



“FROM THE GM’S DESK”

8TH AUGUST 2019



A meeting was convened on Monday, 5th August 2019 involving representatives from Bourke Shire Council, Public Works Advisory, New South Wales Deputy of Industry Water, The New South Wales Department of Health and NSW Drought Coordinator to discuss the water situation in Bourke to ensure that the level of preparedness for the looming water crisis. This crisis that is expected as a result of the lack of flow in the river, the depleted water storages, the forecast continuing dry period coupled with the onset of the summer months.

At this stage Council is well positioned due to a lot of work done earlier in the year with the construction of an additional bore and associated pipeline, however, Council is looking to ensure that the level of preparedness provides for the worst case scenario and includes some redundancy in the available water supply.

As well as looking at the water supply for Bourke, David Swan, Regional Manager - Water Utilities - west Water Group - Department of Planning, Industry and Environment will be taking the opportunity to discuss with the Manager of Works the water supply systems in each of the villages.

The supply of water across the state is becoming increasingly critical and it is important that action be taken to mitigate as far as possible any potential risks. This, however, will not in many instances be a simple task.

Council has received a number of positive comments in relation to the way Central Park is being developed and the fact that the facilities cater for a wide range of the community.

The fact that Council has continued to water the major sporting fields and Central Park has meant that they have been retained as “green spaces” which is extremely important when much of the other grassed areas around town has lost the battle to survive.

Central Park is used by locals and tourists alike and the amenities within the park provide a great source of recreation as well as a welcome rest area particularly for those travelling with children.

As of Tuesday, 6th August 2019, the Darling River will have stopped flowing over the weir at Bourke for 346 days which is only 12 days from the twelve (12) month mark on the 18th August 2019.

The restrictions to Bourke were actually put in place on the 9th August, however, the official cease to flow date is recorded as 18th August 2018.

The height of the weir at Bourke was 3.02 metres over the weekend dropping at a rate of approximately three (3) to four (4) centimetres per week.

The Environmental Flow dubbed the "Fish Flow" continues to make its way tantalizingly close to Bourke, however, if we do get some water in the weir pool it will only be a very small amount which is disappointing. If the weir had been topped we would have had a reasonable level of water security for the next six (6) months, subject of course to restrictions being in place.

The flow has been assisted by the unselfish gesture and assistance of Brewarrina Shire who left out some of the boards on their weir allowing water to flow for an additional two (2) weeks at a reasonable rate.

The boards were replaced last Friday which means that the flow further downstream will be dependant of the water already within the river system below Brewarrina.

The water has passed Beemery which is approximately half way between Bourke and Brewarrina and has seen the river level at Warraweena rise from 2.91 metres to 3.04 metres.

As of Sunday, 4th August 416 megalitres had passed the Beemery gauge with the gauge at Warraweena showing a flow of 18 megalitres per day up from 4 megalitres a week before, but unfortunately seems have slowed again.

Increases such as this would hardly rank a mention in normal times when the river is flowing but in these times of low flows and extended drought conditions take on a whole new level of importance.

It would seem that in the case of the "Fish Flow" it will be a case of "close but not close enough."

Level Two (2) water restrictions are still in place and it is likely that these will move to level three (3) within a few weeks in accordance with the provisions of the adopted Drought Management Plan.

Council staff will be watching the level in the river to see what impact, if any, the tail end of the Environmental flow will have on Bourke weir pool.

To refresh the memories of residents the introduction of water restrictions in Bourke at the various levels is triggered by the height of water in the weir pool.

The way water can then be used is governed by the level of restrictions imposed.

Level Two (2) restrictions are introduced when the river level drops below 3.50metres and fixed sprinklers can only be use one (1) hour per day with hand held hoses able to be used at other times.

Level Three (3) restrictions are introduced when the level of the weir drops below 3.00metres with no fixed sprinklers allowed and hand held hoses restricted to two (2) hours per day

The 2019/2020 rate notices have been issued and the first instalment is due on the 31st August 2019. If you are having difficulties in meeting your commitments in relation the payment of your rates you are invited to contact Council's Revenue Officer so arrangements can be put in place that are to the satisfaction of both parties.

The Annual Louth Races are on this Saturday, 10th August 2019 with good crowds once again expected to converge on the small village.

When a village of 50 people suddenly swells to around 5000 there are some obvious logistical problems that are encountered, however, years of experience and the efforts of a hardworking community has seen the impact become relatively seamless for those not involved in the coordination and everything runs smoothly.

The library has received a grant through the Good Things Foundation to help provide technology training for older people in the Bourke community, through the "Be Connected" program. Be Connected is a free Australian Government initiative aimed at increasing the confidence, skills and online safety of older Australians when they use the internet and everyday technology. With the grant funding we have been able to purchase iPads and a laptop with internet access. Sessions are currently held weekly at the library for anyone over 50 who would like to improve their technology skills.

Council's road maintenance crews are currently working on the Bourke to Louth road undertaking grading operations in preparation for the Annual Louth Races this Saturday.

Council has also engaged local contractors to undertake grading works on the Tooralé Road from Louth towards the Wanaaring road ahead of this important weekend.

Road construction works are still underway on the Wanaaring Road, with 4.5kms already sealed on the first section of Wongareena Plains and the next section of 4.1kms due to be sealed on Wednesday the 7th of August 2019.

