



“FROM THE GM’S DESK”

29TH AUGUST 2019



The Mayor, Councillor Barry Hollman, Councillors John Thompson, Victor Bartley, Cecil Dorrington and I all travelled to Cobar for the Launch of the new air services which will provided air services to the towns of Bourke, Walgett, Lightning Ridge and Cobar.

The launch was conducted by the Minister for Agriculture and Minister for Western New South Wales, the Hon. Adam Marshall, MP and attended by representatives of Bourke Walgett and Cobar Shires plus representatives from various Government Agencies.

Also in attendance with their aeroplanes which will service the routes were the two (2) operators of the services being Airlink and Fly Pelican. Air link will be providing the services to Bourke, Walgett and Lightning Ridge whilst Fly Pelican will be flying the Cobar route.

Flights to Bourke, Walgett and Lightning Ridge will only go to Dubbo with the schedule being developed so that passengers are able then to board a flight to Sydney on either of the two (2) airlines servicing that route.

Of course the option is always available to fly to Brisbane, Melbourne, Canberra or Newcastle on the providers of those services.

The Cobar route will involve both direct flights to Sydney and also flights to Dubbo.

Dubbo is fortunate to have flights that link the city to a major portion of the eastern seaboard.

The provision of an air service was announced over twelve (12) months ago and it has been a lot of work to get to the point that the operators have now been secured and arrangements being made for the introduction of the flights.

Bourke has maintained all its necessary accreditation at the airport to allow the flights to commence as soon as possible and the investment in the improvements to the lighting and the reseal of the runway has proved to be a very good decision.

Roy Butler, the Member for Barwon will be in Bourke later this week and has arranged to meet with Council over breakfast on Thursday morning. The early meeting provides the opportunity for as many Councillors as possible to attend the Meeting.

Council has been invited to attend an information session to learn about recent and future water management on Tooralé National Park and State Conservation Area.

The information session will provide a briefing on:

- Purchase of Tooralé land and water assets
- Overview of the 2019 Warrego River flow event through Tooralé
- How water is currently managed on Tooralé
- Proposed changes to the water management structures on Tooralé
- Overview of Warrego flow regime and proposed operating guidelines
- Next steps and opportunities for further input

Representatives from the NSW and Commonwealth Departments will be present on the day to provide information.

Tree removal contractors were in Bourke last week and removed a number of dead trees from the streets and other areas. With the drought continuing to bite there is every chance that we will have further trees die as a result of the extremely dry conditions.

As of Sunday, 25th August 2019, the Darling River will have stopped flowing over the weir at Bourke for **372 days**.

The river height was at Bourke was 2.93 metres over the weekend and has been dropping at a rate of up to three (3) to four (4) centimetres per week.

While difficult to predict it is anticipated that the current supply within the weir pool will last up to the end of October 2019 and then we will be back in the relatively uncharted territory experienced earlier this year which involved the pumping of water.

A reminder that Level 3 restrictions are in place with no fixed sprinklers allowed and hand held hoses for two (2) hours per day.

A full listing of the restrictions is detailed on the Bourke Shire Website, www.bourke.nsw.gov.au

A reminder that the first instalment of rates is due **THIS FRIDAY**, 30th August 2019.

The Hon. Mark Coulton, MP, Member for Parkes and Minister for Regional Services, Decentralisation and Local Government Assistant Minister for Trade and Investment will be in Bourke next week to

catch up with constituents and will take the opportunity to meet with Councillors and staff of Bourke Shire Council over breakfast on the 3rd September 2019.

Despite the fact that Mark has the largest electorate in New South Wales and one of the largest in Australia he still manages to get around his electorate on regular basis.

The pressure on Mark's time would no doubt have increased significantly with his additional Ministerial portfolio responsibilities, however, these additional responsibilities have not impacted on his ability to be both visible and accessible across his electorate.

With the water shortages across the state unlikely to ease in the immediate future and in particular those communities along the Barwon-Darling River system who basically rely on the flow in this river for their water supply I encourage everyone to be water wise and conserve water where you can.

Council has available small timers which can be utilised to gauge how long you spend in the shower, for example and these are available free of charge from Councils Offices.

Council also has a range of pamphlets available to demonstrate effective methods of water use both inside and outside the home.

Conservation of water not only saves water but also saves money. For an example a slow and barely visible leak in your toilet can waste over 400 litres per year whilst a visible and constant leak can waste around 100,000 litres per year. This equates to around \$220.00 at the current level of charges so it not only makes environment sense to save water but there is a financial incentive as well.

The restrictions that have been put in place within Bourke and North Bourke are aimed at ensuring that the water within the Bourke weir pool remains available as long as possible.

The community is fortunate to have two (2) bores which will enable the river supply to be supplemented once it drops to a level where access via the river pumps becomes difficult.

