



# “From the GM’s Desk”

## 22nd November 2018



Highlighted out of the recent National Drought Summit was the fact that people in drought affected regions across Australia have conveyed they aren't aware of all of the support that is available.

As a first step to address this issue, the Joint Agency Drought Taskforce has developed the attached information pack, which provides an overview of assistance available to individuals, families, farms and communities in drought regions. The information pack captures support from the Commonwealth, States and Territories, as well as charities and not for profits.

The President of Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) Councillor David O'Loughlin is seeking the support of all Local Government areas to assist in creating an increased awareness and understanding of the support that is on offer.

ALGA is encouraging Councils to use the information in the pack to raise awareness in our communities and with all stakeholders about the broad range of assistance available to help people manage during the drought.

A copy of the pack is available on Bourke Shire Council's Website [www.bourke.nsw.gov.au](http://www.bourke.nsw.gov.au) and is also available in hard copy from both the Library at 46 Mitchell Street Bourke and Council Offices at 29 Mitchell Street, Bourke.

If you would like a copy posted out please ring Council on 02 68308000 and Council will arrange for it to be printed and posted.

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Each year Council makes provision in the Operational Plan (Budget) for a contribution of \$100.00 to each of the schools in the Shire to assist in provision of awards at each of the School Annual Presentation days.

Cheques for all schools were posted out this week for the 2018 presentation days which will be coming up shortly.

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Plans are still progressing for the Western Division Conference to be held in Bourke on the 24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> February 2019 with a very good line up of speakers being secured for the Conference which will see all member Councils Balranald, Bourke, Broken Hill, Cobar, Central Darling, Wentworth and Walgett attending; whilst representatives from Bogan, Gilgandra, Moree Plains, Coonamble and Warren Shires have also indicated that they will be attending.

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Barwon Darling Water held their Annual General Meeting at Bourke last Thursday and the meeting saw Joe Robinson from Australian Food and Fibre elected as Chairman. He replaces Tony Thompson

in that role. An executive Committee of four (4) also elected with Jay Murray, Jack Harris, Joe Fleming and Justin McClure making up that Committee.

It was deemed that there was a need for the representation of the younger members of the organisation to become more involved so that there can be a continuation of the advocacy work that has been undertaken in the past and that the knowledge acquired is able to be maintained within the organisation.

Ian Cole remains as the Executive Officer. Ian's ongoing service to the organisation and his knowledge of the issues in relation to the Barwon Darling System was acknowledged by the outgoing and incoming chairs.

The meeting was attended by both Luke Simpkins the CEO of the NSW Irrigators Council and Steve Whan the CEO of the National Irrigators Council. Steve Whan was a Minister in the Labour Government and said one (1) of his previous visits to Bourke was around 2009 in his capacity as Minister for Emergency Services to look at the issues caused to the town of Bourke when eight (8) inches of rain fell overnight causing flooding inside the levee bank. This is a far cry from the conditions that greeted him on this visit to Bourke.

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Residents of Bourke and North Bourke are reminded that Level 2 water restrictions have been effective from Friday, 2nd November 2018.

The use of fixed sprinklers is now limited to one (1) hour per day either between the hours of 7.00am to 8.00am or 7.00pm to 8.00pm daily.

Hand held sprinklers can still be used at other times.

The washing of paved areas and motor vehicles can only be undertaken using a pressure cleaner or buckets and filling of new swimming pools is prohibited in accordance with Councils adopted policy.

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A group of farmers and truck operators in Western Australia are organising a hay run to arrive in Bourke on Australia Day 2019.

Approximately 50 trucks carrying hay will be making the trip from WA to Bourke.

The organisers have teamed up with Lions Club "Need for Feed" to coordinate the distribution of the hay.

Farmers in the Bourke area who would like to receive some hay (maximum 10 bales) are required to register on the "Need for Feed" website [www.needforfeed.org](http://www.needforfeed.org)

They should click on "apply for assistance", select "fodder" and complete the requested information. For further information please contact the Rural Financial Counsellor in Bourke on 1800 940 404.

