



“From the GM’s Desk”

25th October 2018



The Grant Writing Workshop hosted by Bourke Shire Council and facilitated by Belinda Colless last weekend was very well received with all eleven attendees leaving the workshop with a greater understanding of how grant applications should be prepared and an increased level of confidence.

The Graffiti Removal Day although not attracting a huge number of participants was still able to effectively remove a considerable amount of unsightly graffiti and improve the appearance of our town.

Graffiti is effectively a form of vandalism which costs our community thousands of dollars each year, those resources would be better spent on the maintenance and improvement of our assets.

Manager of Corporate Services, Leonie Brown will represent Council at the New South Wales Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) Local Government Forum which is being held in Cobar today.

Bourke Shire Council has been represented at past Forums where it has provided the opportunity for discussion on a number of matters. It is pleasing to see the RFS making their Senior Staff available to travel to the rural areas to get feedback on issues.

This year the NSW RFS has worked with the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) to align the 2018 NSW RFS Local Government Forums in conjunction with the DPE Regional Roadshow for 2018.

The Ordinary Meeting of Bourke Shire Council will be held this Monday, 29th October 2018 at the Council Chambers at 29 Mitchell Street Bourke at 9.00am. As usual a Public Forum will be held at 10.00am and provides the opportunity for members of the Community to address Council with issues of concern. While not essential to make a booking to participate in the public forum, it can assist if you contact Kai- Howard-Oakman prior to the day, so that arrangements can be made for any background information that may be required to be available or audio visual equipment to be set up.

On the agenda for the Meeting of Council on Monday, 29th October 2018 will be a review of the format of Australia Day Celebrations for Bourke.

The review of the Australia Day Celebrations will include the categories for the awards, Eligibility, Categorisation of Senior and Junior Nominees i.e. suitability of current age ranges, method of selection, the confidentiality of nominees, the determination of the recipients, the hosting of the

Australia Day Ambassador and the Australia Day function itself; this is to include the venue, catering, time of day, invitation list and the structure of the program.

Tonight approximately 35 small business in Bourke Shire will attend a seminar with well-known and respected Business Coach, Beau Robinson. The event will be held at the Back O' Bourke Exhibition Centre Café starting at 6.00pm and will finish around 8.00pm depending on questions.

The evening is being held, utilising funding provided by the New South Wales Department of Industry to assist in the promotion of Small Business Week. Bourke Shire has embraced the opportunity to assist small business within Bourke Shire and have engaged Beau to conduct a workshop focussing on how to improve business. It is often said that many people are too busy "working in their Business" to take the time work on their business and look at opportunities that may exist. Beau will provide some pointers in this regard.

There is no cost to small business and during the course of the evening there will be the opportunity for business to enter a draw to win one (1) of five (5) one (1) hour sessions with Beau at their individual businesses the following day. Registrations can be made with Mick McDowell on 68308000 or email at aes@bourke.nsw.gov.au and will greatly assist in the provision of any material and catering.

The Mayor Councillor Barry Hollman and I travelled to Albury earlier in the week to attend the Annual Conference of Local Government New South Wales (LGNSW). The Conference brings together Councils from all over New South Wales and attracts excellent speakers and presentations.

The welcome function on the Sunday Night was attended by the Premier of New South Wales the Hon. Gladys Berejiklian, MP.

The Minister for Local Government, the Hon. Gabrielle Upton. MP was there on the opening day and gave an address to the Conference.

The purpose of the Conference is to assist in setting the policy framework for the Board of Local Government New South Wales and to this end Councils are invited to submit motions for consideration. Not all motions submitted are debated as some are excluded from the business paper if the motion put forward is already in accord with existing policy.

The following motions from Bourke Shire Council were presented to the Annual Conference with the motion submitted by Bourke on drought actually being the first motion on the agenda.

FROM BOURKE SHIRE COUNCIL- Employment Initiatives

That the Association lobby the NSW Government to develop a range of incentives that will encourage experienced and qualified staff from all departments and from all disciplines to seek employment opportunities in Western New South Wales.

Note from Council

The Police and other NSW Governments Departments have introduced incentives such as subsidised rental, increased training opportunities and preferential transfers to mentioned a few whilst other departments have lagged behind with the resultant shortages of qualified staff in some areas. Whilst understanding that you cannot have ongoing subsidies, initial subsidies may encourage some staff to come west and hopefully come to recognise the benefits of living in the area.