LGNSW is holding a forum on 1st -2nd October 2019 in Sydney that aims to bring together JOs, ROCs and regional/rural Councils. The objective of this forum is to identify common goals among attendees/LGNSW to build a stronger platform for future collaboration.

Sydney was selected by the JOs as the preferred location and, as requested, the program will include case studies of individual JOs, including current objectives and governance opportunities, as well as an update on LGNSW activities, services and key projects.

On day two, the event which is for all LGNSW members will focus on the current and future challenges of drought.

LGNSW actively participated in the development of the model, seeking to ensure that it was a model supported by Councils, that joining was voluntary and that JOs would be owned and led by Councils. LGNSW fought against an overly prescriptive model, insisting that the JO membership should determine the functions of the JO beyond the core responsibilities for regional planning and prioritisation, regional advocacy and regional coordination with state agencies.

In the preparation of their 2019-20 State Budget submission to the NSW Government included the provision of ongoing funding to support the operation of JOs as a priority. While it was disappointing that there were no specific initiatives announced in the budget, discussions are ongoing.

LGNSW continues to advocate on behalf of JOs, especially for ongoing funding. While LGNSW welcomed the initial seed funding of \$3.3 million, we have consistently argued that the funding was inadequate and that there needs to be ongoing funding to ensure the financial viability and effectiveness of JOs.

LGNSW is calling on nominations from JOs to be included in a working group noting that direct input from JOs is essential in planning this forum, so that the needs are accurately captured and catered for.

At a number of the meetings held over the past few weeks in relation to employment opportunities in Bourke one of the issues raised was the lack of availability of training course in regional areas and one of these industries identified was training in the security sector.

Training was seemingly confined to metropolitan areas which meant that participants not only had to meet the cost of the course but also the cost of travel and accommodation which made it an expensive exercise.

There have been a number of security related positions identified, both full time and part time and following negotiations with various a training organisations a course is set to be delivered in Bourke.

An information sessions was conducted on Tuesday, 6th August 2019 with the course itself due to commence on the 21st August 2019.

Information is available by contacting Mick McDowell, Senior Project Officer of the Bourke Aboriginal Employment Prosperity Strategy on 68308000 or email Mick on aes@bourke.nsw.gov.au

Bourke will have three (3) NSW State Government Ministers visiting next week with the Hon. Donald Harwin, MLC Special Minister of State, Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs, and the Arts, and Vice-President of the Executive Council, Leader of Government Business in the Legislative Council, the Hon. Mark Speakman, SC, MP, Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and the Hon. Bronwyn Taylor, MLC, Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women paying a visit to Bourke.

It is pleasing to see the number of Ministers from the State Government take the opportunity to visit Bourke and see for themselves both the issues impacting on the town but also the opportunities that exist in this part of the State and also see for themselves the projects that have been undertaken with the various allocations of grant funding that has been made available and the positive impact that these have had the community.

The Mayor has written to the President of the Junior Rugby Club, Liam Rice congratulating him on him on being awarded the New South Wales Rugby Union Volunteer – Youth of the year.

Liam puts in an incredible amount of work for Junior Sport in Bourke and the recognition of his efforts well deserved.

Liam has previously been the President of the Bourke Junior Cricket Club and the Bourke Junior Rugby League Club and was also awarded the Bourke Sportsman of the year in 2018.

Liam's award is a timely reminder of the efforts of so many volunteers within our community including sporting, cultural and social groups as well as those who are members of service clubs, charitable organisations and those who help member of our community who are in need of assistance.

The services and facilities that we enjoy in Bourke are in no small way the result of the hard and dedicated work of volunteers. The contribution of volunteers is also very evident in the village communities and the level of volunteerism responsible for the provision of services and facilities that would otherwise not be available.

The Tour De OROC which will be held October 7th -12th this year, will involve a stopover in Bourke on Wednesday, 9th October and there will be a welcome to the riders and fundraising function held at the Port of Bourke Hotel.

The mine host of the Port of Bourke, Luke Moon has made a number of items available for auction on the night including three (3) eskies, a canoe and barbeque, whilst avid South Sydney fan Meanie Hayman has secured a fully signed South Sydney Guernsey which will be auctioned on the night.

There are still good number of tourists who are making their way to Bourke and taking the opportunities to enjoy the attractions that Bourke offers.

Accommodation is quite often at a premium during week days and most of the food outlets seem to also busy which is good to see.

As I have said on a number of occasions in the past, tourism is a vital part of our economy in Bourke with most businesses being direct or indirect beneficiaries and as such able to maintain or expand their level of employees.

With the agricultural industries suffering as a result of the drought it is good to have a degree of diversification in the economy.

Tomorrow is World Indigenous Day and the Maranguka Community Hub will be holding a number of activities at the Men's Hub in Meek Street to celebrate the day.

The activities will run from 3.00pm to 7.00pm and enquires can be made by contacting the Maranguka Office on 58 347 900.

The Barwon Darling Rugby League held their Grand Finals at Davidson Oval Bourke on Sunday with a good crowd enjoying a great day of football.

Congratulation to the Bourke Warriors who won the Barwon Darling Rugby League Premiership in the Under 15 Division.

Both the senior's and Under 18 sides made the Grade Final but each finished runner-up.

Congratulations also to the Walgett Dragons who won the Senior Premiership, and Brewarrina who won the Under 18 Division and were also successful in the Women's Tag Competition

Quote of the week!

Don't call it a dream, call it a plan.

Unknown

Ross Earl
General Manager