



“From the GM’s Desk” 28th March 2019



The New South Wales State Election created a considerable amount of interest and as expected was reasonably tight with the Coalition returned and are expected to be able to have a majority in the Legislatively Assembly (Lower House) although this may take a few days to be confirmed.

Counting in the Legislative Council (Upper House) will take a little longer to complete with a number of the minor parties expected to gain a seat or two which may make for an interesting passage of legislation through the Upper House.

Locally, Roy Butler from the Shooters Farmers and Fishers Party (SFFP) has gained the seat of Barwon and another SFFP candidate, Helen Dalton, was successful in the seat of Murray meaning that the entire Far West Region will be represented by members of the SFFP.

Mayor Barry Hollman has written to Roy Butler congratulating him on his election and inviting him to Bourke

Council will look to try and arrange a meeting with Roy as soon as practical and ensure that he is aware of Council’s priorities and concerns.

It is important for the development of this area that we are able to see a continuation of the projects that have been able to be achieved over the past few years in the Bourke Shire, Local Government Area.

To stand for election for Parliamentary Office is generally a long drawn out process involving pre-selection process and then, if successful at that stage, campaigning for up to several months prior to the election. This takes a huge commitment of time energy and resources. I think it is appropriate we acknowledge the unsuccessful candidates in all electorates across the state for their commitment to the democratic process.

The drought conditions and lack of flow in the river, necessitating water restrictions has placed a number of trees and plants within Bourke and the surrounding area under extreme stress with many unlikely to recover. The issue is obviously not confined to the urban area with many trees in the rural areas also struggling.

The stresses of the dry weather conditions, has seen many large trees, along or near the river, lose large limbs.

Everyone is reminded to be aware of falling limbs and avoid parking or sitting under trees with large limbs.

Work has been completed on the new bore referred to as Bore 2B which will supplement the water currently available from Walkden's Bore and the two bores combined have the ability to provide Bourke with around 2 megalitres of water per day which is enough to meet the commercial and domestic requirements for filtered water but will not provide any water for external use.

The bore is undergoing final testing with generators and control panels to be fitted before the bore is fully operational and this work is expected to be finalised by the end of the week.

Before the filtered supply is transferred to the bore supply all residents will be notified.

It is hoped that Council will retain the ability to have a limited supply of water available for garden usage however, that will depend on river levels and the ability of Councils pumps to be able to operate at the lower river levels.

As I have said previously we are in very much uncharted territory at the moment and we are unable to rely on any previous knowledge.

The fact that the town of Bourke will have water for its domestic needs is reassuring and work will continue on the drought proofing strategy to ensure that should similar conditions arise in the future the town will be well prepared.

Council continues to make representations to the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder (CEWH) regarding the availability of an Environment Flow for the Barwon Darling River system.

The ongoing dry conditions and diminishing water supply along the Barwon Darling River system has heightened the need for environment flow in the river to ensure the environmental health of the river and the health and well-being of the communities along the river is protected.

Mayor Councillor Barry Hollman said in a recent press release that he was aware of the need for both the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder's (CHEW) Office and the various state agencies involved in the coordination of any flow to firstly undertake a risk assessment associated with the flow. This assessment will assist in determining the potential impact on the

fish population and the problems associated with potential water losses across a dry river bed and the tributaries leading from the storage to the Barwon Darling System.

He also highlighted the potential impact on both the habitat and fish population if no flow was made available and this needed to be considered along with the social and economic impact on those communities and properties along the river system.

There is widespread rain forecast over the next few days in varying amounts and hopefully this may provide enough inflow to wet the river beds and assist with the decision making process in regards to an environment flow

Bourke Shire has been advised that it has been successful in its application for funding from the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science through the Remote Airstrip Upgrade Programme for \$50,000.00 towards the resealing of the Wanaaring Airstrip.

The total cost of the project is estimated to be in excess of \$100,000.00 with the grant funding providing around 50% of that amount.

The Wanaaring Airstrip is an important asset for the people of the area who are serviced by the Royal Flying Doctor Service, both for clinics and in cases of emergency and the availability of an all- weather lighted strip is essential.

The reseal is part of Council's Asset Management Plan

As of Monday 25th March 2019 the Darling River at Bourke will have stopped flowing over the weir at Bourke for 220 days further extending the previous record created in 2006 of 200 days.

The water last stopped flowing over the weir on the 17th August 2018 and unfortunately it would appear that this record looks likely to be extended further with no significant flow anticipated locally and any rain in the catchment or any environmental flow made available likely to take six (6) weeks to traverse the dry river system to Bourke.

Our daughter Gillian, son-in-law Jean-Luc and grandchildren Pascale and Olivier were in Australia visiting from their home in Quebec, Canada over the past four weeks and it was great to be able to catch up with them in Mudgee. Annette and I enjoyed the opportunity to look after the grandchildren for a few days whilst their parents had a trip to Melbourne, whilst it kept us pretty busy and taxed our energy levels it is something we don't get a chance to do very often.

We also took the opportunity to have a bit of a family reunion during their visit with our other three children also making the trip to back to Mudgee and it was the first time in six years that we were all able to get together as a family or now as an extended family.

Plans are under way for the Bourke Easter Weekend Celebrations with the format similar to that as in previous years with the now Annual Back O Bourke Picnic Race Club meeting will again be highlighting the weekend and is to be held on Sunday 21st April 2019.