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Ratepayers are reminded that the next rates instalment is due on Friday, 30<sup>th</sup> November 2018 with the water charges also due on that day.

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There are still a few meetings to be held to finalise the current round of Community Consultation Meetings, the dates for these are as follows:-

**FORDS BRIDGE**

WEDNESDAY - 28<sup>th</sup> November 2018 - TIME: 10.00am - 11.00am - VENUE: WARREGO HOTEL

**LOUTH**

WEDNESDAY - 5<sup>th</sup> December 2018 - TIME: 9.00am - 11.00am - VENUE: LOUTH TENNIS SHED

**WANAARING**

WEDNESDAY - 5<sup>th</sup> December 2018 - TIME: 1.30pm - 3.30pm - VENUE: WANAARING HALL

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The community consultation meeting for Byrock was held on Monday and there was a good representation of the local residents.

The opportunity was taken to mention the availability of the Stronger Communities Fund to be allocated to each of the villages and to seek suggestion as to how this may be best allocated.

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NSW's Local Council meetings will be webcast under the new Model Code of Meeting Practice which was released last Friday.

The Minister for Local Government, the Hon. Gabrielle Upton, MP in announcing the New Code said that if it is good enough for Federal and State MPs to go live to the nation, then there is no reason why local Councillors should be exempt.

According to the circular issued by the Office of Local Government irrespective of whether Councils have adopted a Code of Meeting Practice based on the Model Meeting Code, all Councils (but not joint organisations) will be required to webcast meetings of the Council and Committees of which all members are Councillors within 12 months of its prescription. The webcasting requirement may be met simply by posting an audio or video recording of the meeting on the Council's website.

The new Model Code of Meeting Practice is the first uniform set of meeting rules for NSW Councils. The code includes optional time limits on meetings, a five (5) minute limit on Councillor speeches, uniform rules of debate, and limits on Mayoral Minutes.

Councils are also encouraged to hold public forums before ordinary meetings so residents can address the Council as well as pre-meeting briefings for Councillors where the General Managers outline business agenda items so they can make informed decisions.

At the Annual Conference held in Albury a motion by Carrathool Shire not to make the webcast mandatory was defeated, indicating that the new proposal has the support of the majority of Councils.

Bourke Shire Council has previously raised concerns regarding the ability of Council to webcast meetings which will be held outside the Council Chambers such as the August Meeting held in Louth.

A number of other rural Councils take their meeting to the villages within their Shire to give residents of those areas the opportunity to attend.

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The planning stage of the fixing Country Roads Project on MR 405 Bourke to Milparinka began in December 2017. As part of the initial application the following priorities were identified:-

- Priority 1  
Gumbalie section includes 12.79km's of sealing at approximately \$321,000 per km  
(Total - \$4,110,000)
- Priority 2  
Poison Point Plain section includes 16.55km's of sealing at approximately \$280,000 per km  
(Total - \$4,650,000)
- Priority 3  
Wongareena Plain section includes 7.02km's of sealing at approximately \$335,000 per km  
(Total - \$2,352,000)

Due to drought conditions there was a lack of a reliable source of water to undertake the works so Council elected to construct bores to provide the required level of water and this has proved to be a very successful and cost effective option.

A base camp utilising demountable buildings was also established to minimise travel costs.

### **Gumbalie Section – Stage 1 - Update**

Construction of the Gumbalie section commenced on 21/8/18 with two (2) construction teams forming up the sub-base level of the 12.79 km section.

Stage 1 sealing should be completed this week (beginning 19/11/18) leaving only a minor tidying up of drainage and road furnishings.

### **Stage 2 Poison Point Plain**

Stage two Poison Point Plain started on 12/11/18 and it is hoped to have five (5) kilometres of this road to be completed prior to the Christmas Break.

It is a credit to the Council staff and contactors that the work has gone so smoothly and Manager of Roads, Mark Gordon has indicated that he is extremely pleased on the progress to date and is hopeful that Council will be able to apply for further funding to continue the works.

