



# “FROM THE GM’S DESK”

## 11<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2019



Bourke Shire Council has received the executed deed from NSW treasury relating to funding received by Council to undertake further work on the Bourke to Milparinka Road (Main Road 405) between Goonery and Barakee. The funding will allow the formation, compaction and sealing of another 20 kilometres of the road which will improve accessibility, safety and reduce maintenance costs.

This funding totals \$4,660,000 which when added to the \$11,112,000 already received in funding provides for a total \$15,772,000 allocated for the project and allowing for around 60 kilometres to be sealed.

Council staff have already prepared the necessary plans and costing to allow further applications for funding to be lodged when it becomes available. The sealing of the Wanaaring Road has changed from a dream to gradually becoming a reality with many of those who thought it would never happen in their lifetime.

The funding has been provided through the Fixing Country Roads Program.

I took the opportunity to again visit the construction works on the Wanaaring Road last Friday and speak with a number of the crew working on the project.

The transformation of the road surface in the completed sections is excellent good and it is little wonder we have received some very positive comments in regard to the project. There is still a lot of work to be undertaken between Bourke and Wanaaring before the road is completely sealed, however, the work done to date is a very positive start further enhancing Councils reputation as a road builder delivering a high quality product on time and within budget.

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The Environment Flow that has reached Brewarrina is still looking unlikely to reach Bourke which is extremely disappointing but is in accord with the early predictions prior to the release of the flow.

It was hoped that the initial predictions may have been a little conservative but that has provided not to be the case. It is good news for those above Bourke and those below Bourke that have received the benefit of the flow from the Warrego unfortunately leaving either side of Bourke without any substantive flow.

It would appear that the longer term outlook for rain is not good and that we should prepare ourselves for an extended dry period.

Let’s hope there is a turnaround of our fortunes and that there is some good rain in the near future.

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A number of tourists and tour companies have been disappointed that the lack of flow in the river has resulted in the inability of the PV Jandra to operate this tourism season.

It has no doubt had an impact on the length of stay of a number of visitors. Staff at the Back O Bourke Exhibition Centre are reminding the visitors of the other attractions in town including the Crossley Engine, The National Parks, Dunlop Station, the historical cemeteries, Tours, The Outback Show, Art Galleries and the Back O Bourke Exhibition Centre itself.

Bourke is an iconic town and is often deemed to be a "must see" for people visiting the outback New South Wales and as a town we should all be mindful of the contribution that tourism directly and indirectly makes to our community.

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The Enngonia Race Club will conduct their Annual Race Meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> September 2019 this year and the committee have been fortunate to secure locally based sponsorship from the grazing fraternity to be able to waive the cost of entry to the event. The waiving of the entry fee is the committee's way of thanking the broader community for their support to farmers during the current prolonged drought.

Members of the rural community have received donations of fodder, hampers and some financial support during the drought and despite the obvious hardships being faced are still prepared to contribute to this unique way of saying thank you.

The annual race meeting is an event which galvanises the community of Enngonia and surrounding district and it is a great initiative by the committee which this year being led by Bill Ridge who replaces Phillip Ridge the previous long serving President.

The committee are looking at other ways to promote the race meeting and I hope that their efforts are rewarded.

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Throughout July and August 2019, The New South Wales Government will be conducting a water metering roadshow, stopping at 12 locations across regional NSW, as well as hosting an online webinar.

They are encouraging all interested persons to attend.

At each session, representatives from the Water Renewal Taskforce and the Natural Resources Access Regulator will present on the new rules to help water users understand what they need to do to comply. They will also seek feedback on minor amendments to the Water Management (General) Regulation 2018, primarily relating to reporting requirements. There will also be the opportunity to ask questions.

The Bourke session of the roadshow is to be held on the 18<sup>th</sup> July. Further information can be obtained via the website [industry.nsw.gov.au/water-reform/consultation](http://industry.nsw.gov.au/water-reform/consultation).

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A reminder that both Bourke and North Bourke are on Level two (2) Water Restrictions which means the following;

The use of fixed sprinklers is limited to one hour per day either between the hours of 7.00 am 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.

The ongoing cooperation of all residents is sought in complying with the restrictions.

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As of Tuesday, 16<sup>th</sup> July 2019, the Darling River will have stopped flowing over the weir at Bourke for 326 days.

The 12 month mark is the 18<sup>th</sup> August 2019 which unfortunately is likely to become a reality unless there is some significant rain over the next few weeks.

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The Western Division Councils of New South Wales met in Cobar on Tuesday last week for their Mid -Term Meeting.

The group is chaired by Councillor Leigh Byron who is Deputy Mayor of Balranald Shire.

The group was fortunate to have a number of good speakers address the group including the Minister for Agriculture and Minister for Western New South Wales, the Hon. Adam Marshall, MP, the Member for Barwon, Roy Butler, MP and the Member for Murray, Helen Dalton, MP.

Minister Marshall highlighted a number of the State Government initiatives in relation to various funding opportunities including the next round of Stronger Country Communities Funding which opened this week and was very open to answering a number of questions posed to him as he always is.

The President of Local Government New South Wales (LGNSW), Councillor Linda Scott was the first speaker of the day and as always she provided a concise yet detailed outline of the work being undertaken by LGNSW. Councillor Scott was accompanied by the Chief Executive of LGNSW, Tara McCarthy.

