



“FROM THE GM’S DESK”

17TH OCTOBER 2019



Level four (4) restrictions are in place as of 12.00pm today Thursday, 17th October 2019 with no fixed sprinklers allowed and hand held hoses for one (1) hour per day only.

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

With the Darling River dropping at the rate of one (1) centimetre per day it is likely that level four (4) water restrictions will remain in place for around six (6) weeks until a move to level five (5) would need to be considered.

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

As of Sunday, 13th October 2019, the Darling River will have stopped flowing over the weir at Bourke for 421 days.

The river height at Bourke was 2.60 metres over the weekend and the level of the water has been dropping at the rate of around one (1) centimetre per day.

This rate of loss will increase as the weather heats up and the level of evaporation increases.

The riders who took part in the 2019 Tour De OROC passed through Bourke last week, staying overnight in Bourke last Wednesday night.

Bourke Shire Council in conjunction with Bourke Rotary Club hosted a welcome function at the Port of Bourke Hotel on the night and conducted a charity auction and despite a relatively small crowd managed to raise over \$3,000.00, which is a great effort.

Earlier in the evening the main host was the Licensee of the Port of Bourke Hotel, Luke Moon who presented the organiser of the ride, Mathew Dickerson from Dubbo a cheque for \$1200.00 which will go towards the fund raising efforts for this year’s Tour De OROC which will again go to Macquarie Homestay.

The auction was very lively with auctioneer Greg Sieler doing an excellent job keeping the crowd engaged and the bids flowing.

A signed South Sydney football Guernsey was the item that recorded the highest bid at \$500.00 whilst two (2) large eskies and a kayak also attracted a great deal of interest.

The riders were welcomed to Bourke by Mayor Barry Hollman and following the welcome Victor Bartley, who has had the opportunity to experience the benefits of Macquarie Homestay, gave the crowd an indication of the value of the facilities and encouraged everyone to consider the benefit to the communities of western New South Wales when considering a bid. His words obviously resonated with the crowd who dug deep for a very worthy cause.

Before departing on Thursday morning, the riders were provided with a wholesome breakfast by Bourke Rotary Club who were up early to have the meal prepared for a 6.30am start.

The riders then departed for a leisurely 160 ride to Cobar.

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 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.

Council will be coordinating a Graffiti removal day however; it may not be the 27th October as we strive to increase the level participation which has unfortunately been very low the past few years.

Bourke Council have been successful with a funding application through the NSW Governments Waste Less, Recycle More Initiative's Landfill Consolidation and Environmental Improvements Grants program to improve wind borne litter at the Bourke Waste facility. A recent audit of operations at the site by Council staff, identified the wind borne litter as an issue emanating from the active tipping area.

Funding has been awarded to Council for the installation of mobile litter fencing to alleviate the litter problem, local suppliers will be used to fabricate mobile panels that will be positioned at the Waste Facility to intercept windblown litter.

Unfortunately, the sample of water taken last weekend to allow testing of that water to enable the design of the proposed desalination plant was unable to be completed and as such a further sample was required to be extracted.

To enable the sample to be as representative as possible the bores will again be required to run for at least three (3) or 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 Friday, 11th until Tuesday, 15th October 2019.

This additional switch also gave Council staff a further 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.

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 similar motion has also been submitted by Brewarrina following a meeting of all Councils along the Barwon Darling River System.

Council also coordinated a further meeting of the Councils along the Barwon Darling to further discuss the proposed strategy and it was to be held in Sydney on Wednesday, 16th October which will be the last day of the Local Government New South Wales Annual Conference.

There have been some positive outcomes from the security course which was recently conducted in Bourke.

Early advice would indicate that a number of the participants have been successful in obtaining their accreditation.

The course was coordinated by Mick McDowell the Senior Project Officer for the Bourke Aboriginal Prosperity Strategy (BEAPS) and Tom Brain from Training Services New South Wales. The course was delivered locally by Aces Group from Sydney and is one of the very few courses held outside that metropolitan area.

