



Press Release

Update on Initiatives being taken to implement a Water Security Plan for the Town of Bourke

With the level of the Darling River at Bourke at lows not experienced in the past seventy years Bourke Shire Council is undertaking urgent action to ensure that an adequate water supply is maintained for the town of Bourke. Additionally consideration needs to be given to the supply of water to villages such as Byrock should the need arise.

The current level of the River at Bourke is 2.35 metres and the town of Bourke is on level 4 water restrictions. With the current rates of usage and evaporation it is expected that the river will drop to below 2.00 metres in the first week of March if not sooner. It is difficult to accurately determine given we are in relatively uncharted territory and have experienced abnormally hot weather conditions.

Once the river drops to below 2.00 metres level 5 water restrictions will be invoked.

At this stage it is anticipated the ability to be able to readily access water in sufficient quantities from the river to service the domestic needs of the town will be exhausted around the end of March or early April, however, this timeframe is based on the best current available information and could vary dramatically.

Council currently has an emergency bore at Walkden's Bore on the Hungerford Road and the water is pumped to town through infrastructure built over the past two (2) years. This bore has been used to supplement the water supply over the past week when Council experienced pumping issues at the intake facility for the Water Treatment Plant.

The current supply from Walkden's Bore is insufficient to meet the demands of the town.

Council has engaged a contractor to sink another bore starting the week commencing 11th February and this bore should be finished and ready for use in early March.

Concurrently with the drilling of the new bore which is located five (5) kilometres west of Walkden's Bore the additional pipeline will be installed ready for use once the bore is finished.

There may need to be some modifications undertaken at Walkden's Bore Complex, which also provides preliminary treatment of the water. This will ensure that it has the required capacities to cater for the additional flow.

Contactors will be on site this week to determine if any such modifications are required.

General Manager of Bourke Shire Council Ross Earl said that a considerable amount of work continues to be undertaken and contingency plans being put in place to mitigate the risk of the town not having sufficient water supply.

Council has worked closely with Minister Blair's Office and representatives from the New South Wales Office of Water who are now part of the Department of Industry.

Council have received excellent support and cooperation from all agencies involved and anticipates that this support will continue.

The recently appointed New South Wales Town Water Security Coordinator James McTavish who is also the NSW Cross Border Commissioner will visit Bourke next week to discuss with Council staff the plans that are in place and what assistance may be required.

Council has been successful in obtain funding of \$225,000.00 towards the new bore and construction of the pipeline. A further application for funding has been lodged to undertake further works and this application is currently being determined

The situation is unprecedented and a great deal of support and cooperation has been required.

Council is very appreciative of the level of support received from all stakeholders including, contractors, Government representatives and residents each of whom understand the serious situation that is potentially unfolding.

Council is seeking to have an environmental flow released from the water held in dams and that request is currently being considered.

Even if the flow is made available it will be at least six (6) weeks before it reaches Bourke and as such the completion of the bore supply remains critical.

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Contacts Media contacts Mayor Barry Hollman 0409037903 or General Manager Ross Earl
0409362307