



# “FROM THE GM’S DESK”

## 10TH OCTOBER 2019



The Finance Team of Bourke Shire Council are to be congratulated as they were able to have Councils Annual Financial Reports including the Auditor’s Report submitted on the 25<sup>th</sup> September 2019 which is well before the due date of the 31<sup>st</sup> October 2019.

As of the 25<sup>th</sup> September the only General Purpose Councils who had lodged their Annual Financial Reports were as follows:-

1	06-Sep-19	Narrandera Shire Council
2	19-Sep-19	Hills Shire Council
3	19-Sep-19	Ku-ring-gai Council
4	24-Sep-19	Campbelltown City Council
5	25-Sep-19	Penrith City Council
6	25-Sep-19	Coolamon Shire Council
7	25-Sep-19	Bourke Shire Council

Well done to all involved, it is an extremely good effort to be in the first 10 Council’s in the state to have their Annual Financial Reports lodged.

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The quadrennial Local Government Ordinary Elections are to be held on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

While it is sometime off there is a lot of preparation work to be done by the State Electoral Commission who need to know how many elections they will be running and in what location etc. so that they can ensure that they have secured staff and other resources.

Bourke Shire Council has made the decision at this stage to engage the State Electoral Commissioner to conduct the elections for Bourke Shire

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As of Sunday, 6<sup>th</sup> October 2019, the Darling River will have stopped flowing over the weir at Bourke for 416 days.

The river height was at Bourke was 2.60 metres over the weekend and the level of the water has dropping at the rate of around one (1) centimetre per day. Unfortunately, this rate of loss will increase as the weather heats up and the level of evaporation increases.

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A reminder that level three (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](http://www.bourke.nsw.gov.au)

With the Darling River dropping at the rate of 1 centimetre per day it is likely that level four (4) water restrictions will be in place in around ten (10) days.

Level four (4) restrictions allows the use of hand held hoses for one (1) hour per day only.

Whilst Council has the ability to fine residents for non-compliance with restrictions and/or restrict supply, these are only instituted as a last resort and it is hoped that all residents recognise the importance of compliance measures with restrictions and not only their legal responsibility to do so but their moral obligation to do so.

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The Annual Graffiti Day will be held across New South Wales on Sunday, 27<sup>th</sup> October 2019.

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

Materials required for removal of the graffiti on the day are supplied free of charge, due to the generous sponsorship of Industry and the State Government.

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A reminder that Council has available small timers which can be used to measure time taken in the shower for example, to provide an indication of just how much time individuals take to shower. As the drought continues and water becomes increasingly scarce, small savings such as reducing your time in the shower, only doing full loads of washing can have a massive savings of water when the cumulative impact across the whole community is considered.

Water is a finite resources and it is only at times such as the current drought conditions we are experiencing that we really appreciate what an important resource it is and often take for granted the ability to turn on the tap and get potable water.

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Representatives of the Louth Race Club travelled to Sydney to attend a function hosted by Racing New South Wales who were announced as the New South Wales Country Race Club of the Year 2018.

This is a tremendous effort for such a small community and testimony of the huge level of voluntary effort that goes into making the race meeting such a success.

The Committee of the Louth Race Club and indeed the whole Louth Community can be justifiably proud of the achievement.

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To allow Public Works Advisory to obtain crucial information required to finalise the design of the desalination plant to be constructed for Bourke they need to have data relating to the bore water supply which requires the bore to be in operation continually for three (3) to four (4) days.

With this in mind Council's filtered water system was switched over to become 100% reliant on the bore water supply on Saturday, 5<sup>th</sup> October 2019 until Tuesday, 8<sup>th</sup> October 2019.

The transfer to the bore system also gave Council staff the opportunity to ensure the bore system was working well as it will be needed as we move into, what is projected to be, a hot and dry summer period.

Bourke Shire Council has previously acknowledged that the sodium (salt) level in the bore water is higher than desired. Previous testing of the bores shows that the sodium concentrations range from 289 mg/L to 353 mg/L. The Australian Drinking Water Guidelines gives a value of 180 mg/L as the concentration at which people are likely to taste sodium in their drinking water.

The proposed desalination plant is being designed to address the higher than desired sodium level. NSW Health confirms that the water is safe to drink, but Council appreciates that people may be concerned about the taste of the water. Chilling your drinking water can help reduce the salty taste.

Anyone who may be concerned about sodium in the water and their diet should talk to their doctor for specific advice. NSW Health has given information to doctors about patients who may need special attention because of the extra sodium in the drinking water. These are pregnant women, people with advanced kidney disease, poorly controlled high blood pressure, diagnosed heart failure and others who are on a low salt diet.

The installation of the desalination plant is aimed, in part, at reducing the sodium levels in the water.

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Bourke Shire Council hosted a teleconference on Monday involving those Councils along the Barwon Darling River to discuss the current lack of strategy for the long term water security within the system. Representatives from Bourke, Walgett, Brewarrina Central Darling Broken Hill and Wentworth Councils all participated whilst apologies were received from Moree Plains and Cobar.

Town Water Security Coordinator James McTavish and David Swan from DPIE NSW – Water were also both able to join the meeting.

Bourke Shire Council has a motion going to the Annual Conference dealing with the development of a long –term strategy regarding the management of the flows in the Barwon Darling System.

A further meeting of the Councils is proposed to be held in Sydney on Wednesday, 16<sup>th</sup> October which will be the last Day of the Annual Conference of Local Government New South Wales.

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Water carting was expected to have once again commenced to Byrock but fortunately the ground water supply is holding up to the demand. Given that the groundwater supply is the only supply for Byrock and is dependent on rain to recharge that storage the commencement of carting looks like being in evitable unless we get a significant fall of rain in the next few days.

Unfortunately, the issue of water shortages has been a matter that has faced the residents of Byrock over the past few years as the drought conditions continue to be experienced.

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*Quote of the week!*

*"Do something today that your future self will thank you for".*

Ross Earl  
General Manager