



MEDIA RELEASE

PREVIOUS RECORD "CEASE TO FLOW" PERIOD OF 200 DAYS FOR THE DARLING RIVER AT BOURKE TO BE ECLIPSED TODAY

The Darling River at Bourke stopped flowing over the weir on 17th August 2018 and has now ceased flowing for 201 days which means it is the longest period recorded since 1944 from when accurate records are available for the current weir structure.

This is a seventy five (75) year period.

With no rain in sight and still no flow in the river this unwanted record period of "cease to flow" unfortunately likely to continue to grow.

The previous longest recorded period of "cease to flow" was during the millennium drought from September 2006 to April 2007 and this saw the river level drop to 2.58metres. The river now is already at 2.03 metres and with hot weather predicted for the next two (2) weeks it will continue to drop at a rate of around one (1) centimetre per day, although with dredging in the river taking place the readings are varying slightly.

It should also be remembered that the river received a supplementary environmental flow provided by the Northern Connectivity Event in April of last year. The Northern Connectivity Event was supported by the Commonwealth Environment Water Holder and the New South Wales Office of Environment and Heritage with the cooperation of the various state water agencies

The current extended period without a flow could have been much greater if it were not for that environmental flow being made available via the Northern Connectivity event.

Mayor of Bourke Shire Councillor Barry Hollman said that he was optimistic that an environmental flow would again be made available; however, even it was to become available it would not be released until April when the weather cools down and the flow would have a much greater chance of reaching Bourke. The flow would take at least six (6) Weeks to reach Bourke.

Councillor Hollman stressed that while he was optimistic of a flow there have certainly been no guarantees provided and we would have wait and see what decision is made following the completion of an assessment of the potential risks.

General Manager of Bourke Shire Council Ross Earl said this record "cease to flow" period provides a clear insight into just how severe the current drought is and the dramatic impacts that are being felt along the entire river system.

He added that whilst in uncharted territory it would appear that the ability to provide enough water for the pumps to be able to operate properly will cease when the river is at a level of around 1.4 metres. It is estimated that this period could be within the next 60 days and will depend on weather conditions and water usage.

Council staff are currently making plans to pump water from various up stream sections of the river into the section of the river that houses the pumps to make the water more accessible and allow pumping to continue.

End

Further Media information contact the General Manager Ross Earl 0409362307 or Manager of Works Peter Brown 04882906620.