



“From the GM’s Desk”

6th September 2018



Mayor Barry Hollman and I will travel to Walgett on Thursday, 6th September 2018 to attend the second meeting of the Far North West Joint Organisation of Councils and then travel to onto Coonamble to attend the Annual General Meeting of the Orana Regional Organisation of Councils (OROC) on Friday, 7th September 2018.

OROC has been a very successful organisation on many fronts and its activities have played an important role for all member Councils both from the ability to negotiate group purchasing arrangements and undertaking joint advocacy on a number of issues.

However, the ongoing role of OROC will be discussed as with the majority of the member Councils now also members of a Joint Organisation of Council, some of the functions may overlap. The future direction of OROC will no doubt, feature on the agenda.

The Enngonia Races are fast approaching with Saturday, 15th September 2018 only a little over a week away and all is shaping up for a great day of racing on the bush track at Enngonia Racecourse.

Whilst not as big a Race Meeting as Louth, the Enngonia Races still offer a great family atmosphere and a guaranteed good day out.

The Inaugural Meeting of the JB Renshaw Oval User Group Advisory Committee will be held at the complex on Monday, 10th September 2018 at 5.00pm. Each of the primary users of the Complex which are listed below will have two (2) delegates and they will join with the Mayor of Bourke Shire Councillor Barry Hollman and Councillor Bob Stutsel to form the Committee.

- “Back O Bourke Race” Club
- Bourke Gunn Club
- Bourke P&A Association
- Bourke Pony Club

The Advisory Committee will review a draft charter which has been developed and take the first steps to developing a strategic plan for the complex detailing the requirements of each of the user groups.

Following the changes in our Federal Government and Cabinet, Local Government has a new Federal Minister with the appointment Senator Bridget McKenzie who is also Deputy Leader of the Nationals. In her recent statement Senator McKenzie said she was excited to use the levers of Government to create stronger, more vibrant regional communities.

The work on the revitalisation of the Central Business District (CBD) continues and already there have been a number of positive comments on the way it will look when it is finished in a few months’ time.

Not all comments have been positive however, it is hoped that as the project takes shape will we see those who have been initially sceptical pleased with the outcome.

One of the significant components was the making of Oxley Street between Richard and Sturt Streets one way and that took effect over the last weekend and while it will take some time to get used to it will soon become second nature to all locals.

The Bourke to Milparinka Road via Wanaaring will be closed between Pine View and Gumbalie to allow the planned reconstruction works to be undertaken.

All traffic will be required to detour via Ford's Bridge and the Snake Gully Road.

The Road closure is expected to be in place until late December.

Council apologises for the temporary inconvenience and looks forward the cooperation of all road users and are confident that the short-term inconvenience will be far outweighed by the significant improvement of the road.

Bourke Shire Council were asked to consider issues that could be considered for inclusion in the list of Strategic Priorities for the newly formed Far North West Joint Organisation of Councils and whilst the list will change with the inclusion of contemporary issues it will form the basis for advocacy undertaken on a regional basis.

The Strategic priorities already suggested are as follows:-

- Air Services
- Health Services
- Drought Support
- Infrastructure Funding-Roads, Water, Power and Mobile Phone Coverage
- Education

Bourke Shire Council has suggested the following be included:-

- Water
 - Reversal of regionalisation of services
 - Rail
 - Tourism
 - Provision of State Government Services delivered locally
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The Senior Citizens building in Mitchell Street Bourke will soon have a new name with the building to be known as the "Bourke Community Centre". The building has not been used as a Senior Citizens Centre for some years and the new name is reflective of the broader community use that the building now has, including groups such as the Garden Club, a Sewing Group and the Bourke Arts Councils.

A Plan of Management for the building will be developed to determine such things as fees for the use and the ongoing maintenance. The building is in need of some refurbishment to ensure that it meets the needs of all user groups and these works will be undertaken as funds allow.

Bookings for the use of the Bourke Community Centre will be handled by Council Staff at the Main Office at 29 Mitchell Street, Bourke.

Council will again be represented at the National Local Roads and Transport Congress which will be held in Alice Springs from the 20th to 22nd November 2018.

Council will be represented by the Mayor Councillor Hollman and other representatives to be determined.

The National Local Roads and Transport Congress has been an important forum and advocacy group and is generally able to secure the attendance of a number of Ministers at a Federal level. The Congress, in its early days was instrumental in commencement of the Roads to Recovery Funding which has delivered significant tangible benefits to all Councils.

Council at its last meeting received a letter from the Bourke Christian Church asking that the trees in the median strip adjacent to the Church not be removed as planned and advertised.

Council resolved to receive the letter and continue with the current Tree Removal Policy.

