



“FROM THE GM’S DESK”

11TH APRIL 2019



As the river continues to fall there is a strong possibility that Bourke will be reliant on bore water for its filtered water supply for domestic and commercial purposes within weeks.

Council has been actively preparing for this scenario over the past few months and is confident that there will be sufficient water available from Walkden’s and Stoney Rise Bores to meet the needs of the community. Council has been utilising water from Walkden’s Bore to both supplement supply and to assist in maintaining water quality.

Bourke Shire Council wishes to advise that the water coming from Walkden’s Bore and the new Stoney Rise Bore is safe to drink and poses no risk to health.

Bourke Shire Council acknowledges that the sodium (salt) level in the water is higher than desired. Recent testing of the bores shows that the sodium concentrations range from 289 mg/L to 353 mg/L. The Australian Drinking Water Guidelines gives a value of 180 mg/L as the concentration at which people are likely to taste sodium in their drinking water.

NSW Health confirms that the water is safe to drink, but Council appreciates that people may be concerned about the taste of the water.

Chilling your drinking water can help reduce the salty taste.

Anyone who may be concerned about sodium in the water and their diet should talk to their doctor for specific advice. NSW Health has given information to doctors about patients who may need special attention because of the extra sodium in the drinking water. These are pregnant women, and people with advanced kidney disease, poorly controlled high blood pressure, diagnosed heart failure and others who are on a low salt diet.

Far West - Algal Coordinating Committee (FW-RACC) have released their latest Blue-green Algae Report.

Advices applicable to this area are as follows

Darling River at Brewarrina is on Red Alert. Algae numbers are reducing. Another low result is required to lift the Red Alert. The dominant Algae detected are not known to be toxin producers.

Darling River at Rose Isle is on Red Alert. Applicable for areas between Louth and Bourke. The dominate algae species is not known to be toxic.

The Darling River at Wilcannia and Trevallyn and Caulpaulin are on Red Alert. Water users should apply extreme caution in this section of the river. Very high concentration detected.

Darling River at Caulpaulin is on Red Alert. The algae numbers detected are very high, domestic users along this section of the Darling River should seek alternate water supplies. This water should not be used for stock watering and it is recommended that stock access be restricted to the river as the algae species detected is known to be potentially toxic.

Barwon River at Collarenebri is on Amber Alert.

Darling River at Bourke Boat Ramp is on Amber Alert.

Darling River at Tilpa and Louth are on Amber Alert.

If you have concerns in relation to the water supply you should contact
WaterNSW Algal Website

<http://www.waternsw.com.au/water-quality/algae>

Or Call

NSW algae hotline 1800 999 457

ANZAC Day is only two (2) weeks away and the local RSL sub-branch has again planned the ceremonies in Bourke whilst other ceremonies will be held across the Shire.

The Dawn Service at Bourke to begin at 6.00am on 25th April with attendees asked to be at the Cenotaph at 5.50am.

The main ANZAC Day Service in Bourke will start at 11.00am on the day and those who intend to march are asked to assemble at 10.30am outside Diggers on the Darling.

There will be changed traffic conditions for the march in both Oxley Street and Richard Street and residents are asked to be mindful of these changed conditions.

The Enngonia Service will be held at 5.00pm on ANZAC Day with the contact person being Greg Oates on 68747577

Louth have for some time now conducted a dusk ANZAC Commemoration Service and it will again be held this year starting at 5.00pm. For details in relation to the service you can contact Jane Murray on 68747401

As of Monday, 8th April 2019 the Darling River at Bourke will have stopped flowing over the weir at Bourke for 235 days further extending the previous record created in 2006 of 200 days.

A team from A Current Affair visited Bourke last week to highlight the plight of those living along the Darling and the impact on the river of the current drought conditions. The story went to air on Thursday, 4th April 2019 and for those who may have missed it can be accessed at <https://www.9now.com.au/a-current-affair/2019/clip-cju2dyhwc000q0gof6dgqbx2v>

Water issues are the major topic of conversation around Bourke at the moment with everyone extremely concerned about the extended drought conditions that we are experiencing and the degree of uncertainty that the immediate future holds in relation to the supply of water for other than domestic use.

The impact on the rural community has been significant with many farmers having to reduce stock numbers.

The rainfall to date for 2019 is only 24.4 millimetres or about 1 inch in the old scale which is less than 20% of the average rainfall for the same period.

In 2018 the rainfall for the period to April was 49.4 millimetres.

Residents at Wanaaring are advised that on the 30th April 2019 there is a scheduled power outage between the hours of 8.45pm and 2.45pm to allow Essential Energy Crews and Contractors to safely undertake improvements to the electricity network in the area.

The Water Supply at Wanaaring is run by electricity and to ensure that an adequate supply remains in the overhead supply tanks during the power outage period all residents are asked to minimise their water consumption.

With the cooler weather this should not pose any real issues.

Planning for the Easter weekend is in full swing with the programme now close to being finalised and has been widely circulated.

As part of the now Annual Easter Festivities in Bourke the Wool Bale Rolling Competition and the Parade will once again be held.

If you are thinking of entering a float into the parade or the wool bale rolling please contact Jodi Sontag at the Back O' Bourke Exhibition Centre who will provide you with all the details and any requirement for registration.

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

If there is something that you would like to see included in the program please Contact Jodi at the Back O' Bourke Exhibition Centre 68721321 so that it can be included in any further prints of the program and included in the online versions.

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 assist in conserving water.

Water carting to Byrock continues and I would again ask the residents of Byrock for their cooperation in conserving consumption and utilise the water for internal domestic purposes only.

Council has received a number of enquiries for carting to properties over the past few days as the supplies on many properties runs out.