The lack of qualified security personnel was highlighted in a meeting of the Bourke Employment Training Coordination group and action was taken to address the problem.

Participants came from Bourke, Walgett and Brewarrina. A number of the participants will be able to now obtain employment as either part time or full time security staff.

Chris Wright the newly appointed Employment Manager from REDI is very keen to engage his participants in a clean-up of the Darling River from the weir to the Fishing Reserve and has asked Council for its assistance in this project.

Council is extremely pleased to be able to provide assistance with the carting of the rubbish as well as disposal in the waste Management facility.

Details are still being finalised but if anyone in the community would like to assist in the project for a few hours they should contact Mick McDowell the Senior Project Officer for BAEPS at Council.

The Board of the Local Government New South Wales have put a motion to the conference regarding the need for an increased focus to be put on an increase in water storages across the state and the development of a long term plan in this regard.

Bourke Shire Council has two (2) motions in relation to water and these motions will have been listed as covered by the Boards motion if that motion is covered. Council's motions are as follows:-

From Bourke – Increasing Storage to service the Barwon Darling River System

That the State Government be encouraged to take a bipartisan approach to identifying options to increasing the level of storage along the Barwon Darling System or able to provide water for the Barwon Darling system to prevent a replication of the significant periods of no flow along the river system

Note from Council

The issues in the Barwon Darling recently are well documented.

The lack of flow in the system has put significant stress on all those who rely on the system for their water supply including agriculture, riparian users and town water supplies.

Whilst it is easy to politicize the blame in relation to the issue, the fact is that successive Governments have done little to remedy the situation.

The social economic and environmental advantages to be achieved by the increasing the storage is obvious and urgent action must be taken.

From Bourke - Looking at Long Term Solutions to Water Supply

That the State Government adopt a bipartisan approach looking at opportunities for the ensuring the long term supply of Water in Western New South Wales. These opportunities should not exclude ambitious projects of the scale of the Snowy Mountain Scheme which has reaped considerable benefit for the State

Note from Council

Ideas such as the diversion of water from the eastern seaboard have been discussed as deemed impractical. With improvements in technology and construction techniques it is not unreasonable to look at revisit these options for water security.

The recent drought coupled with predictions of increasingly dry weather with the phenomena of global warming make this a very important issue.

The increase in productivity in the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area based on the provision of a secure water supply is evidence of the economic benefit of such schemes.

The lands are fertile and productive in the west of the state and there is a need for the addition of water. The availability of water would lead to increased productivity in these areas; generate employment, leading to population growth and sustainable communities.

In addition to the motions on water, Council has submitted a number of other motions including one on the commitment of some funding from the State Government for longer periods to allow Councils the opportunity to plan for the future.

From Bourke - Budgetary Commitment from State Government

That the State Government be asked to provide a commitment of longer term funding to Councils to allow them to prepare their four (4) Delivery Programs with an increased degree of surety and importantly make provision for and undertake appropriate purchases of plant and equipment and also ensure the availability of adequate staff resources.

Note from Council

The current provision of providing funding by the Roads and Maritime Services for example does not allow Councils to undertake the prudent financial management expected of them.

Like commercial enterprises Councils can ill afford to make significant investment in plant and other resources or have the ability to attract qualified and experienced staff when that only have a 12 month commitment of funding.

A reminder that all Swimming Pools in NSW must be registered, Swimming Pools are to be registered at www.swimmingpoolregister.nsw.gov.au. Bourke Shire Council can assist and complete the registration process for a fee of \$10. The process is relative simple where you will be required to enter your name, address, contact details, the type of pool, and the approximate age of the pool. You will need to complete a self-assessment checklist about your pool, the self-assessment entails the use of a simple checklist to self-assess if your pool meets the appropriate Australian Standards. Council's authorised officers *may* fine pool owners if their pool is not registered on the NSW Swimming Pool Register.

Quote of the week!

"One of the only times you should ever look back is to see how far you've come."

Ross Earl
General Manager