



# “FROM THE GM’S DESK”

## 14TH NOVEMBER 2019



NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) Inspector, Craig Warwick has advised RFS Volunteers and staff are supporting the firefighting effort in the States North and East from the far West Team.

Crews from Silverton, Cobar, Bourke and Brewarrina Brigades have attended fires in the States North and East.

Our thoughts go out to all person impacted by the current fires.

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The rain event last week certainly attracted a great deal of media attention with the Mayor, Councillor Barry Hollman doing number of interviews and other members of the community were also asked for comments.

There were reports of significant falls across the Shire with most areas set to benefit, however, while we have seen a flow in the river and the water crossing the weir there has still been no substantive falls in the catchment which is important to provide the volumes of water to ensure that there is sufficient water to traverse the length of the river and ensure that water is available for agricultural purposes. The lack of water over a number of years has resulted in a significant decline in agricultural production within the Shire.

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Waide Elliott from Essential Energy was in Bourke last week to discuss a proposal provided by Essential Energy to upgrade all the street lights within the Shire to LED lights.

The proposed changes have been the subject of a number of meetings to date and indicative costings are being developed so the proposal can be evaluated.

LED technology provides a much better light and on the positive side is much cheaper to run.

As part of the proposal Council will be undertaking a review of its current stock and location of its streetlights throughout the shire with a view to ensuring these meet the contemporary needs of the community.

Things like changes in use of areas can impact on the location of street lighting.

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Over the past few years, a dedicated group of volunteers including the members of the Bourke Men’s Shed have combined to host a Christmas luncheon for those people who find themselves alone on Christmas Day or would just like the opportunity to share the day with others to come together for a community luncheon.

The luncheon did not take place last year but the Men's Shed led by President, Bob Stutsel have once again decided to host the event which will be held at the Back O' Bourke Conference Centre. At this stage the format of the day is still being finalised but watch out for further information as it becomes available.

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The Remembrance Day Service at Bourke was once again well attended and it is reassuring to note the sacrifices made by so many so we can enjoy the freedom and liberties we do today, continue to be acknowledged and respected.

Once again the small but dedicated band of ex-service personal who make up the Bourke RSL did a tremendous job in coordination the day.

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Bourke Shire Council will be holding a **FREE TIP WEEKEND FOR RESIDENTIAL PREMISES** for the disposal of most household items on Saturday, 23<sup>rd</sup> & Sunday, 24<sup>th</sup> November 2019 from 9.30am to 5.00pm.

Accepted items include, furniture, whitegoods and household refuse as well as garden waste.

Please note that this is for residential properties ONLY, no commercial or building waste will be accepted free of charge.

There are some items will **NOT** be accepted free of charge and these include. Chemicals, Tyres Batteries, Asbestos and liquid wastes and as detailed above building and commercial waste.

In the lead up to Christmas, I encourage residents to take advantage of the *Tip Fee Free Weekend* and dispose of their unwanted rubbish

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Bourke Shire Council will be hosting a meeting of Councils along the Barwon Darling River System to get an update on the development of the New South Wales Western Weirs Strategy.

Tom Chesson from Minister Pavey's Office has agreed to assist in the coordination of the teleconference and ensure that the appropriate Government representatives are available to provide the most up to date information.

The development and funding of the Western Weirs Strategy was an election commitment of the New South Wales National Party.

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The Member for Parkes, the Hon. Mark Coulton, MP has advised that applications are now open for Round Five (5) of the Safer Communities Fund, with communities across Australia set to share in up to \$55.1 million to boost public safety and security.

The Safer Communities Fund provides funding to address crime and anti-social behaviour through the implementation of crime prevention and security initiatives such as CCTV and lighting.

Round Five (5) builds on Round Four (4) and targets schools, pre-schools, places of religious worship, local Councils and community organisations, to help protect those who may be at risk of attack, harassment or violence stemming from racial or religious intolerance.

Round Five (5) delivers on our 2019 Federal Election commitment by boosting the fund by \$20 million; this Government has made available \$180.1 million to keep our communities safe.

You can visit the Australian Government's Grants websites at: <https://www.grants.gov.au> and <https://www.business.gov.au>, for further information.

*The program provides for grants of between \$10,000 and \$1,000,000 to eligible organisations including schools and pre-schools, places of religious worship, community organisations and local Councils that may be facing security risks associated with racial and/or religious intolerance.*

To be eligible your project must be aimed at protecting schools and pre-schools, places of religious worship, and other organisations that may be facing security risks associated with racial and/or religious intolerance. Eligible activities can include the following: -

- Fixed or mobile CCTV cameras, security lighting, bollards, fencing or gates
  - Security and alarm systems, intercoms and swipe access for public or community spaces
  - For schools or preschools, licensed security guards
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The Law Society is providing a grant of \$50,000 to the Rural Financial Counselling Service NSW Central Region specifically to fund legal assistance for farmers and people in rural communities affected by the drought.

The Rural Financial Counselling Service NSW Central Region (which covers more than half of the state) works closely with farmers and small related businesses who are suffering, or at imminent risk of suffering financial hardship to help them to resolve urgent issues and develop a plan for their future and that of their families and their enterprise. Part of the valuable service it provides is identifying the need for legal advice in relation to matters such as farm debt mediation and succession planning. Farmers and members of rural communities impacted by the drought will now be able to apply for grants of up to \$1200 per individual to pay for legal advice through the confidential counselling service.

