



“FROM THE GM’S DESK”

13TH JUNE 2019



The level in weir pool continues to rise as a result of inflows from the Culgoa River and it is anticipated that it will continue to slowly rise over the next couple of weeks.

The Culgoa is still flowing up near the border which is good news as this water will make its way south.

As at Monday lunchtime the height of the river at Bourke was 2.95 metres which is a rise of over a metre from its lowest level but still a metre away from topping the weir.

Level three (3) water restrictions are still in place.

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.

Once the water level increases to 3 metres the level of restrictions will be reviewed in conjunction with forecast inflows and weather predictions.

As of Wednesday, 12th June 2019, the Darling River will have stopped flowing over the weir at Bourke for 300 days or about 10 months. This period would have been well in excess of 12 months had it not being for the Environmental flow dubbed the Northern Connectivity Event which was made available in the early 2018.

The Environmental flow from both Copeton and Glenlyon Dams is gradually making its way towards Walgett.

The dry river beds continue 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 we are hopeful that the flow will reach Bourke.

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

The Mayor and I attended the Extraordinary Meeting of The Far North West Joint Organisation of Councils (FNWJO) held at Dubbo last Friday.

The meeting was convened to progress the procurement process for the provision of air services to the far North West of the state.

The Board of FMWJO considered seven (7) options and has narrowed these options to a point where the JO can now enter into specific contract negotiations.

Final contract negotiations will proceed with a view to a determination by the FNWJO in the next three (3) weeks.

The NSW Government has provided significant funding to see the return of air services to the far North West and the FNWJO is most appreciative of the Government's commitment.

The trip to Dubbo for the Meeting of the FNWJO meant that I had three (3) days in Dubbo last Week having also attended the Board Meeting of The Regional Development Australia on the Monday and then the Cross Sector Leadership Group on the Tuesday.

While in Dubbo Annette and I caught up with former Bourke residents Fizza, Prakash and Nabeera Khan who moved from Bourke to Dubbo and have now moved to Melbourne.

The Khans were back in Dubbo to participate in their Australian Citizenship ceremony which was conducted on the Wednesday.

They are all now extremely proud Australian Citizens.

They asked to be remembered to their friends in Bourke.

The next of Bourke Shire Council will be held on the 24th June 2019 and will commence at 9.15am with the meeting to be preceded by a Public Forum during which members of the public are able to speak to items on the agenda.

Council has previously conducted a Public Forum at 10.00am each meeting day, however, with the changes to the Code of Meeting Practice this opportunity will no longer be available with presentations being limited to items on the agenda. However, anyone who wishes to raise a matter can make an appointment to speak with the relevant Manager or if necessary the Mayor.

Whilst unable to be at Hungerford due to Meeting of the Far North West Joint Organisation of Councils held in Dubbo I understand that the Field Day was a great success and that the organising committee did a tremendous job in attracting exhibitors and providing entertainment.

I had some good comments on the condition of the road which Council staff try and ensure is in good condition for the crowds making their way to the Field Day.

Last Friday and Saturday Bourke Shire Council hosted the Deputy Premier of New South Wales, the Hon. John Barilaro, MP and the State Treasurer, the Hon. Domenic Perrottet, MP.

On the Friday evening the Deputy Premier and Treasurer joined the Mayor and available Councillors for dinner at Diggers on the Darling.

On Saturday Morning Council hosted a breakfast meeting and it was attended by Councillors staff and members of the community. At this meeting the Deputy Premier and Treasurer announced the allocation of \$1.4 million in funding which will be primarily be used to provide an upgrading of the displays and facilities at the Back O' Bourke Exhibition Centre, whilst part of the funding will be allocated to the restoration of the North Bourke Bridge, Poets Corner in Central Park and also the other funding will provided to upgrade the boarding area for the PV Jandra and Signage around town.

There was a Q&A sessions with both the Deputy Premier and Treasurer giving freely of their time to answers a range of questions.

Following the Tourism Funding Announcement those in attendance were invited to join the Premier and Treasurer at the Old North Bourke Packing Shed where they announced that the 2019/2020 State Budget would see the inclusion of \$37.5 million for the improvement to the Wild Dog Exclusion Fence that will see an additional 742 kilometres of fencing constructed.

The funding recognises the significant damage caused by wild dogs and the impact of the economy of the farming sector.

Many of the community members present had a strong interest in Wild Dog Control and the announcement was very welcome.

This huge funding announcement comes on top of the funding of \$926,000 recently received under the *Communities Combating Pest and Weed Impacts during Drought Program* to assist in addressing the wild dog problem in the western area of the state.

Working with the Western Local Lands Services the Shires of Bourke, Brewarrina, Wentworth, Cobar, Central Darling and Broken Hill City Council combined to lodge that successful application which will be auspiced by Bourke Shire Council as the lead Council.

The Hon. David Littleproud, MP, Minister for Water Resources, Drought, Rural Finance Natural Disaster and Emergency Management, visited Bourke on Tuesday along with our Local Member, the Hon. Mark Coulton, MP, Member for Parkes, Minister for Regional Services, Decentralisation and Local Government and Assistant Trade and Investment Minister.

The two (2) Ministers met with council and other, members of the Community around the issues created by the ongoing drought.