In her address, Councillor Scott said that she had seen first-hand the devastating impact of drought during her many visits to rural and regional communities over the past 12 months, and was pleased that persistent lobbying by LGNSW had paid off with an additional \$355m allocated for drought assistance during the recent state budget (over and above the \$400m commitment made during the election campaign).

She was also pleased that much-needed water security and on-farm assistance programs will be extended. Saying that indications are that this drought isn't going to break any time soon, so LGNSW will continue to lobby hard at all levels.

Other issues covered in Councillor Scott's address were the financial assistance grants, the emergency services levy, roads, rural and regional health, community services and local water utilities and recycling. Our Save our Recycling campaign continues, aiming to create real opportunities, including regional jobs, in a home-grown recycling industry.

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As part of their election commitments the New South Wales Government have indicated that they will take back and fund 15,000 kilometres of Regional Roads which were devolved to Local Government in 1993.

No decision has been made as to which Regional Roads will be taken back by the State Government and it will apparently be up to the individual Councils to make a determination as to which Roads they would like to nominate.

At the meeting of the Western Divisions Councils held last week at Cobar, Minister for Western New South Wales, Adam Marshall, MP, suggested that Council across the state should look at the any roads that they consider that the State may wish to takeover.

At the meeting in Cobar in a question to the Minister, I highlighted the need for Regional and Rural Councils to still be involved in the Single Invitation Contracts for the work on State owned roads noting the importance of that work in enabling Councils to maintain a modern plant fleet and the ability to maintain jobs within these areas.

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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 an 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.

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The next meeting of Bourke Shire Council will be held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2019 and will commence at 9.15am.

Persons who wish to address Council on any matters on the agenda can do so at a Public Forum convened each meeting day commencing at 9.00am.

Persons wishing to speak are encouraged to contact the Executive Assistant to the Mayor and General Manager Kai Howard-Oakman 0268308000.

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LGNSW is seeking feedback on their proposal for Local Government Electoral Expenditure Caps, and whether Councils agree that they should put forward a proposal that the Expenditure Cap be calculated at \$1 per elector. LGNSW feel that it is essential that any electoral expenditure arrangements are fair and consistent, but also are administratively simple to understand.

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With the change to the NBN there have been a number of changes experienced by residents and Bourke Shire has not been immune from the changes with our telephone system needed to be upgraded and the installation will hopefully be finalised this week.

Whilst there should be no major issues experienced during the transition of phone systems these transfers sometimes experience some minor difficulties. If you have any trouble contacting Council please use the "on call" number 0419 722055.

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I was talking last week with Paul Clarkson who runs the Outback Show at the Back O' Bourke Exhibition Centre as well as the carriage rides around town and during the course of the conversation, he mentioned that one of the carriages he uses was completely rebuilt by local tradespersons in Bourke. He said the work undertaken has been to high standard and involved steel work, upholstery and timber work and is a great endorsement for those people who contributed to the rebuild.

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Together with the Mayor Council Barry Hollman, I attended the Remembrance Ceremony for Indigenous Ex-Servicemen who have served Australia in various conflicts around the world. The ceremony is part of the NIADOC Week Activities and has been an annual event for the past few years. The event is organised by the local branch of the RSL led by Victor Bartley and Kelly Lienesch and hosted by the Bourke Aboriginal Health Service.

There was a good attendance and once again it was pleasing to see a wide cross section of our community in attendance and the fact that a number of the younger members of the community were participants in the ceremony.

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The fishing Competition at the Bourke War Memorial Swimming Pool certainly created a lot of interest with visitors and local alike very impressed with the innovative approach taken by the Bourke Ain't Caught Nothin' Yet Fishing Club who organised the event in collaboration with the Pool Lessee Mark Holman and Bourke Shire.

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For parents struggling to meet the costs of their children's sporting activities they may like to look at the State Governments Active Kids Program.

The NSW Government is helping kids get active with the Active Kids program.

The Active Kids program provides two (2) \$100 vouchers for parents, guardians and carers of school-enrolled children to use towards sport and active recreation costs each year.

From 1<sup>st</sup> July 2019, parents, guardians and carers can apply for the second \$100 Active Kids voucher. Voucher 1 is valid January to December and Voucher 2 is valid July to December.

The vouchers may be used with a registered activity provider for registration, participation and membership costs for sport, fitness and active recreation activities.

To use a voucher, find a [registered activity provider](#) and present your voucher when you sign up. For those children with non-sporting interests they may like to avail themselves of the Creative Kids initiative.

Creative Kids, is all about making it easier for school-aged kids (4.5 to 18 years old) to get involved in creative and cultural activities.

Parents, guardians and carers can claim a \$100 voucher per year to put towards the cost of lessons and fees with registered providers.

It's a great opportunity to let kids find their passion and learn new skills.

Vouchers can be used to contribute to registration, participation and tuition costs for performing arts, visual arts, coding, languages, literature, music and other creative and cultural activities with our approved list of activity providers.

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The NSW Office of Local Government issued a circular to councils this week on the development of template policies on social media use and councillor/staff interactions to support the new Model Code of Conduct.

The Office is also seeking examples of Councils' current policies and feedback on what other template Governance Policies they would like to see developed.

The initiative of developing templates for policies is to be applauded.

Whilst there is no need for Councils to adopt the templates to be provided, the use of templates will result in considerable saving of time and resources particularly for the smaller Councils. The use of templates will provide for increased level of consistency amongst Councils.

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*Quote of the week!*

*"Truly great friends are hard to find, difficult to leave, and impossible to forget."— Unknown*

Ross Earl  
General Manager