



“From the GM’s Desk”

7th March 2019



The Western Division Conference went extremely well with all attendees seemingly very pleased with all aspects of the conference.

I would like to thank all members of Council staff who gave freely of their time to ensure the conference went smoothly and also to the members of the community who assisted in the provision of services and facilities.

The Conference attracted an excellent array of speakers who covered a range of topics which are very important to Local Government. I would like to express the appreciation of all attendees for the time that they invested into both preparing their presentations and in travelling to Bourke.

As you would expect there was an emphasis on water supply and the impacts of drought throughout the conference.

Sponsorship is a big part of running conferences and Bourke Shire Council was able to attract excellent sponsorship, I am hopeful that all sponsors were happy with the outcome from their point of view. I note a couple of sponsors have already secured a spot at the 2020 conference to be held in Broken Hill.

The newly renovated Back O Bourke Conference Centre proved to be an excellent location for the Conference Dinner and the setting looked great thanks to a lot of hard work.

Catering over the period of Conference also brought very positive comments and it was good to be able to show case Bourke and demonstrate that Bourke is equal to the best, when it comes to putting on a conference.

As of Friday 1st March 2019 the period of “cease to flow” for the Darling River at Bourke was 196 days meaning that the current record of 200 days will be surpassed on Wednesday 6th March 2019.

It is important to note the record we are talking about is only for the post 1944 period when accurate records are available. Equally important is the fact that this period would have been

substantially greater, had it not been for the Environmental Flow dubbed “the Northern Connectivity Event in April last year which provided a flow for over two months.

The new bore which has been constructed some five kilometres west of Walkden’s Bore has proved to be successful with a flow rate exceeding one (1) megalitre per day being achieved. Work is now underway to have this piped to Walkden’s Bore then into the Bourke Water Treatment Plant for reticulation through the town filtered water system.

Works required entails the construction of a pipeline, modification of the pump and the installation of a Generator to supply the power to the site pending permanent connection to the electricity supply.

The Generator will also give assurance of supply during any unforeseen power outages.

The new bore combined with the production from Walkden’s Bore will bring the total amount of water that will be available will be approximately two (2) megalitres per day which will meet the filtered water requirements for residential and commercial usage.

There will be no need for Council to restrict the use of filtered water for internal use.

The restriction on the use of filtered water is the same as raw water.

Council has commissioned the construction of another Bore, which will be drilled on the Bourke side of Walkden’s Bore with the additional bore been part of the drought proofing strategy being developed by Council in conjunction with the Department of Primary Industries Office of Water (DPI Water)

The additional bore will both provide additional security and at the same time spread the pumping over a greater area of the aquifer.

Council has been a very strong advocate in relation to the issues facing the Barwon Darling River system starting in mid- December last year including representations to the Minister for Regional Water Hon Niall Blair and Jody Swirepik the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder (CEWH), in an attempt to ascertain the possibility of securing an environmental water flow along the Barwon Darling system.

Bourke Shire Council made further representation to the CEWH in January and in conjunction with the Murray Darling Association was responsible for the coordination of a meeting in Sydney with the Minister’s Office which involved all agencies. This meeting discussed the

administration of water along the Barwon Darling System and tried to identify both long term and short term solutions to the problems currently being experienced.

Council staff have also been actively working on the construction and commissioning of the new bore which has involved funding applications, site identification liaison with various government departments and the obtaining of all the required licences and approvals.

On behalf of Council I would like to publicly acknowledge the assistance that Council has received from all agencies who have displayed a great deal of understanding of the situation that is unfolding in Bourke and the need to expedite the processing of documentation.

The river continues to drop at an approximate rate of over a centimetre per day and as at Monday 4th March 2019 the water level at Bourke was 2.05 metres. It is now estimated to drop 2.00 metres on or around 7th March 2019 which will be the catalyst for the introduction of level 5 water restrictions.

With the introduction of level five (5) water restrictions the most significant change is that all outside watering is banned, except by the use of buckets, and the bleed off for evaporative air conditioners is also banned. Council has relaxed the banning of bleed off provision and have asked that residents reduce the bleed off where possible.

The restrictions that are contained within the Drought Management Policy in relation to use of filtered water were largely developed prior to the construction of Walkden's Bore. With the construction of the additional bore restrictions such as the control of bleed off from evaporative air conditioners will be relaxed slightly.

It is important to note that the water restrictions relate to both **Raw and Filtered Water**.

Bourke Shire Council has taken delivery of eight (8) Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) to be placed throughout the Shire.

An AED is a small portable device designed to deliver a controlled electric shock to a person experiencing cardiac arrest.

Councils were successful in obtaining funding of \$14,850 from the New South Wales Office of Sport Local Defibrillator program which was supplemented by Council.

Part of the cost of the units includes training, unit storage cabinets and signage.