For resident's interest it should be noted that level three (3) restrictions were imposed last year on the 24th December 2019 with level four (4) then being imposed on the 29th January 2019. Level five (5) were imposed on the 28th April 2019.

It should also be noted that it was only a five (5) week period of level three (3) but that was due in part to the extremely hot weather being experienced. The length of time at level three (3) is expected to last a little longer this time, however, as the weather warms up there will be an increased level of evaporation and subsequent lowering of the river level.

The time between the introduction of level four (4) and Level (5) water restrictions earlier this year was certainly influenced by the fact that Council was able to pump additional water into the weir pool from upstream.

There is every likelihood that that this will occur again be case, however, the fact that we now have additional bore supply will assist to reducing the reliance on the river supply.

As the river level drops it becomes increasingly difficult for the pumps to be able to supply the quantities of water required.

At the Annual Conference of Local Government New South Wales there will be elections of Office Bearers for the next two (2) years.

Nominations have been called for and the constitution provides for representation from both rural and metropolitan areas to ensure that the board is as representative as possible across the state.

Bourke Shire Councils August Meeting was due to be held at Enngonia but was transferred back to Bourke to allow Councillors and Staff the opportunity to attend the funeral of former long serving staff member Barry Gale.

It is proposed that the September Meeting of Council now be held in Enngonia on the 23rd September 2019.

Council held a workshop, on Tuesday, 20th August 2019 to discuss Council's application for the funding made available under Round 3 of the Stronger Country Communities Fund and the workshop also received information on how Council has allocated funds received to date, which has focussed on four key (4) areas being:-

- a. The major sporting hubs being Davidson Oval, Coolican Oval the Bourke War Memorial Pool and the PCYC area
- b. Central Park
- c. The CBD including linkages to the Wharf Area
- d. The Ongoing Development of the tourism product for Bourke.

The details are contained within the publication called "Growing Bourke and Community" which has been compiled by Consultant Belinda Colless.

The publication is available on the Bourke Shire Website www.bourke.nsw.gov.au

In addition to detailing the focus to date it also details a strategic focus for future funding looking at the completion of much of the works required in the four (4) focus areas to see them completed.

As part of the recommendations contained within the publication there is details regarding suggested priorities for Round Three (3) of Stronger Country Communities as well as other works that should be considered as funding becomes available.

Council notes the fact that they have ensured that work to date closely aligns to the priorities detailed in the Community Strategic Plan and the outcomes from a Strategic Workshop that detailed priorities for the development and improvement of sporting and recreational facilities in Bourke and District.

Often it is said that Councils in some areas look for community input to the strategic priorities and then largely ignore that input. This cannot be said in the case of Bourke Shire where work undertaken very much identifies with those community priorities

Council has submitted an application for the A.R Bluett Memorial Award. The A.R Bluett Memorial award has been awarded annually since 1945. The Award is contested each year by Councils in NSW who would like to be recognised as being the most progressive in the state. Entry is open to all NSW councils irrespective of size or resources.

The staff felt that Council had achieved a considerable amount over the past 12 months and took the opportunity to submit an application.

The entry provided a great opportunity to reflect on what has been undertaken within the Shire and of the work on the Wanaaring Road, the proposed new Water Treatment Plant, the improvements in the CBD, and the further consolidation of Council's strong financial position all form part of the submission.

There are two (2) categories for the award and the winners of each category will be announced at the Annual Conference of Local Government New South Wales in October 2019.

At the Meeting of Council held on Monday Council accepted tenders for the supply of a new grader and a new B-Double water tanker that were due for replacement in accordance with Councils Plant Replacement Program

The long length of road for which Council is responsible and the tyranny of distance makes the operation of a modern and reliable plant fleet essential if Council is to undertake the maintenance of the road network in an efficient and effective manner.

Council has been advised that applications are now open for the next round of the Fixing Country Roads Program and staff are working on applications to try and secure additional funding from the program to continue with the Wanaaring Roads Project.

Funding to date from this program has proved extremely valuable and has allowed for a large section of the road to be sealed with further sections already identified to be completed. Access to further funding will see a continuation of work and resulting in the sealing of additional sections of the road.

This will see the bringing of what was only a dream a few years ago closer to becoming a reality.

The work done to date has attracted widespread praise from the regular users who have seen not only a much smoother ride but considerable time savings.

The Annual Graffiti Day will be held across New South Wales on Sunday, 27th October 2019

Graffiti Removal Day is a State Government Initiative to inspire people to volunteer to remove and prevent graffiti in their neighbourhoods.

Materials for the day are supplied free of charge due to the generous sponsorship of Industry and the State Government.

Graffiti vandalism costs New South Wales more than \$300 million each year.

Council in previous years participated in the day with mixed results and levels of participation.

If you are keen to assist on the day please contact Councils Offices and leave your name and contact details

Quote of the week!

The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now." – Chinese Proverb

Ross Earl
General Manager