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While the construction gang have been busy on the Wanaaring Road, the maintenance crew have been undertaking ongoing maintenance of the Rural Local Roads (RLR), with some of the recently graded roads including the following RLR 11 Weelong Road, RLR 50 Mooleyarrh Road, RLR 23 Willara Road and RLR 32 Kingbolt Road which has had work started but not completed. Work is also being undertaken on RLR 10 Tooralé Road below Louth.

Culvert replacement work on RLR 49 West Culgoa – Ledknapper Creek Road is due to commence this week.

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Anyone who has been in the CBD over the past few weeks will have noticed that work continues to progress on the main street upgrade. Further placement of sandstone seating has been placed in front of the old Exchange building and the garden bed in the same vicinity is almost complete with only work on the storm water system required to finalise this section.

The construction has moved to the Police Station corner of Richard and Oxley Street and are well and truly marching through that section.

Statewide line marking crew were on the job last week painting pedestrian crossings, centrelines and other required line marking including in Sturt Street and the raised pedestrian crossing in Oxley street is now clearly painted.

Disabled car parking spaces have been identified in Oxley Street, with wheelchair access works to be completed next week near the Chemist.

There are still plenty of carparks in Sturt and Richard Streets with new parking areas being identified in Richard Street.

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Nominations are called for the 2019 Australia Day Awards and will be received up until midday on the 14<sup>th</sup> January 2019. The form for nominations is slightly different from previous years and persons nominating people for an award should ensure that they included all relevant details to assist the judging panel in their deliberations.

Quite often the work undertaken by the volunteers within our community goes relatively unnoticed and it is important that their work is recognised.

Similarly, the significance of sporting achievements at a regional, state or national level if applicable need to be highlighted as well as awards provided by sporting organisations for service and outstanding achievement(s).

Nomination forms are available from Bourke Shire Council, Bourke Library or on the Council website [www.bourke.nsw.gov.au](http://www.bourke.nsw.gov.au)

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Councils Annual Financial Reports for 2017/2018 will be one of the items of business to be presented at the Ordinary Meeting of Council to be held on Monday, 26<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

The Financial Reports are available for inspection at the Council Chambers, Bourke Public Library and also on Councils Website [www.bourke.nsw.gov.au](http://www.bourke.nsw.gov.au)

The financial results for Council continue to be sound and this demonstrates both strong financial management and adherence to budgets by all within the organisation.

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The latest Far West - Algal Coordinating Committee (FW-RACC) Blue-green Algae Report Reports provides as follows:-

There are five (5) amber alerts in their area. The Namoi River at Walgett is on amber alert and there are four (4) alerts along the Darling with Bourke/Boat Ramp, Trevallyn, Wilcannia and Caulpaulin all on amber alert.

They advise that fortunately, the dominant algae species detected in the samples is not known to be toxic. However, stock managers should be considering or planning for alternate water supplies for stock. Domestic users should also be considering their options for alternate water supplies as the conditions are very favourable for algae growth.

There are also green alerts for Brewarrina and Tilpa.

The Committee advises that areas of low flows, standing water holes and weir pools may become an ideal environment for algae production. Stock owners and managers should be vigilant and be on the lookout for signs of algae scums.

They also advise that due to the expanse of the Darling River, there are many areas for which they do not have BGA results. Therefore, **water users should treat the Barwon - Darling River with caution**, especially when conditions for algal growth are favourable such as low river flows combined with persistent hot and sunny weather conditions.

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Council has lodged applications under the Drought Communities Fund (DCF) and these applications are currently being assessed and it is hoped to be able to implement some of the projects early in the new year if not before.

One of the funding applications relates to the provision of funding to assist in the ongoing improvements and maintenance to the villages within the Shire and hopefully we will have the opportunity to relay some positive news during our visits to Ford's Bridge, Louth and Wanaaring over the next week or so.

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*Quote of the Week!*

*"Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around"*

*Leo Buscaglia*

Ross Earl  
General Manager