



“From the GM’s Desk”



20th December 2018

The Christmas Markets and Carols by Candlelight was very popular and well received by all residents with stall holders kept busy with food stalls particularly popular. It was good to see such a strong presence of stall holders, some of who had come a long way to attend

Certainly the cooler weather was welcomed by all those who took the opportunity to attend although many had wished that they had brought along warmer clothes as the evening progressed.

Well done to the organising team lead by Manager of Tourism and Events Fran Carter and Tourism Support officer Jodie Sontag.

Thank you to the combined Churches of Bourke who once again came together for the staging of the Carols by Candlelight and at the same time highlighting the real meaning of Christmas.

Work continues on the Wanaaring Road with a further 2.3kms being sealed this week making a total of 18kms that have been sealed under the current reconstruction program being funded under the Fixing Country Roads Program. This represents approximately half of the works to be undertaken with Council optimistic that further funding may become available to continue with these works.

The work to date has attracted considerable favourable comment from road users and it is a credit to our Engineering Staff and Construction Crew and further enhances their reputation of being able to produce quality work “on time and on budget”.

The rural road maintenance program has seen both the Avondale Road and Emaroo Road receiving a maintenance grade over the past week.

The road from Louth to Tilpa on the East side is currently being graded.

As part of the works in the CBD there has been a change to the number of designated disabled parking spots in Oxley Street with a total of four (4) designated disabled parking spots now available. These have been strategically located in the vicinity of the Chemist, Post Office and the two (2) banks. Signage has already been placed on the road surface with the signs on the footpath to be erected shortly. Please be conscious of these new parking arrangements.

As the re-development of the CBD takes shape there have been more and more positive comments which is certainly heartening for those who have put so much work into the planning phases and those working on the project and making it happen .

As a Council we have numerous visitors to town and the feedback from them in relation to the revitalisation of the main street has also been positive.

There have been some queries as to why the flower beds are yet to be planted and the simple answer is the lack of water and the ongoing water restrictions coupled. Another factor is the increasing salt content of the water that is available and the difficulties this will pose in trying to establish flower beds.

As soon as there is a good flow in the river the plantings will take place adding to the overall appearance of streetscape and at the same time adding a lot of vibrancy and colour to the area.

The Mayor, Councillor Barry Hollman and I attended the Annual Presentation Day of the Bourke Walgett School of Distance Education (BWSODE) last Friday and it was good to see many of the parents make the trip in to Bourke to be able to share and celebrate their children's achievements. The children come from a very wide area and only get together with their classmates a few times a year but there was an obvious strong bond between them.

When you live so far from a school that daily travel is not possible distance education is the only option, however, it has proved to be a very successful medium over the years with a number of former students achieving academic excellence.

It is no doubt a challenge for the P and C of BWSODE to organise fund raising events given the tyranny between families but they do so very successfully and funds raised go towards providing assistance with excursions and other activities which are important in the provision of a well-rounded education.

Advertisements calling for tenders from operators interested in providing air services to Bourke, Cobar and Walgett/Lightning Ridge have been placed in the Sydney Morning Herald and the Dubbo Daily Liberal and are also on the websites of Bourke, Cobar and Walgett Shires.

Tenders will close on 12th February 2019 and the tenders will then be assessed by an evaluation panel and hopefully we could see an air service to each of the towns in March or April 2019.

Bourke Shire Council was pleased to be selected as the pilot Council and enjoyed partnering with the Department of Planning - Western, throughout the consultation phase involved in the preparation of

the Draft publication "Bourke Building Future Communities". The preparation of the document was one of the actions to come out of the Far West Regional Plan.

Whilst Bourke is the pilot Council the process of developing the document will be replicated across all other seven (7) Councils in the Far West Planning Region.

A pleasing aspect of the process was the fact that most of the community members who started the journey were still on board and were keen to maximise the benefits and outcomes that should flow from the extensive process.

The support of the community has been instrumental in its success and the availability the Department of Planning staff to keep both the Community representatives, Council representatives and staff engaged in the process has been instrumental in its success.

As a result of the success of the project the Staff at Western Planning have just won a highly commended and overall runner up for the collaboration award at the Annual Department Secretary's awards announced last week. There were 48 nominations, from across the State, in the category, with the Metro Independent Hearing and Assessment Panels taking out the major prize. The Bourke Project was the only project outside the metro area to be recognised at the awards which is a tremendous effort.

As I write this column on (Sunday 16th December 2018) the current river height at Bourke Weir is only 3.09 metres at the Bourke weir and seems to be dropping a little over a centimetre per day so it is very likely that level three (3) water restrictions will have to be put in place shortly, this may even be before Christmas. With temperatures forecast to be in the forties this week the level of evaporation will no doubt increase and the same forecast paints a bleak picture in relation to potential rainfall in the short term.

With level three (3) water restrictions the use of fixed sprinklers and hoses is banned and hand held hoses can be used for two (2) hours per day. The filling of swimming pools is prohibited and the washing of paths etc. is also prohibited.

