



# “FROM THE GM’S DESK”

## 30<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2019



Water restrictions in Bourke and North Bourke have reverted from Level Five (5) to Level Three (3).

This change was effective from 4.00pm, Monday, 27<sup>th</sup> May 2019.

The weir pool is now re-filling due to inflows from the Culgoa River. This inflow is good news for Bourke and North Bourke’s town water supply and for stock and domestic users. It is still unclear as to how much water will be received into the Bourke weir pool, but it is anticipated that it will continue to slowly rise.

The use of fixed sprinklers continues to be prohibited.

Hand held hoses can, however, now be used for two (2) hours per day only at each property.

These restrictions apply to both filtered and raw water supplies.

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The Flow into the Darling River and then into the Bourke Weir Pool was welcomed by the Bourke Community with many people travelling to the boat ramp and weir to watch the water breach the bank at that location and move further downstream for the first time in over nine (9) months.

Whilst there are some photos mirroring the situation when the river was at record lows it appears that there was no-one within the community who could personally recall the river being so low and the ongoing water supply to Bourke under such critical threat.

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As of Tuesday, 28<sup>th</sup> May 2019, the Darling River will have stopped flowing over the weir at Bourke for 285 days, far exceeding the previous record created in 2006 of 200 days.

The recent rain that has resulted in the Culgoa flowing well and hopefully we may see this record period come to an end very shortly.

A reminder that water restrictions are in place in Bourke and North Bourke and the exact level of those restrictions will vary according to the inflow into the River.

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There is a strong degree of optimism that more water from the Culgoa will flow into the Darling River and make its way into the Bourke Weir Pool.

It is however, anticipated that the flows will be slow in coming.

The Environmental flow both Copeton and Glenlyon Dams is gradually making its way down stream and the water from Glenlyon which was released into the Mehi River has reached Collarenebri.

The low river levels and dry river beds have combined to make it difficult to predict how far the water will get but there is a strong degree of optimism that it will get to at least Brewarrina, and hopefully beyond.

Once the water from the Environmental Flow reaches the Barwon, the opportunity will present itself for a much more accurate prediction to take place.

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The supply of water for domestic purposes may have improved in Bourke but, we are certainly a long way from having desirable flows into the Barwon Darling System and a considerable amount of rain will be required in the catchment if we are to achieve these much needed flows

The construction of the bores has given the town of Bourke increased security but those who are relying on water for irrigation are still relying on the rain in the catchment becoming available.

The drought conditions are wide spread and right across New South Wales. There are communities experiencing significant hardship. Regionally, the low level of available water in Burrendong Dam has triggered some concern for those communities reliant of water from this source including Dubbo.

In a positive for the Far West of the State there is still a strong flow in sections of the Warrego this has meant equally strong flows in the Darling at Louth and beyond.

Hopefully this water will get to Wilcannia and provide that community with the additional water that they need.

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Council adopted the 2019/2020 Operational Plan (Budget) at its Ordinary Meeting of Council held on Monday, 27<sup>th</sup> May 2019.

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Arrangements for this year's Tour de OROC are progressing and the riders will enjoy an overnight stay in Bourke on the 9<sup>th</sup> October 2019.

Bourke Shire Council and Bourke Rotary will combine to host the riders in Bourke and will be responsible for dinner, bed and breakfast. There are a number of people from the Bourke district who have already experienced the benefits of Macquarie Homestay which will be the beneficiary of all funds raised by Tour de OROC.

A fund raiser will be held at the Port of Bourke Hotel will some great prizes to be auctioned. All these items have been made available for the fund raising efforts by Luke Moon, Publican of the Port of Bourke.

As an indication of the amount of coordination that goes into an event such as this, Chair of the organising Committee, Mathew Dickerson has a weekly meeting of the committee in Dubbo with members of the committee from outside Dubbo including myself joining via teleconference. The meetings are to ensure the route including stopovers is determined, required permissions obtained and matters such as catering and accommodation are organised.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> June, Mathew will be accompanied by committee members Ashley Wielinga and Paul Loxley who will drive the route to ensure that everything is in place prior to the advertising and promotion commencing.

Toyota have once again agreed to be the major sponsor of the event in association with Dubbo City Toyota.

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Council adopted a new Code of Meeting Practice at its meeting held on Monday, 27<sup>th</sup> May 2019 and it will become effective at the next meeting to be held in June 2019. Council has up until the 14<sup>th</sup> December 2019 to determine how it will meet its obligation to webcast the meetings, noting of course that the placing of an audio recording of the meeting will satisfy the requirement.

Options to meet the requirement in relation to webcasting are currently being investigated.

