



“FROM THE GM’S DESK”

20TH JUNE 2019



The level in the 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.

As of Thursday, 13th June 2019 the river height was 3.0 meters.

As a result of the increased river height residents of Bourke and North Bourke are advised that we have reverted to Level 2 Water Restrictions effective on midday, Friday, 14th June,

- The use of fixed sprinklers is limited to one (1) hour per day either between the hours of 7.00am to 8.00am or 7.00pm to 8.00pm daily.
- Hand held hoses can still be used at other times.
- The washing of paved areas and filling of new swimming pools is prohibited in accordance with Councils adopted policy.

Water restrictions will also apply to watering of public parks, recreational areas and sporting ovals and where possible the hours will be varied from residential allocated periods to ensure, as far as possible, water pressure is maintained for all residents during the times allowed for watering under the restrictions.

Council introduced Level Three (3) Water Restrictions on the 24th December 2018 and then went progressively to Levels Four (4) and Five (5) so it has been almost six (6) months since residents had been able to utilise sprinklers.

I would remind all residents that we are in a period of extreme drought with the relief only being made available from the rainfall that allowed the Paroo, Culgoa and Warrego Rivers to flow.

The Culgoa comes into the Darling at Warraweena.

I encourage all residents to utilise water wisely and treat it as the favourable and finite resource that it is and where possible conserve water.

As of Tuesday, 18th June 2019, the Darling River will have stopped flowing over the weir at Bourke for 305 days

The Environmental flow from both Copeton and Glenlyon Dams is gradually making its way south, having reached Walgett and topped the weir there on the 12th June 2019 giving Walgett some security of water for the next couple of months.

The Fish Flow as the flow has been called will importantly ensue that the fish stocks are able to survive and this is the primary purpose of the flow.

There has been over 400 megalitres going past Walgett for the past week which is great news indeed for those people along that stretch of the river.

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, we are hopeful that the flow will reach Bourke, although current indications are that this won't be the case.

As the flow makes its way down the system we will get a much clearer picture of just how far it will get and the benefits that will be derived.

The next Ordinary Meeting of Bourke Shire Council will be held on Monday, 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.

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. 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.

I mentioned in last week's column that Bourke Shire Council will be the first Council in Far West New South Wales and one of the first in Regional New South Wales to have prepared what is known as Local Strategic Planning Statements (LSPS).

I thought it may be advantageous if a little more detail was provided on what a LSPS is designed to achieve.

The Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) sets the framework for the economic, social and environmental land use needs over the next 20 years. The 20 year vision for land use in the local area will be set out with the special character and values that are to be preserved and how change will be managed into the future. The LSPS will implement actions in the regional and district plans, and the

Councils own priorities in the community strategic plan. The LSPS gives effect to the Far Western Regional Plan, implementing directions and actions at a local level. The LSPS planning priorities, directions and actions provide the rationale for decisions about how Council will use the land to achieve the community's broader goals.

The Bourke Public Library holds a large collection of historical information including the WJC Collection, ARB Collection, History of Bourke volumes and Cemetery information. For those who are interested in family history the Library offers a history research service. A \$60 fee is charged for this service, however the first half hour is free. Please contact the Library for further information.

The Hon. Adam Marshall, MP, Minister Agriculture and Minister for Western New South Wales was in Bourke last week to meet with Local Landowners to provide details in relation to the New South Governments recently announced Drought Package.

This was Minister Marshall's second visit to Bourke since assuming his new responsibility as both Minister for Agriculture and Minister for Western New South Wales and we look forward to meeting up with him when he next visits.

I had the opportunity to catch up briefly with Adam and look forward to working with him in particular in his role as Minister for Western New South Wales.

Last week I took part in a Meeting of the Critical Water Advisory Panel which brings together a wide cross section of stakeholders involved in water issues across the state including, Department of Industry Water, Department of Industry Communications and Engagement, Water NSW, New South Wales Environmental Protection Authority, Office of Environment and Heritage, Health New South Wales, Local Land Services, Department of Premier and Cabinet together with representatives of Local Councils.

I represented the Far North West Organisation of Councils at the meeting which held via teleconference.

The meeting was split in sessions with an initial session looking at state wide issues, then smaller groups to focus on particular location and in our case the Barwon Darling system.

The meeting focuses on the situation of extreme water shortages across the state and strategies that can be put in place to minimise the impact of the critical water shortages and how best to manage the water resources that are available.

Whilst the situation in Bourke has improved dramatically with the inflows from the Culgoa and the area to the South of Bourke, below the junction with the Warrego have benefitted from those flows there are still areas above Bourke and immediately below which haven't had a flow and those persons along these areas are desperate for water in some instances.

The forecast for a drier and warmer winter does not provide any level of confidence that the drought conditions will abate in the short term and the recent flows will only provide temporary relief.

The Government agencies are working proactively to identify possible impacts and to try and minimise or mitigate these impacts.

During his visit to Bourke last week the Hon. David Littleproud, MP, Minister for Water Resources, Drought, Rural Finance, Natural Disaster and Emergency Management indicated that the visit was his first to Bourke but certainly would not be his last and he hoped to return shortly and Council issued an invitation to him to do just that and our preparedness to assist in the coordination of any future visits.

Minister Littleproud in the Member for Maranoa which lies immediately above the Queensland border and takes in a large area as does the electorate of Parkes which is the electorate in which Bourke sits.

The huge areas they have within their individual electorates coupled with their Ministerial responsibilities certainly ensures that both Minister Littleproud and our Member, the Hon. Mark Coulton, MP, Member for Parkes, Minister for Regional Services, Decentralisation and Local Government and Assistant Trade and Investment Minister are kept very busy and we were indeed fortunate to have them both in Bourke last week.

The main street crew is producing excellent volumes of paving on a daily basis, it is good to see that we are nearing the end of the paving phase of the project.

Well done to the entire crew for their hard work and diligence to what has been a sizable project and a big thankyou to the public for their patience and understanding during the construction to date.

With the rise in the river, it may become possible to plant some of the species that have been chosen to add colour and a softer edge to the new works which will really make a difference.

Any decision to undertaking plant will not be undertaken until we have a high degree of optimism of continuity of a flow in the river.

Leonie Brown, Council, Manager of Corporate Services, represented Bourke Shire Council at the Barwon Darling Stakeholder Advisory Group held in Bourke last Thursday. This is the eighth (8th) occasion on which the group has met and meetings brings together all water users along the Barwon Darling system including Local Government.

The meetings are not only attended by water users but all Government agencies involved and they are an important forum for decision making in relation to this important and finite resource.

The river height whilst allowing temporary relief from the strict water restrictions still falls well short of being able to allow the PV Jandra to re-commence cruising. The level in the river will need to rise at least another 50 centimetres before consideration can be given to the operation of the Jandra.

The inability for the Jandra to operate is a significant loss in terms of tourist attractions with many people looking forward to a relaxing cruise on the Darling.

All sporting groups and other users of Councils parks and ovals are reminded to ensure that they book the facilities for both scheduled training and organised games and any other activities that may be planned.

Booking are essential to ensure that the sporting grounds and parks are prepared for the event and also to avoid clashes.

Davidson Oval in particular has a high level of usage and it is important that everyone is afforded the opportunity for use without interruption.

There are now lights on Coolican Oval which although not being good enough for night matches do provide sufficient lighting for training purposes.

Queries in relation to Ovals and their usage should be directed to Lynette Gooch, Council's Engineering Support Officer on 68308000.

Quote of the week!

"If you're walking down the right path and you're willing to keep walking, eventually you'll make progress."

Barack Obama

Ross Earl
General Manager.