This week's editions contains full details of the impact of the new restrictions

Residents once again are reminded that the garbage collection time is between 3.00am – 11.00am each collection day. **IT IS IMPORTANT** that garbage bins are placed out prior to 3.00am to ensure they are collected.

To date Council has adopted a flexible approach and has returned to pick up bins which have been put out late, however, this is both time consuming and an additional cost.

The **COOPERATION** of everyone is sought in ensuring bins are placed out in time for collection which means by 3.00am.

Bins placed out later may not be collected until the following week and may have to be taken by the property owners to the Waste Management Facility.

As mentioned last week I attended my first meeting as a Board Member of Regional Development Australia- Orana last week in Mudgee. The next meeting of the Board will be held in Bourke on the 15th April 2019 and I look forward to being able to showcase the town to my fellow board members.

In the listing of projects to be funded under the drought communities program the project involving the undertaking of Rural Addressing within the shire was inadvertently omitted but will be proceeding.

The project involved the numbering of all rural properties and the erection of appropriate signage.

The project will allow much easier directions to be available for emergency services etc. many of who rely on these directions be provided by a central call centre.

A reminder to all residents that Council does not meet in December with the next scheduled meeting to be held on 21st January 2018 which has been brought forward due to the 4th Monday being the Australia Day Holiday. The meeting for February has also been brought forward to the 18th February 2019 as the 4th Monday will be the first day of the Western Division Conference to be held in Bourke.

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

Don't say someone should nominate them, "be that someone" and take the time to nominate a person who you think would be a worthy recipient.

Nomination forms are available from Bourke Shire Council, Bourke Library or on the Council website www.bourke.nsw.gov.au

Far West - Algal Coordinating Committee (FW-RACC) Blue-green Algae have released their latest report and advise as follows:

There is a Red Alert in place for the Barwon River at Brewarrina.

A media release has been issued. Stock and domestic users in this area should apply caution and seek alternate water supplies.

Darling River at Bourke Boat Ramp is on Amber Alert.

Barwon River at Louth is on Green Alert.

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.

Due to the expanse of the Darling River, there are many areas for which we 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. Use the closest sites that have results as a guide to your location of interest.

These alert levels apply to **non-human consumptive or recreational contact and stock alert warnings**. Drinking water safety thresholds are much more stringent.

Arrangements for the operation of Council over the Christmas period have been advertised in an earlier edition of the Western Herald.

Details of changes in the operation of Council's services and facilities over the Christmas period are also detailed on Council's website www.bourke.nsw.gov.au.

Emergencies as always should be reported to the Council Duty Officer on **0419722055**

On behalf of the Mayor, Councillors and staff of Bourke Shire Council I would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy and prosperous New Year.

I would also like to take the opportunity to thank everyone who has assisted in so many ways to make Bourke a better place and have contributed their time and effort in this regard. All small towns rely on the efforts of volunteers in so many ways with organisations including service clubs, sporting groups and various social and interest groups playing an important part in enhancing the facilities within the town.

The ends of the school year often signals the end of the tenure of many people in country towns including Bourke as people in professions such as teaching accept transfers or move for family or other reasons. Unfortunately a number people who have made a significant contribution to Bourke will be leaving and on behalf of Council and the broader contribution to the Bourke in so many ways

and trust that you have enjoyed your tenure here and thank you for your contribution whilst you have been resident in Back O Bourke. I am sure that most will return to visit friends made during their stay.

The New Year will see a number of new residents come into Bourke and I sincerely hope that they are made feel welcome and able to mix readily into our community and enjoy the many activities that are available.

In conjunction with Bourke Rotary Club, Bourke Shire Council will again be hosting its Welcome to Bourke function in February and this not only provides the opportunity for the new residents to get an idea as to what is available in Bourke but provides the opportunity for organisations to highlight details of their organisation and can look at the opportunity to boost their membership numbers.

If you are travelling over the Christmas and New Year period, please drive safely and take the required rest stops.

Water mains always seem to break at the most inopportune time as was the case last Wednesday night when a main at the corner of Mitchell and Richard Street failed causing the Water and Waste Water crew to be called out for emergency repairs at four in the morning. Repairs such as this need to see the highway temporarily closed and traffic re-directed and involves a lot of coordination.

The storm last Thursday created havoc around town with power outages and a number of trees falling or being significantly damaged. Bourke Shire Council's Town Services, Parks and Gardens crews worked to get the mess cleaned up as quickly as possible and were assisted by staff from other areas from within Council in a great team effort. This work can prove dangerous with some of the trees affecting the power lines. Thank you to all staff who responded so quickly.

A great effort by all concerned.

Also to the fore were members of the of the Local State Emergency Services these people are volunteers who give freely of their time to help others adversely impacted by storms or other situations, quite often these are very dangerous situations, to help others.

Quote of the Week

"Peace on earth will come to stay, when we live Christmas every day." – *Helen Steiner Rice*

Ross Earl
General Manager