



“FROM THE GM’S DESK”

15TH AUGUST 2019



I had the opportunity to talk to a couple of the riders who took part in the Black Dog Motorcycle Ride which stayed overnight in Bourke last week and they were glowing in reports of their stay at the Mitchell Caravan Park. They indicated that not only did hosts Dan and Steph accord them great hospitality but also arranged to cook their evening meal.

On receiving the payment for the meal they promptly donated the proceeds of the meal back to go towards the fund raising efforts of the ride and included the takings of other meals provided to other guests for whom they catered for as well.

Other guests at the park also donated towards the fundraising leaving the riders not only with a great impression of the park but also the town of Bourke, which is tremendous, as quite often we only hear the negatives.

We often hear of our accommodation providers and those in the hospitality industry going the extra mile for visitors to town and they are to be applauded.

Well done to Dan and Steph for their generosity and hospitality!

As of Tuesday, 13th August 2019, the Darling River will have stopped flowing over the weir at Bourke for 360 days which is only 5 days from the twelve (12) month mark which will be reached on the 18th August 2019.

Level 1 Water Restrictions to Bourke were actually put in place on the 9th August 2018, however, the official cease to flow date is recorded as 18th August 2018 so we will stick with that date for the consistency of record keeping.

The height of the weir at Bourke was 2.99 metres over the weekend and had been 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 level of water security for the next six (6) months, subject of course to restrictions being in place.

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 2 restrictions are introduced when the river level drops below 3.50metres and fixed sprinklers can only be use one (1) hour per day between earth 7.00am and 8.00am or 7.00pm and 8.00pm with hand held hoses able to be used at other times.

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

Given that there is a strong possibility that the water level will rise as result of the tail of the environmental flow reaching Bourke the decision to introduce restrictions was been delayed. A full listing of the restrictions is detailed on the Bourke Shire Website, www.bourke.nsw.gov.au

As at Sunday, 11th August 2019, 631 megalitres of water has passed the gauge at Beemery from the Environmental Flow which first reached Beemery on the 22nd July 2019 and 249 megalitres has passed the gauge at Warraweena.

It is difficult to predict how much, if any, will make it to the Bourke Weir Pool.

The Annual Louth Races were once again a successful event with large crowds not only attending but also camping in and around Louth for up to a week before the races.

Well done to President Jim Strachan and the hard working committee on yet another successful meeting. I think this was the first meeting I have attended that saw me go home with a slight profit on the day.

There are people who came from various parts of Australia and I bumped into a number of people I knew from Local Government Australia plus friends from Newcastle who had taken the opportunity to undertake a tour of Western NSW.

While on Louth Race Club, I note that they have been selected as a finalist in the New South Wales Race Club of the year along with Coonamble and Forbes Race Clubs

The announcement of the winner will be made in Sydney in October and I wish the Louth Race Club all the best and trust that they will be the ultimate winner.

With summer just around the corner, Bourke Shire Council will start conducting routine swimming pool compliance checks as part of their mandatory pool inspection program for pools that are situated at tourist or visitor accommodation. These inspections are to ensure compliance with the

Swimming Pools Act 1992. Inspections will commence shortly with pool owners being contacted via letter advising of the proposed date and time of their inspection.

This round of swimming pool inspections is an educational based program designed to be informative and to encourage pool owners to ensure their child safe barrier complies with relevant requirements of the Australian Standards and the Swimming Pools Act.

All residential pool owners are reminded that the swimming pool barriers must comply with the relevant Australian standards and Swimming Pools Act. All pools in NSW must be registered with the NSW Swimming Pool register found at www.swimmingpoolregister.nsw.gov.au. The site also includes preliminary self-assessment of your pool safety barrier which can be a useful tool in seeing if your pool barrier currently meets the requirements. Any questions or queries related to swimming pool fencing and compliance issues can be directed to Council's Environmental Services Department on 02 6830 8000. Further information can be accessed from the following websites: - www.swimmingpoolregister.nsw.gov.au www.royallifesaving.com.au

There have been a number of security related positions, both full time and part time, available within Bourke and District, however, one of the impediments to filling these vacancies has been access to the appropriate training.

This has been overcome following negotiations with a training organisation and a course is set to be hosted in Bourke.

The staff at Training New South Wales were a great help in facilitating the training and the Bourke community appreciates their continued support.

At the information day conducted on Tuesday, 6th August 2019 there were twenty-four people in attendance coming from as far as Walgett.

The course itself is due to commence on the 21st August 2019.

Information is available by contacting Mick McDowell the Senior Project Officer of the Bourke Aboriginal Employment Prosperity Strategy on 68308000.

The Ordinary Meeting of Bourke Shire Council will be held at the Enngonia Memorial Hall on Monday, 26th August 2019 commencing at 9.15pm with a Public Forum dealing with items on the Agenda commencing at 9.00am.

The meeting will provide the opportunity for the members of the Enngonia Community to sit in on a Council meeting.

Council often receives complaints regarding the fact that a small number of residents seemingly oblivious of their need to adhere to water restrictions.

The provision of section 637 of the *Local Government Act*, provides that it is an offence to wilfully or negligently waste or misuse water from a public water supply.

The maximum penalty is 20 penalty units. The penalty unit value is still \$110.00.

A penalty notice can be issued on the occupier of the land where the waste or misuse of water has occurred.

Council has the ability to issue on the spot fines of two (2) penalty points or \$220.00 and will be looking to do so once level three (3) water restrictions are introduced.