FROM BOURKE SHIRE COUNCIL- Disposal of Syringes and other Sharps

That the New South Wales Ministry of Health is asked to:-

- Reinstatement of the Community Sharps Program to assist in the provision of funding to purchase sharps bins/containers, signage and to assist to raise awareness of the dangers of incorrect disposal of needles and other sharps. The cost of collecting and managing sharps that are indiscriminately disposed of in towns across New South Wales is yet another burden that Councils have to carry.
- Work with sharps manufacturers and suppliers to introduce a producer responsibility approach for sharps, whereby the industry assists with the costs of managing their products.

Note from Council

Discarded needles both pose a health risk for the innocent members of the community and the collection of the needles an added cost to Councils. While appreciating the funding that has been made available for education in the past there is an ongoing need for this funding to continue in the future.

FROM BOURKE SHIRE COUNCIL- Need For Drought Declaration Criteria

That The New South Wales Government as a matter of urgency develop a policy framework which clearly defines when an area is deemed to be in "drought" and also develops a range of measures that provide assistance to farmers and small business impacted by drought conditions including clear criteria which needs to be straight forward and inclusive, so that such assistance can be accessed in a timely fashion.

Note by Council

There is no current mechanism for areas to be drought declared and as such with each drought period comes the question of what indicators are used to determine when the an area is impacted by an extended period of abnormally dry conditions.

Drought conditions should be treated in a similar way to both fire and flood as all are disaster situations.

Often, pleas by the impacted landowners and businesses to have measures put in place to alleviate the financial hardship being experienced as a result of the abnormally dry period, result in that assistance being provided far too late to be effective.

Should loan funding be made available the repayment period for such loans should be of a sufficient period to enable those accessing the loans to improve their financial capacity to do so.

In the days when organisations such as Rural Lands Protection Board were in existence such policy framework existed and worked effectively. The transition to Local Land Services (LLS) has seen the framework disappear and there is an ongoing debate on what constitutes drought and what should be provided by way of assistance. The delays means that support, if it becomes available, often comes too late for those most impacted.

All the motions received the support of the Conference and will now be actioned by the staff at Local Government New South Wales.

With Bourke Shire Council hosting the Western Division Conference in February 2019. Mayor, Councillor Barry Hollman and I took the opportunity to promote the Conference with member Councils of Western Division and other Councils who we think might be interested in attending. We also spoke to a number of potential speakers and sponsors during the course of the Conference and are confident that we have been able to secure a number of both. We are confident that the Conference in Bourke will be of a high standard with the theme of the Conference focussing on issues impacting on rural and remote communities. Things such as Health, Law and Order, Water, Road Funding and regional development will figure prominently in discussions.

Prior to the LGNSW Annual Conference commencing on the Sunday afternoon the Mayor and I attended a meeting in the morning coordinated by Gwydir Shire Council regarding the provision of Health Services to Rural and Remote New South Wales.

One of the catalysts for the meeting was the proposed introduction of the Stronger Rural Health Strategy (SRHS) on the 1st November 2018. This Commonwealth Strategy has been developed with the aim of ensuring that people living in Rural, Regional and Remote Australia have better access to health services. Although initiatives included in the SRHS could result in an increase in the number of medical practitioners in regional centres, it appears that initiatives under the strategy do not address the issue of recruitment and retention of medical practitioners in smaller rural and remote areas.

Gwydir feel that some of the initiatives could actually have a detrimental impact on the ability of small rural and remote medical practices to recruit a General Practitioner (GP) workforce.

From November, 1st 2018 as part of the SRHS, new non-vocationally registered GPs who are not on a formal training program will only be able to access 80% of the Medicare rebate currently available. In effect this means patients will receive a 20% reduction in the Medicare rebates they currently receive for those GP services in the future, and where practices provide bulk billing, it will be those practices and the GPs working in those practices that will be impacted by the 20% reduction in rebates. With non-vocationally registered GPs accounting for approximately 44% of the GP workforce in small rural and remote communities across New South Wales the new strategy has the potential to have a dramatic impact.

Bourke Shire Council has continually strongly advocated for increased incentives to attract qualified professionals including doctors to the rural communities and will be reviewing the potential solutions which have been put forward by Gwydir Shire to assist in overcoming some of the unintended consequences of the SRHS.

Shane Hatton the Chief Executive Officer of Rural and Remote Medical Services (RaRMS) spoke at the meeting about the envisaged problems associated with the SRMS as it currently stands. RaRMS who already experience difficulty in attracting doctors on a permanent basis in rural and remote locations can ill afford a further impediment to this task.

Quote of the Week!

"A lot of people, when a guy scores a lot of goals, think, 'He's a great player', because a goal is very important, but a great player is a player who can do everything on the field. He can do assists, encourage his colleagues, give them confidence to go forward. It is someone who, when a team does not do well, becomes one of the leaders" *Pele*

Ross Earl
General Manager