



MEDIA RELEASE

BOURKE WATER SUPPLY HAS LIMITED CAPACITY AND IS APPROACHING A CRITICAL LEVEL

The Darling River at Bourke stopped flowing over the Bourke Weir in August 2018 and has now ceased flowing for over 150 days.

The weir pool is rapidly depleting with Bourke Shire Council having to introduce level three (3) restrictions on the 24th December 2018, with the expectation that this will go to level four (4) water restrictions next week (week commencing 24/01/2019).

The severe heat wave conditions that have existed since Boxing Day, look to continue for a few days and this will have a dramatic impact on the storage level, with over a centimetre per day expected to be lost in evaporation.

While difficult to accurately predict, the utilisation of computer based modelling combined with historical information, it would appear that ready access to the water supply in the weir pool will only be available up until the end of March 2019.

This will represent a cease to flow period well in excess of the current record of 196 days and this occurred between 20th September 2006 to 4th April 2007

Whilst the modelling indicates that there will still be limited quantities water within the weir pool until the end of May, it will be at a level that will make pumping in the quantities required to sustain the town of Bourke, extremely difficult and not practical.

Council have been in urgent discussions with representatives from the Lands and Water Division of New South Wales Department of Industry, to put plans in place to ensure that contingency provisions are in place to provide an ongoing water supply to Bourke.

The construction of a new bore will commence in early February with an expectation that it will be able to be finished by early March 2019, with a new pipeline to be constructed concurrently. The new bore will be then utilised to supplement the current emergency supply able to be provided from Walkden's Bore located on the Hungerford Road.

There are also other water security options under urgent consideration.

Council has received funding for the emergency works undertaken to date and will be working with Lands and Water Division of the New South Wales Department of Industry to have a strategy in place to ensure the ongoing supply of water to Bourke.

The water level gauge is currently at 2.56 metres which is below the previous record low of 2.58 metres recorded on the on 25th January 2007.

Without any substantive inflow the level will continue to fall with level four (4) water restrictions likely to be implemented early next week when the water level drops to 2.50 metres.

Mayor Barry Hollman has moved to reassure residents that everything is being done to expedite the new works with the necessary contractors engaged and pipe secured and all necessary approvals being sought.

General Manager Ross Earl said that the level of assistance to date from the various Government agencies in assisting with approvals and funding has been excellent and he is confident that this ongoing support will continue with recognition of the importance of being prepared for the transition to a total bore water supply for the town of Bourke when required.

End

Further Media information contact the General Manager Ross Earl 0409362307