A warning may be issued before the issue of the on the spot fines as it is recognised that sometimes there may be a lapse of memory or concentration but those who are continually and blatantly ignoring the restrictions will be issued with the penalty.

Once issued the penalty noticed is then handled by the New South Wales Office of State Revenue and they will be responsible for the collection of the penalty and enforcing further action if the penalty notice is remains unpaid.

Whilst the on the spot fines are \$220.00 fines, up to \$2200.00 can be imposed if the matter is referred to Court.

Bourke will have three (3) NSW State Government Ministers visiting today 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.

The Ministers will take the opportunity to visit facilities within Bourke and have a number of discussions with those organisations charged with the responsibility of delivering services that are covered by their Ministerial Portfolios.

Also visiting Bourke this week is Clayton Barr, MP, Shadow Minister for Water, Shadow Minister for Innovation, Science and Tertiary Education, and Shadow Minister for the Hunter who is will meet with the Mayor and myself on Wednesday.

Water is an issue impacting on a wide area of the state and unless there is rain the situation will only get significantly worse.

In my capacity as the Local Emergency Management Officer (LEMO) I chaired the quarterly meeting of the Local Emergency Management Committee (LEMC) which brings together representatives of all agencies who will be required to respond to various emergency situations should they arise.

The meeting provides a forum for all agencies to discuss issues relevant to the committee including climatic conditions which may lead to the Committee having to be activated. Emergency situations are generally controlled by the Local Emergency Operations Controller (LEOCON) which is in most instance the Commanding Officer of the Local Police and the role currently falls to Inspector Andrew Hurst.

The committee ensures that appropriate accreditations are held and also coordinates exercises to allow the agencies to hone their skills in situations that are as life like as possible so they are well prepared to face real situations which unfortunately will arise.

Whilst a number of the members of the committee are paid officers of the various agencies there are a number of members who are volunteers and give freely of their time to ensure that the safety of the community is protected and that the community is equipped to handle all emergency situations.

One such volunteer is Steve Walsh who resigned his role as Local Controller of the Local State Emergency Services as of 1st July 2019 after holding that role for twenty-nine years but will still continue to serve as a member and add to his already lengthy period of service which currently spans thirty-eight years (38) years

There has been discussion amongst the providers in Bourke regarding the need to establish a Youth Hub in town to allow for the better coordination and delivery of services. The services are delivered from a number of locations each of which are delivering multiple services that are not purpose built or equipped to handle the range of services required to meet the needs of this sector of the community.

Work is currently being undertaken to identify a suitable location to source the funding that will be required to enable the facility to be established.

Together with Mick Williams of Maranguka, I co-chair the Governance Group who provide guidance for the Bourke Aboriginal Employment Prosperity Strategy (BAEPS).

The strategy aims to increase employment opportunities in Bourke through a number of initiatives which are summarised as follows:-

- To increase liaison between local business and those who are unemployed
- Establish a Local Jobs Board to readily identify jobs which are available locally
- Assist in the facilitation of State Government contracts and work to enable local businesses to more readily capitalise on those opportunities
- Develop a register of programs operated by State Government and Non- Government Organisations.

The group meets regularly to review the progress of the BAEPS and brings together a wide range of stakeholders with many of those involved utilising that the teleconferencing facilities that Council has available.

One of the participants in the meeting was Gavin Priestley the Regional Director of Public Works Advisory – Riverina Western an area which takes in roughly 90% of New South Wales.

Bourke Shire Council has been working with Gavin and New South Wales Public Works Advisory for a few years to improve access to State Government work for local tradespersons, contractors and suppliers.

This initiative will boost economic activity in Bourke and the region.

Providing additional work for local businesses will also help underpin their ability to increase apprenticeship and trainee opportunities.

Gavin has been working on the project that involves breaking down some of the larger State Government contracts. There are considerable benefits that will also flow from the ability for local tradesperson to be able to undertake “manageable sized” and locally based projects.

Large projects often rule out local contractors and result in non-local businesses bringing in staff. Apart from the money leaving town the training and development opportunities are also lost to the region.

Initially Gavin had selected a wider region to trial the concept, however, the coordination over that wider area was a little more challenging than initially thought so he elected to concentrate on the one town and has chosen Bourke as the pilot community.

Some local tradespersons and contractors found the initial registration and compliance requirements daunting.

However, Bourke Shire Council, through BAEPS, and NSW Public Works Advisory are committed to work with local contractors and tradespersons to assist them to “pre-qualify” for work and have already held one information seminar and intend to hold another shortly.

A number of local business have already registered and hopefully we will see them being the recipients of work in the near future.

Councils Auditors will be in Bourke during the week commencing 26th August to undertake the audit of the 2018/2019 Annual Financial Reports.

This audit is being undertaken much earlier than in previous years and has kept the finance team very busy with a considerable amount of work being required in the preparation of the Financial Reports.

Work on Main Road 405 (Bourke to Milparinka) Stage 3 at Wongareena Plain has had a further 4.1 km of seal completed last week leaving approximately 3.2 km still to seal in this section. Council's construction crew will then undertake work on two (2) further strategic areas between Wongamana and Hopelands and it is hoped the works will be completed in early September.

Once the works at the Wongareena section are completed in early September the construction team will then relocate to start the Goonery to Barakee section in mid-September 2019.

Road maintenance works continues with a formation grade programmed to start on the Eastern side of Louth Tilpa Road this week.

Quote of the week!

"Don't educate your children to be rich. Educate them to be happy, so they know the value of things, not the price".

Ross Earl
General Manager