financial assistance when able.

Well done to all those involved!

On the way down to Louth, Annette and I took the opportunity to visit Tooralé National Park and were very impressed with the work that has been undertaken by National Parks and Wildlife Service in developing the facilities within the Park.

As we look to build Bourke as tourist destination we have a great partner in National Parks and Wildlife who had added a new dimension to the tourist attractions within the region not only with Tooralé but the other National Parks such as Gundabooka.

There would appear to be an ongoing programme of improvements in place and not doubt will attract additional tourists as the word spreads.

If you haven't taken the opportunity to have a visit these National Parks you should take the time to do so as it is well worth the trip. The National Parks and Wildlife Office in Bourke has a good range of

literature and maps and these are also available at the Tourist Information Centre Located at the Back O' Bourke Exhibition Centre.

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. Tenders close at 3.00pm on Thursday, 21st June 2018.

Quote of the week!

A mind is like a parachute, it doesn't work if it isn't open

Frank Zappa

Ross Earl
General Manager