The long term drought conditions across the far West of the state has an impact on, not only the farming community, but also the broader community in a number of ways many of which are not immediately obvious.

This impact has meant that a number of the recurring sponsors of the Outback Arts organised Outback Archie's have not been able to provide that sponsorship this year and Outback Arts have asked the Member Councils to assist with the provision of \$500.00 towards this year's prizes. Bourke Shire Council has agreed to provide the \$500.00 as requested.

In their request letter Outback arts has said that the Outback Archie's will provide a unique opportunity in these dry times to increase Social inclusion, creativity and provide relief from day to day stress.

It is important that our communities have the opportunity to experience a diverse range of social activities and interaction. Bourke has a strong Arts Council who have organised a number of activities and are looking to expand the range of opportunities available to the residents of Bourke Shire.

Bourke Shire Council has received notification that it will receive an Additional \$266,677 in its 2018-2019 Financial Assistants Grants with Council resolving to allocate those funds to the Asset Renewal Reserve to be utilised to undertake the refurbishment and replacement of assets as required.

Council will receive \$5,780,550 from the 2018-2019 Financial Assistant Grants.

The Funds are allocated by the New South Wales Local Government Grants Commission who are required to adhere to the National Principals which mandate a per capita payment based on population growth/decline.

It is also the policy of the NSW Government to explore opportunities to direct grants to communities with the greatest relative need. In allocation of the funds the Commission has had regard to these policies

In a map accompanying the information on grants the decline of population of the rural areas is clearly demonstrated with nearly all Councils west of the Newell Highway experiencing a population decline when at the same time the overall population of New South Wales increased by 15%.

Bourke Shire Council is extremely appreciative of the funding which has been made available.

While most people are conscious of the need to stay off unsealed roads while they are wet; there are some people who seem oblivious to the damage they do to the road surface when they drive on wet unsealed roads and importantly to the cost of the rectification of damaged caused.

Bourke Shire Council has around 2,300 kilometres of unsealed roads and the damage done to the road surface during periods of rain is quite significant and costly to rectify.

I again urge all motorists to take heed of the road closures and stay off wet roads. Quite often it is only a matter of hours before closed roads are again trafficable and damage to the road is avoided.

The Department of Public Works have been appointed by Bourke Shire Council some time ago to undertake the supervision of the new Water Treatment Plant for Bourke which is anticipated to cost almost \$9 Million.

NSW Public Works have advised that they will be in a position shortly to be able call tenders for the work with the tender period to be around two (2) months to allow any firms wishing to submit a tender to be able to do so for what will be a relatively complex job.

Once tenders are received they will be assessed by a panel of technical experts and a recommendation made to Council.

While is difficult to accurately determine it is hoped that construction will be able to be commenced very early in the New Year and is likely to take around eighteen months to complete.

It is proposed that the new plant will be constructed on the existing site and this will eliminate the need for any significant change to the mains which would add considerably to the cost. The funding has been made available by the New South Wales State Government under the Water and Wastewater Backlog Program and is once again very much appreciated by Council and the community.

Council has a number of other applications for Grant Funding currently being assessed and it is hoped that further funding will be secured.

One of the funding opportunities that will hopefully be announced shortly is the outcome of Round 2 of the Stronger Regional Communities Funding and Council has a number of projects for consideration in this round of funding including the proposed upgrade to the Main Pool at the Bourke War Memorial Swimming Pool Complex and there will also be funding available for work at each of the villages within the Shire.

Round 1 of this program has seen the installation of lights at Cooligan Oval, the upgrade of the old floodlights and canteen facilities at Davidson Oval and the installation of toilets and playground equipment at the North Bourke Oval. All these projects are part of the Regional Growth Fund.

Rod Crowfoot the Managing Director of Macquarie Homestay was in Bourke on Monday to catch up with members of the local community regarding the construction of the facility. Rod was keen to meet with those in the health field who would be able to let people become aware of Macquarie Homestay and the service and facilities it will provide. Whilst in Bourke, Rod took the opportunity to visit Brewarrina to let the members of that community know about Macquarie Homestay.

Bourke has been a strong supporter of the Macquarie Homestay via the Tour De OROC which has been held three (3) times now to raise funds for the building of Macquarie Homestay and each time the residents of Bourke have dug deep to support this worthy cause.

Macquarie Homestay is being developed in close proximity to the newly redeveloped Dubbo Base Hospital and will provide affordable accommodation for patients and their families from outlying areas such as Bourke who are visiting Dubbo for medical treatment and are required to stay for an extended period. It will provide patients who do not require hospitalisation but do require regular treatment and the ability to stay in close proximity to the hospital.

Quote of the week!

"Be thankful for what you have, you'll end up having more. If you concentrate on what you don't have, you will never ever have enough".

Ross Earl
General Manager