



“From the GM’s Desk” 25th February 2016



Bourke will be host to five (5) members of a Rotary Group Study Tour this weekend with local Rotarians hosting the visitors from Thursday until Monday. The group are from Taiwan and their visit is being coordinated by the Rotary District 9670 and includes the Newcastle, Dubbo and Mudgee area. Included in the local itinerary will be a visit to a cotton farm, a boat ride on the river, a visit to the school of distance education, a sunset barbeque at Mount Oxley, a tour of the Back O’ Bourke Exhibition Centre as well as a camp oven dinner. Annette and I are hosting two of the visitors whilst Tony and Meredith Thompson are also hosting two and Rob and Lee Bourke hosting the other.

The Community is reminded that due to the fact that the next two (2) meeting dates are public holidays for Easter Monday and ANZAC Day that those meetings will be held on the 3rd Mondays of the Month being the 21st March and the 18th April.

The Community Consultation Meetings concluded last week with visits to Enngonia and Fords Bridge last Thursday and a meeting in Bourke last Wednesday night.

All the meetings were reasonably well attended with some important issues being raised at each of the meeting and Councillors and staff received valuable feedback.

Councillors and Staff enjoyed a cooked breakfast at both Enngonia and Louth. At Enngonia the Progress Association did the catering whilst at Louth it was the Louth Public School while lunch at Fords Bridge was catered for by the Ford’s Bridge Cricket Club and at Wanaaring catering was provided by Narelle at the Outback Inn Hotel.

The opportunity is taken to interact with the community over each of the meals. The meetings do take some time to organise and also undertake but are extremely beneficial in getting an understanding of the issues over this very large shire area.

The next meeting of Barwon Darling Water will be held on the 30th March at Diggers on the Darling in Bourke. The ongoing availability of water along the river system is a concern for all users and not simply irrigators. As I have stated previously these meetings are important forum for those concerned with the availability of water in the river system.

During the recent round of village tours the opportunity was taken to express Councils appreciation to the community members who voluntarily assist Council in the undertaking of its roles including the maintenance of halls and ovals, the monitoring of water supplies and slashing in and around the villages areas to name but a few of the areas where assistance is provided.

Minister for Local Government, the Hon. Paul Toole, MP, last Thursday announced that the State Government would be providing assistance to the eight (8) Councils involved in the Far West Initiative to purchase video conferencing facilities.

Bourke Shire have on behalf of the group been looking at the options available and are pleased that the Minister has also seen the benefits of utilising video conferencing facilities as an effective means of communication between the Councils.

The first meeting for 2016 of the General Manager's Advisory Committee (GMAC) was held last Friday and amongst the items on the agenda was an address by Ian Scott Community Affairs Manager of NBN Co who detailed plans for the roll out of the NBN network across the region covered by the Orana Regional Organisation of Councils (OROC).

At this stage it is anticipated that construction works associated with the NBN will commence in Bourke in the fourth quarter of this year.

The good news for those in the rural areas is that they will be able to start connecting to the satellite service in around June this year. The satellite service will provide a much better services and increased data availability.

One of the steps will be for each landowner/resident to get an identification registration which clearly identifies the location of the service. Details on how to access the online registration for this step will be available shortly. A link will be placed on Council's website over the next few weeks so that residents can find out additional details.

“Council encourages everyone to check their address and register for updates either via visiting the Council's webpage and clicking on the **nbn check your address section or by going directly to **nbnco.com.au** and checking their address”.**

The rate notices were posted out a few weeks ago and residents are reminded that the third instalment is due on the 28th February 2016.

I notice from the reports on the river heights that the flow in Darling River reached Louth last Wednesday giving that part of the river a much need flush.

The website <http://waterinfo.nsw.gov.au> gives up to date information regard flows and anticipated flows.

There was a meeting of the Regional Emergency Management Committee held at Brewarrina on Tuesday, 23rd February 2015. The Region covers the Shires of Wentworth, Bogan, Brewarrina, Central Darling, Bourke, Cobar and Broken Hill City Council. The Meeting is chaired by Assistant Commissioner, Geoff McKechnie of Dubbo. This meeting ensures that there is preparedness for emergencies and disasters on a regional basis.

The New Pre School located on the Golf Club site will be officially opened tomorrow with the Member for Barwon, Kevin Humphries, MP joining with the Mayor of Bourke Shire Council, Cr Andrew Lewis in officiating at the opening.

The facility is purpose built and is a vast improvement on the premises which burned down three (3) years ago. The opening is scheduled for 2.00pm and members of the public are invited to attend.

While Kevin is in town Councillors and staff will take the opportunity to catch up with him in relation to a number of issues impacting on Council at a State Government level.

Whilst on the subject of reconstruction of buildings the structural repair work on the grandstand at Davidson Oval has been completed for a while and the outside has been painted. The opportunity has been taken to also undertake some much needed improvements to the change rooms located under the grandstand and work in this regard should be completed in time for the upcoming football season which will no doubt be appreciated by both the local football teams and the visitors.

Work has been completed on the Caronga Peak Road and local resident Warwick Bramhall took the time to contact me to say what a tremendous job the shire team had done. In turn I would like to thank Warwick who made his scarce water supply available so that the work could be undertaken. It is a great example of community cooperation bringing about an excellent result.

During the Community Consultation Meetings, the Manager of Roads, Mark Gordon was able to let the residents know about the increase in funding available to Council under the Roads to Recovery Program for 2016/2017 and invited residents to submit projects that could be undertaken under the program.

Council will be contacting the Cross - Border Commission James McTavish in relation to the issues that have surfaced in the Barringun area with mail and the dispatching of emergency services. It has been pointed out that a significant number of online addressing systems use the Australia Post data base to verify addresses and their system lists Barringun as being in the Cunnamulla 4490 postcode. This has also resulted in the delays in delivery of mail and lost mail.

Potentially of more importance is that it would appear that the "OOO" service which handles emergency calls also has Barringun listed as being in Queensland and as such directs the calls to the Queensland based services.

The matter has been raised at the Local Emergency Management Committee (LEMC) so that the services are aware of the problem. The issues are not unique to Barringun with similar instances are recorded in many of the border towns and are magnified when parts of towns are located on either side of the border.

Quote of the Week!

“If it is important you will find a way. If not you will find an excuse.”

Ross Earl
General Manager