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A reminder that the final instalment of the 2018/2019 Rates and the last Water Charges are due this Friday, 31<sup>st</sup> May 2019.

If you are having difficulties in meeting your obligations in relation to the payment of Rates and Water Charges please contact Council's Revenue Officer who may be able to discuss the implementation of a payment plan.

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I have been notified that the Unit Commander of the Bourke State Emergency Services (SES), Steve Walsh has indicated to the NSW SES Commissioner of his intention to relinquish his role as Unit Commander at Bourke effective as of 30<sup>th</sup> June 2019.

Steve has held the role for 22 years and has given great service to the community of Bourke during that time and has earned the respect of those within the SES and other emergency services. During this time his dedication and commitment and ability to work collaboratively with these other agencies for the betterment of the town.

From a personal point of view I would like to thank Steve for his assistance and cooperation during my tenure in Bourke where I also act as Chair of the Local Emergency Management Committee. Steve was a great supporter and contributor to that committee and always made himself available.

Much of the work undertaken by our volunteer organisations, including the SES and Rural Fire Service, goes relatively unnoticed by the general public who only really see what those organisations do when an emergency situation arises. However, each of the volunteers are required to obtain accreditation, attending regular training sessions and participate in planned exercises so that they are adequately prepared for those emergency situations.

While Steve will relinquish his leadership role he will retain active membership of the SES unit and continue to support the Bourke community.

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I attended a meeting of the General Managers of The Far North West Joint Organisation of Councils and the Orana Joint Organisation of Councils at Warren last Friday to discuss issues of mutual concern.

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Many trees in and around Bourke suffered during the drought and unfortunately it would appear that many have already died or are unlikely to survive; which is a clear demonstration on just how severe the drought has been.

Council has had an arborist look at the street trees and also trees within the parks in town to try and determine which ones will need to be removed and which ones have the potential to be revived.

Unfortunately amongst those unlikely to survive are some very large trees.

Those street trees needing to be replaced will be replaced with trees identified in the Street Trees Master Plan.

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There have been a number of positive comments received in relation to the improved facilities across the shire which have been funded by a combination of the Building Stronger Communities Fund, the Drought Communities Extension Fund and by other grants obtained by Council and of course Councils other revenue sources.

The revitalisation of Central Park continues as it becomes a focal point of recreation for the community.

The new shade sails over the skate park will increase their ability to be used particularly during the hot weather, the half -court basketball/netball court is receiving good use as are both the exercise equipment and the playground equipment.

The new fence around the tennis court has made a huge difference and work will commence on the refurbishment of the tennis club house in the near future.

The toilet complex for Central park should be in place by the end of June.

It is also proposed to undertake some work on the improvements to "Poets Corner" which reflects a great deal of Bourke's history.

There is an ongoing emphasis on the consolidating and improvement of council's existing assets including active and passive parks.

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In addition to the Bourke Skate Park receiving new shade sails, the contractors have also visited some of the villages and have erected shade sails over the playground equipment at Louth and Enngonia.

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While on parks, work will commence on the establishment of the amphitheatre at Darling Park at the corner of Mitchell and Sturt Streets which is part of the CBD redevelopment and will provide an ideal location for outside performances.

There will be some disruption to pedestrian access around that area whilst the works are being undertaken.

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The 2019 Graffiti Removal Day is scheduled for Sunday, 27<sup>th</sup> October 2019. Bourke Shire will again be working with Bourke Rotary Club in relation to the coordination of the day. The state wide initiative has attracted a great deal of corporate sponsorship including the supply of graffiti removal kits free of charge so that all that is needed is for the manpower. Individuals and Organisations within the community are asked to consider assisting on the day.

The aim of Graffiti Removal Day is to highlight the problem of graffiti across NSW and encourage people to volunteer to remove and prevent graffiti. Graffiti vandalism costs the NSW Government and residents more than \$300 million every year and it has to stop.

The results speak for themselves:-

- Since its inception in 2012, the number of GRD volunteers has increased from 597 to over 1800 in 2017.
- In its first year, 100 sites were nominated. In 2017 volunteers removed graffiti from 428 nominated sites.

Over the past couple of years the participation in the day has been relatively low and it is hoped that with adequate notice the opportunity may be available to get a much greater involvement.

So if you can mark the date of the Graffiti Removal Day down in your diary it would be a good start.

While individuals are very welcome to attend and assist in the effort to remove this unwanted form of vandalism the day also presents the opportunity for sporting groups to get together to ensure that the facilities they utilise is free from graffiti.

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*Quote of the week!*

*"No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted."*

*Aesop*

Ross Earl  
General Manager