Other activities planned are a Colour Run on Good Friday, a parade and wool bale rolling on Saturday morning and an old Boys Rugby Match on the Saturday afternoon and a Sunrise Church Service and Pancake Breakfast on the Sunday morning.

A new innovation for this year will be a Blues and Blue Grass Mini festival on the afternoon of Good Friday with a number of Bands already indicating their attendance and former local artist Tonchi McIntosh will be back in Bourke for the day to perform.

The Blues Festival will be a family friendly event and forms part of the Drought Communities Fund activities.

A full programme is available at the Council offices and is also available on the Council website www.bourke.nsw.gov.au or visitbourke.com.au

To assist residents become a little more water wise Council has for distribution to residents timers so that they can gauge length of shower times. These "egg timer" like devices are able to be attached via a suction cup to the shower recess and allows for periods of four (4) minutes. While four minutes might not seem long it may surprise people how much time they take in the shower and the water usage as a result.

They are available free of charge to any residents who would like to make an attempt to conserve water.

Water carting to Byrock commenced last Saturday with the groundwater supply there exhausted. The opportunity was taken to clean the overhead tank prior to the delivery of the first load of water.

The water carted is for domestic purposes only and the use should be restricted to internal use only.

Water will need to be carted three or four times weekly

The cooperation from all residents in the frugal use of water is once again sought.

Bourke Shire Council has been working with New South Wales Public Works Advisory to improve access to State Government work by local tradespersons, contractors and suppliers. This initiative will boost economic activity in Bourke and the region. Providing work for local businesses underpins increased numbers of apprentices/trainee opportunities", Bourke General Manager, Mr Ross Earl commented.

Regional Director Riverina Western of Public Works Advisory Gavin Priestley has been working on the project that involves breaking down some of the larger State Government contracts. Large projects often rule out local contractors and result in non-local businesses bringing in staff. Apart from the money leaving town the training and development opportunities are also lost to the region.

Local tradespersons and contractors sometimes found the initial registration and compliance requirements daunting. Bourke Shire Council and NSW Public Works Advisory are committed to work with local contractors and tradespersons to assist them to "pre-qualify" for work. This step provides contractors an opportunity to submit quotations and tenders for work in our region.

NSW Public Works Advisory and Bourke Shire Council will combine to host an information night on the 9th April 2019 between 5.30pm and 8.00pm at the Back O' Bourke Conference Centre. Tradespersons, contractors, suppliers and their administration teams can find out more about the opportunities available. The evening will also provide guidance through the first steps of registration and "pre-qualification".

The information night is free of charge and local tradespersons were encouraged to register their intent to attend by contacting Mick McDowell at Bourke shire Council via email aes@bourke.nsw.gov.au or telephone 68308000

The Bourke War Memorial Swimming Pool is open until 31st March 2019 when it will close for the season.

A photographic Exhibition entitled the - Art4Ag Photography Exhibition is currently in Bourke and on display at Councils Offices.

It is a body of work developed to celebrate our farmers and National Ag Day.

Featuring images from 18 farmers and locals across the Far West region, each exploring their interpretation of Australian agriculture and its farmers.

The exhibition explores the theme of #growforgood within the industry.

The display is free of charge at the Bourke Shire Council Chambers.

The display was to conclude on Thursday 28th March 2019, however, it will remain open for an additional day Friday 29th March 2019 to give those who have yet to have the opportunity to see the exhibition to visit.

This is a project involving Outback Arts, Bourke Arts Council and Bourke Shire Council

At the Western Division Conference held in Bourke last month the elections for Officer bearers were held and Councillor Leigh Byron of Balranald Shire was elected President, with Councillor Dave Gallagher of Broken Hill City Council Vice president whilst Marion Brown of Broken Hill and Councillor Greg Evans of Wentworth Shire filling to the other two (2) executive positions.

Leigh has previously been the Chair of Western Division and is keen to see the organisation reinvigorated as a powerful and respected lobby group. There will be a mid-year meeting of Western Division at Cobar in June and the next Annual Conference is scheduled to be held in Broken Hill in February 2020

The Bourke Senior Citizens weeks commences this Sunday 31st March 2019 with a luncheon at Renshaw Oval Pavilion hosted by Bourke Shire Council and Bourke CWA. The function will commence at 12.30pm. RSVPs are due by 10.00am on Thursday 28th March 2019 but if you had forgotten if you notify the Council offices by lunch time Friday I am sure that we will be able to cater for you.

Seniors week across New South Wales is held in February but with the hot weather experienced in this part of the state the decision was made to hold it when the weather will hopefully be a little cooler.

Activities are planned for everyday next week with the exception of Saturday 6th April which has been left as a rest day and the senior's Week will wrap up on Sunday 7th April with a barbeque lunch hosted by Bourke Rotary Club and Bourke Shire Council.

All activities are provide free of charge and all seniors are encouraged to participate and any queries can be directed to Leticia Tiffen on 0439566118,

The full programme is available on the Council website www.bourke.nsw.gov.au

or a hard copy can be made available by contacting the Council on 0268308000.

Quote of the week!

"Well done is better than well said". Benjamin Franklin

Ross Earl

General Manager