NSW Public Works Advisory and Bourke Shire Council combined to host an information night on the 9th April 2019 at the Back O' Bourke Conference Centre. Tradespersons, contractors, suppliers and their administration teams were able to find out more about the opportunities available by ensuring that they were registered to access the Government Contracts. The evening will also provide guidance through the first steps of registration and "pre-qualification".

Mick McDowell the Senior Project Officer from the Bourke Aboriginal Employment Prosperity Strategy with Bourke Shire Council can provide additional information if anyone was unable to attend. Mick he can be contacted via email aes@bourke.nsw.gov.au or telephone 68308000

The final function for Bourke Seniors Citizens Week 2019 was held at Renshaw Oval Pavilion hosted by Bourke Rotary Club in Association with Bourke Shire Council and once again went well and also well attended.

The week went well and all seniors were very appreciative of the functions that were hosted on their behalf and I would like to say a big thank you to all those who assisted in any way to make the week a success.

Bourke Shire Council hosted the 2019 Annual Conference of the Environmental Development and Allied Professionals (EDAP) Conference last week and it was a great success with a number of positive comments in relation to the Back O' Bourke Conference Centre, and Bourke more generally, being received.

Mayor, Councillor Barry Hollman provided a welcome address at the start of the Conference and delegates had the opportunity to listen and learn from a number of excellent speakers as well as further develop their networks.

Well done to Dwayne Willoughby, Manager of Environment Services who both coordinated the bid to host the Conference and undertook the bulk of the arrangements.

Bourke's Ain't Caught Nothing Yet Fishing Club led by President Steve Coyne provided a camp oven dinner for the Conference on the Thursday night and the EDAP Committee provided a donation of \$500.00 to assist the Club undertake further restocking of the river.

As with the Western Division Conference last month accommodation in Bourke was at a premium and all accommodation providers welcoming additional bed nights that the conferences provided.

All attendees were very complimentary of the Conference and the hospitality shown to them by the people of Bourke and in a number of cases delegates indicated their intention to return with their families.

As mentioned last week the good rainfall across Queensland and some parts of New South Wales over the past two (2) weeks have resulted in some good flows within the river systems, however, there has been no significant inflows into the storage dams and the larger river systems.

It is anticipated that there should be a flow into the Darling River above Louth from the Warrego. However, as the flow moves slowly south a considerable amount has apparently gone outside the normal river channel and the extremely dry river bed has seen much of the flow absorbed and these two (2) issues may result a reduction of the anticipated flows.

There was also the expectation that water from the Nebine in Queensland would flow into the Culgoa and then into the Darling, however, once again the dry conditions have served to reduce the available flow.

The positive of course is that a considerable amount of the river courses are now wet and any further rain should result in the increased possibility of a flow.

Council continues to seek the provision of an Environmental Flow mindful of course that there is limited availability of water held in storage for this purpose. Council is mindful of the environmental damage that will continue to be incurred with a dry river and the impact on the fish population and habitat.

There would be obvious benefits for all communities along the river as well as landowners who utilise the water from the river for stock and domestic purposes, if a flow was made available.

Council would appreciate the notification of any incidence of dangerous situations involving Council owned or controlled facilities by contacting Council during office hours on 026830800 or if the situation is afterhours and is viewed to require emergency response because it poses a high degree of risk of an accident or injury occurring then the concern should be relayed via Councils Duty Officer on 0419722055.

Bourke Shire Council's Draft Operational Plan (Budget) for 2018/2019 is currently on display with submissions in relation to the Operational Plan able to be lodged any time during the display period which concludes on the 10th May 2019.

Council will consider the Draft Operational Plan for 2019/2020 and any submissions received in respect of the Plan at its Ordinary meeting of Council to be held on the 27th May 2019 prior to its adoption at that meeting.

The next meeting of the committee of Regional Development Australia – Orana (RDA-Orana) will be held in Bourke on Monday, 15th April 2019.

Bourke Shire Council will be hosting a small welcome function for members of the Committee who are drawn from across the Orana Region. The function will be held at the Back O' Bourke Exhibition Centre and it is intended that some of the Local businesses representatives will also attend and have the opportunity to find out a little more about the operation of RDA-Orana

With the winter sports about to start and training in full swing it is important that all sporting clubs book their game days in accordance with the competition draw and any training requirement with Councils Engineering Support Officer, Lynette Gooch. This will assist in reducing the possibility of clashes and also allow Council to ensure that the grounds are prepared in accordance with requirements and also allow maintenance to take place.

All users/residents are asked to respect the bookings of others and if you don't have a booking please don't utilise the ovals when those who have a booking are doing so.

The new lighting facilities at both Coolican and Davidson Ovals will assist in scheduling training and will also ensure that the usage is spread a little more evenly.

The next Ordinary Meeting of Council will be held on Monday, 29th April 2019 commencing at 9.00am. The scheduled meeting date of the 22nd April is of course Easter Monday.

From 1 July 2019, there will be significant changes to the structure of the NSW public service, most importantly, from a Local Government perspective is that the Office of Local Government and the Office of Environment and Heritage will be abolished and their functions absorbed into a new Planning and Industry Department, with Heritage and Arts going to the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

From 1st July 2019 the responsibilities of the Chief Executive of the Office of Local Government and the Chief Executive of the Office of Environment and Heritage will be transferred to the Secretary of Planning and Industry, Jim Betts.

Best Wishes to Councillor Victor Bartley who is recovering from heart surgery in Sydney.

I spoke to Victor over the weekend and he is doing well and looking forward to returning home.

Quote of the week!

Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope and confidence - Helen Keller

Ross Earl
General Manager