It is hoped that the installation of the units can commence shortly and it is important to get a coordinated approach to the training, this will be delivered at the various locations by St Johns Ambulance qualified instructors, where the AED's are to be situated. A Defibrillation Awareness

E-learning course will also be made available to people who would like to know more and learn how to operate the AED in an emergency. It is most important that community members are confident in using the AED unit – there is no point having the device if no-one knows how to operate it.

Information supplied by the NSW Office of Sport, indicates that in NSW up to 7,000 people will experience an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest (OHCA) this year.

About a quarter of these incidents will occur outside the home and publicly available defibrillation will assist in improving the prospects of survival. The information says that the first eight (8) minutes after a person has a cardiac arrest are the most critical and early access to CPR and defibrillation can increase the likelihood of survival by up to 75%.

The units are to be located in each of the villages within the shire.

Council is very aware that the villages do not have 24 hour medical services and are between 50 to 200 kilometres from an Ambulance service. The installation of defibrillators in these rural and remote communities will provide access to immediate defibrillation.

In Bourke the units will be located at the PCYC and the Swimming Pool/ Davidson Oval whilst an additional unit will be available for events across the shire.

The proposed listing of all locations is as follows.

- Byrock
- Enngonia
- Fords Bridge
- Louth
- Wanaaring
- Bourke Swimming Pool
- Bourke PCYC/Davidson Oval
- Bourke Shire (available for events)

The initiative of the New South Wales Office of Sport was to be applauded and the Bourke Shire Council was pleased to be able combine with them in providing the AEDs across the Shire.

I was in Mudgee over the weekend and took the opportunity to attend the Charity Shield Rugby League football match between St George and South Sydney with my two (2) daughters Jaimie and Gillian and despite the result it was a great night. Mid-Western Council did a tremendous job in the promotion and organisation of the event and in preparing the facilities. The Glen Willow Complex is a credit to Mid-Western Council and no doubt there will be many high quality matches in various codes hosted in the future.

While in Mudgee I took the time to visit the Mudgee Show and noticed that Local Enngonia identity and renowned steel sculpture Tony Mallon had some success as an exhibitor in the craft section. Well done Tony!

I note that the Bourke Show has been cancelled for 2019 due to a number of reasons all of which combined made the staging of the Annual Show difficult.

It is an indicator on just how much of a grip the drought conditions have on our community and drought conditions impact not only economically but socially as well.

At the Western Division Conference Bourke Shire Council put forward thirteen (13) of the sixteen (16) motions and each of the motions submitted by Bourke were carried. Amongst the motions from Bourke was the following

From Bourke –Environmental Flow in the Barwon Darling System

That the Western Division Shires as a collective support the call for an Environmental Flow to be provided into the Barwon Darling system and that the flow be made available as soon as possible give the dire state of the river and the impact on the communities and the environment both within and along the river system

Note by Council

The dire state of the Darling River is well documented and needs no further explanation.

Council understands the complexity and risks involved in coordinating a flow as requested including the limited amount of water available and the risk of involving the potential to cause environmental damage to the native fish. A release of water from storage could lead to further fish deaths and negate the benefits of a flow.

Council is of the view that the environmental damaged caused by lack of water along the system will outweigh these risks. Council understands the need to fully evaluate the risk however, "time is our enemy" and we asked that this assessment be undertaken as a matter of urgency and that the flow be made available within a similar degree of urgency.

It would appear that the provision of an environmental flow in the Barwon Darling is still under consideration although nothing has been determined.

If a flow is to eventuate it will take a great deal of coordination and there is a need to mitigate any risks associated with such a flow and to this end a scientific analysis of these risks is being undertaken.

It has been highlighted that any flow that might be made available is unlikely to be released prior to the end of March given the weather conditions. It has also been highlighted that a flow on such a dry river bed would require much more water to achieve the same outcome that resulted from the 2018 "Northern Connectivity Event" and that there is only very limited water in the storages with the inflows dramatically reduced.

Water carting will commence this week to Byrock with the groundwater supply at Byrock is almost exhausted.

The water carted will of course have to be sourced from the bore supply once the river supply is exhausted making the commissioning of the new bore even more important.

The residents of Byrock have unfortunately had a lot of experience in managing to survive on carted water and the restrictions that go with that situation.

The compliance with water restrictions at Byrock has been commendable in previous periods where water has been carted and Council looks forward to a similar level of cooperation.

The next Ordinary Meeting of Council will be held on the 25th March 2019 commencing at 9.00 am in the Council Chambers, 29 Mitchell Street Bourke.

Bourke Shire Councillors will hold a workshop on Monday 11th March to determine which of the optional provisions of the New Code of Meeting Practice it wishes to adopt.

The Draft provided by the office of Local Government contains mandatory provisions which are required to be adopted plus other parts which Councils have the discretion to adopt or leave out of their individual Code of Meeting Practice.

The Code of Meeting Practice determines the meeting procedure for the Council Meetings of the Council and the Meetings of all Committees of Council whose membership is made up solely of Councillors.

Quote of the week!

Share your smile with the world. It's a symbol of friendship and peace. Christie Brinkley

Ross Earl

General Manager