The issue of Water is of paramount concern for the residents of this area and we have been lucky enough to have had both the State and Federal Ministers for Water visit Bourke over the past few weeks to hear the community concerns.

The new sails over the Skate Park certainly add to the colour and presentation of the area and have received quite a bit of favourable comment. The whole Central Park precinct seems much more vibrant and is being increasingly utilised.

There is still some work to be done on the Tennis Clubhouse and then the installation of the new toilets. Once these works are finalised the area will be further improved.

Work in the Main Street continues to go well and I know that many members of the community are looking forward to an increased flow in the river and an end of water restrictions which will not only have a positive impact on the private gardens around town but also allow Council the opportunity to be able to plant in the gardens plots that have been formed as part of the redevelopment of the Main Street.

Organiser of the 2019 Tour de OROC Mathew Dickerson was accompanied by Ex- Bourke resident Ashley Wielinga last Friday in travelling around much of the route to be covered by this year's event to ensure that the times and locations of stopovers and rest breaks was able to be finalised. As I have previously mentioned there is a lot of planning that goes into the staging of an event such as Tour de OROC.

The visit to Bourke by the Deputy Premier, the Hon. John Barilaro, MP and the Treasurer, the Hon. Domenic Perrottet, MP was well covered by the Sydney media with a double page spread appearing in the Saturday edition of the Daily Telegraph, coupled with the lead article in that days Editorial.

In addition to the print media coverage a television crew also accompanied the two (2) NSW Senior Cabinet Members on their trip to the Far North West area of the State.

In addition to Bourke they also visited both Lightning Ridge and Cobar.

A meeting of the Barwon Darling Surface Water Stakeholder Advisory Panel will be held this Thursday 13th June 2019 at Diggers on the Darling. Bourke Shire is represented on the Panel which meets regularly to discuss issues related to the Barwon Darling System. It brings together a wide range of representation including Local Government the farming community and various Government agencies.

Local Government New South Wales have been in consultation with the NSW Minister for Regional Roads and Transport, the Hon. Paul Toole, MP, to see if he would allow LGNSW join him in approving the members and terms of reference for his Road Classification Review.

The State Government have a commitment to this review, which will ask councils about which local roads councils want to hand back to the State – and which they want to keep – as part of the government's promise to take back 15,000km of local roads to reduce cost-shifting impacts.

In his visit to Bourke last week The Deputy Premier also highlighted the fact that Government intends to take back the 15,000 kilometres of road and from Bourke Shire Councils perspective there could be some considerable change depending on which roads are selected.

Bourke Shire Council will be the first Council in Far West New South Wales and one (1) of the first in Regional New South Wales to have prepared what is known as Local Strategic Planning Statements (LSPS). Manager of Planning and Environment at Bourke Shire Council, Dwayne Willoughby and Planning Assessment Officer, Carolyn Crain have been working closely with New South Wales Department of Planning to formulate the document.

The new Minister for Local Government the Hon. Shelley Hancock, MP introduced *Local Government (Amendment) Bill 2019* last week that will provide some legislative changes for Councils. Included in these changes will be amendments to:-

- raise the threshold value for council tendering arrangements to \$250,000
 - allow some functions to be shared or delegated by agreement to fellow councils, that may be better resourced or have particular expertise
 - Extend the cut-off dates by which councils need to decide whether to outsource administration of the 2020 local government elections to the Electoral Commission.
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Congratulations to Maxine Mackay OAM whose award was announced in the 2019 Queen's Birthday Honours list earlier in the week.

Maxine has done a lot of work within the Bourke Community and in particularly with the children of the town and it is great to see her work recognised.

Congratulations to Greg Moore who was the recipient of the Police Service Medal which was also announced in the Queen's Birthday Honours List.

Greg has made a tremendous contribution to Bourke and the Central North Police District.

The Bourke town water supply reverted to back to total river supply last week with the height in the weir pool gradually increasing providing a surety of supply for the short term with the cooler winter conditions reduced level of evaporation.

The bores and pipelines which have been constructed have provided a degree of confidence that the water supply for the town of Bourke can be maintained should we be faced with the severe shortages in the supply from the river system.

There is still some work to be undertaken to increase the capacity of the pipelines and this will be undertaken as soon as practical.

The Council and the community is extremely grateful for the funding which has been made available by the State Government to "drought proof" the town.

Bourke Shire Council has been advised that Round 4 of the Mobile Black Spot Program will see 180 new mobile base stations to address coverage issues in regional and remote Australia with Telstra being responsible for the delivery of 131 of those sites.

Included in the new sites are Enngonia and Yantabulla (Naree Station) within Bourke Shire while the township of Tilpa is also included.

It is hoped that the first of the stations will be constructed in the second half of this year.

Representatives of Downer EDI who will be undertaking the work will be discussing the issues relating to the construction of the new towers from an approvals point of view with Council over the next few weeks.

Council has lobbied hard for improvements to the mobile coverage and will continue to do so. The erection of the proposed towers will be a positive step forward and very welcome by both the residents of the areas and the travelling public.

Quote of the week!

"The quality of your life ultimately is shaped by the quality of your choices and decisions".

Robin Sharma

Ross Earl
General Manager