It's hoped these grants will ensure much needed legal assistance for farmers and people in rural communities during these challenging times.

The gesture by the Law Society is further evidence of the broad impact of the drought and how it affects people in so many ways.

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In an initiative to try and encourage people to buy from the regional and rural areas the concept of Buy Regional has been established.

The [Buy Regional online hub](#) showcases regional shops and sellers together in one place. The hub is made up of six (6) categories to make it easier for shoppers to find the perfect Christmas gift and support regional NSW.

#### [Visit the Buy Regional online hub](#)

The hub already features businesses from some of the hardest-hit areas of the state, including Broken Hill, Coonamble, Inverell and White Cliffs.

Regional businesses can participate in the Buy Regional hub and social media network for free by [emailing](#) the Buy Regional team.

Deputy Premier and Minister for Regional NSW John Barilaro is encouraging everyone planning festive get-togethers and Christmas Day feasts to consider buying meat, produce and hampers from Regional NSW.

It is a great concept and apparently some of the participating businesses have had great results.

If there are local businesses who would like to try and capitalise on the expected surge in retail expenditure over the Christmas period I would encourage them to register.

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Councillor Victor Bartley and Council's Manager of Corporate Services, Leonie Brown represented Bourke Shire Council at the Cross Sector Leadership Group of Maranguka held in Dubbo last week. The Cross Sector Leadership Group involves a number of Regional Department Heads as well as representatives from various organisation involved in Maranguka including those from the philanthropic sector and Not for Profit organisation who provide assistance and resources.

The meeting was also attended by the Minister for Health, the Hon. Brad Hazzard, MP in his capacity as "Bourke Champion". Gary Barnes who hold the position of Coordinator General for New South Wales was also in attendance.

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I attended the quarterly meeting of the Local Emergency Management Committee last week which brings together representatives from all organisation involved in the coordination of responses to emergency situations within the Shire.

There are a number of emergency situations that can arise and it is important that the community organisations can respond to those situations and have a high degree of coordination in place.

Each agency has their own emergency response plans in place however, in most instance when such situation arise it will be a multi-agency response that is required.

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Bourke Shire Council will be submitting an application for funding under the recently announced Fixing Local Roads Program.

The NSW Government has committed \$500 million to a Fixing Local Roads Program to improve Council roads across rural and regional NSW.

This investment will help reduce the maintenance backlog for Councils, targeting roads that do not meet the freight significance or benefit to cost ratio (BCR) requirements of the current Fixing Country Roads (FCR) Program.

Fixing Local Roads aims to fund improvements to local roads that will deliver smoother, safer and more reliable journeys.

The Fixing Local Roads Program will provide up to \$500 million to Councils to help manage and maintain their local road networks over several rounds of funding.

Fixing Local Roads will provide funding to Councils to repair, maintain or seal priority or important local roads. The program will open in November 2019.

It is important that local residents see work starting on these projects quickly. For this reason, shovel ready projects will be prioritised and Councils will be expected to complete projects within two (2) years of a successful funding application.

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Essential Energy crews will soon complete maintenance work on the main powerline which supplies power from Nyngan to homes and businesses in Bourke, Byrock, Enngonia, Louth, Wanaaring and the surrounding area.

The work is designed to strengthen the local electricity network and help to ensure a safe and reliable power supply for customers in Bourke and the surrounding townships.

A planned power outage is necessary to allow crews to safely undertake the maintenance and this is scheduled for **Sunday, 24<sup>th</sup> November 2019, between 8.30am and 1.30pm**. Affected homes and businesses will be notified.

Given the planned power outage will affect all homes and businesses in Bourke, Byrock, Enngonia, Louth, Wanaaring and the surrounding areas, on this occasion Essential Energy has been able to schedule the works for a Sunday in order to reduce the overall inconvenience of the outage on the wider community.

The scheduled works are dependent on suitable weather conditions and may be postponed if the conditions are unfavourable or unforeseen circumstances arise. This is one that residents might like to put in their diary.

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As the tourist season winds down there will be reduced hours of operation in place for both Tourism Information Office and the Back O' Bourke Exhibition Centre with the facilities closed on a Sunday effective from the 17th November 2019 and having reduced hours of a Saturday from 16th November 2019 with the facilities opening from 9.00am to 3.00pm each Saturday.

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Both facilities will be closed of a weekend from 14th December 2019

The Crossley Engine has ceased operating for the season on Saturday and Sunday's with the decline in numbers.

Whilst there will be a lull in tourist activities over the next few months the Tourism and Events Manager and her staff are busy looking at a number of other promotions within the Shire . They are also looking to work with the organisers of the some of the existing events within the Shire to improve the marketing of those events for 2020 and ensure that they are included on any promotional material relating to Bourke.

Also high on the priority of the team is to ensure that the tourism product within the Shire continues to be enhanced and in particular building upon our current attractions and assisting in their development and promotion.

Council is keen to further cement Bourke's reputation as a tourist destination.

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*Quote of the week!*

"One man practicing sportsmanship is far better than a hundred teaching it".

*Knute Rockne*

Leonie Brown  
Acting General Manager