



“From the GM’s Desk”

28th November 2019



Community Cabinet

Bourke was certainly the centre of the States attention earlier this week when the Premier, Deputy Premier and the NSW Ministerial Cabinet travelled to Bourke on Sunday for a Community Cabinet Meeting on Monday, 25 November 2019.

The Cabinet travelled to Bourke from Dubbo on Sunday in two (2) coaches, which allowed the Ministers to see the extent of the drought. Each of the Ministers I spoke to said that whilst the trip was long, it was certainly an eye opener.

After a stop at Nevertire to chat with those who developed the very successful @buyfromthebush Regional Shopping Campaign, the Ministers arrived in Bourke around 7.00pm. It was then to the Port of Bourke Hotel for a fantastic welcome function, where there was a definite air of enthusiasm in the room.

Monday morning saw a series of back to back events completed. A breakfast at the Rural Fire Service Headquarters at the Airport gave our visitors an opportunity to meet casually with members of the Rural Fire Service including the RFS State Mitigation Indigenous Work Crew, State Emergency Service, and Fire and Rescue NSW.

From the RFS Headquarters it was off to the Weir with Premier Berejiklian, Deputy Premier Barilaro, and Mayor Hollman to discuss water issues. The Premier was very happy to see the extent of the Darling River compared to when she was last here in April this year when you could drive across the River. At the Weir during a media conference, the Premier announced further funding of \$2million for securing Bourke’s water supply, the funding is for the drilling of an additional bore at Belvedere and the pipeline to Walkden’s Bore and on to Bourke. This announcement was gratefully accepted to drought proof Bourke for the short term.

Whilst the Premier and Deputy Premier were at the Weir, the remaining Ministers were taken on a brief tour of Bourke before the Ministers had a walk down Oxley St to view the upgraded street landscape and get a cup of coffee.

After that it was off to the Fellowship Church where the “Meet the Minister” sessions were held followed by a community morning tea. The Premier was delighted with the number of community members who took the opportunity to meet with her Ministers and attend the Morning tea.

Mayor Hollman, Deputy Mayor Ford, Councillor Davis and myself had successful meetings with the Premier; Deputy Premier; Regional Roads Minister, Paul Toole and Water Minister, Melinda Pavey, discussing a variety of issues. These discussions included water security for the long term, further funding for the Wanaaring Road Project and other road funding options, ensuring there are no cuts to the Bourke Hospital bed numbers and medical services provided by the hospital, and the impact from the current drought situation to name a few.

During her speech at the Morning Tea, the Premier spoke of the Cabinets visit to Bourke as being both “historic” and “significant” and ended her speech by saying, “It might be the Back O’ Bourke, but you are at the forefront of our minds”. This comment was very much appreciated by those in attendance.

Also in Bourke on Monday this week was renowned broadcaster, Alan Jones. Alan presented his Alan Jones Breakfast Show from the Bourke Bowling Club to his massive listening audience, which in Sydney, exceeds 17% of the listening audience. The positive exposure that Bourke has received from this broadcast is difficult to calculate.

Whilst it was a very hectic couple of days, once again Council led the way as staff applied themselves to ensure a successful couple of days were had by all. From the comments by the Premier and her Cabinet, this was achieved. A very big thank you to all staff involved in the various events.

I would also like to add my thanks to the Port of Bourke Hotel, the various accommodation providers in Bourke, the volunteers from the Isolated Children's and Parents Association who did the catering for the Morning Tea and the Full Gospel Fellowship Church who provided their facilities and much assistance for the event.

Bourke Council also received an additional \$1.8 million in funding that was announced by the Deputy Premier and Minister for Regional NSW on Monday to continue the revitalisation of the CBD. This funding is funded under the Drought Infrastructure Package. The works will include completion of the Oxley Street Precinct, beautification of Mitchell Street from Sturt to Glen Street, upgrade to the Cenotaph and Rotunda and additional CCTV and lighting. Council appreciates the support of the NSW Government in providing this funding that will provide employment for local contractors the current works crew that have done a great job thus far.

Flights

Also on Monday Mayor Hollman in conjunction with the Minister for the Western Region, Adam Marshall, MP, launched the initial flight from Bourke to Dubbo by Airlink Airlines under the Far North West Joint Organisation Air Services Project. It is some 12 years since regular passenger transport flights have operated into and out of Bourke, this Mondays launch was an important milestone. Flights will operate each Monday, Wednesday and Friday with full details available at www.airlinkairlines.com.au

PV Jandra

The Council owned Jandra Paddle Vessel has unfortunately not seen a lot of activity during 2019, given that up until recently there has been not enough water in the river to operate. Notwithstanding, it is necessary for Council to ensure that the vessel is maintained in appropriate condition in readiness for usage as required. To ensure this, the Jandra is currently up on stilts near where it docks at Kidman's Camp whilst the vessel undergoes what is called an "out of water Marine Survey" to ensure that it is fit for purpose.

Council Meeting

Given the Community Cabinet Meeting this week, the normal Monthly Meeting of Council for November 2019 which was to be held on 25th November 2019, has been moved to Monday, 2nd December 2019 in the Bourke Shire Council, Council Chambers, commencing at 9.15am. As per Councils Meeting Procedure, the meeting will be preceded by a Public Forum Session commencing at 9.00am. During this time members of the public may address Council on any matter on Councils Business Paper Agenda. Should you wish to address Council, please contact Kai Howard-Oakman at Council on 68 308 000 by Friday, 29th November 2019.

Louth Flood Study

Bourke Shire Council commissioned the preparation of the Louth Flood Study Flood Risk Management Study and Plan for the village of Louth. The study was to assess the impacts of flooding, review Council policies as they relate to development of land in flood liable land. The draft study has now been completed and has been placed on public exhibition for 28 days. The draft document is available for viewing on Councils website at <https://bourke.nsw.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/LFRMS-Report.pdf> Councils Office at 29 Mitchell Street, Bourke Public Library at 46 Mitchell Street Bourke and the Shindy's Inn Hotel at Louth.

Water Restrictions

The Darling River height is around 3.87 metres in Bourke with no flow in the upper reaches of the system, things are looking reasonably bleak at the moment.

The town of Bourke and North Bourke continue to be on Level one (1) Water Restrictions and the cooperation of all residents is sought in adhering to those restrictions. As we move into the hotter weather we will see a substantial increase in evaporation which will in turn see a further decline in the river height.

The lack of flow in the river coupled with the hot weather will unfortunately increase the risk of the presence of algae blooms in the river, residents and landowners should be mindful of the risks these can present.

Water restrictions will also apply to watering of public parks, recreational areas and sporting ovals and where possible the hours will be varied from residential allocated periods to ensure, as far as possible, water pressure is maintained for all residents during the times allowed for watering under the restrictions.

Quote of the Week!

"A goal is a dream with a deadline"

Napoleon Hill

Have a good week.

Leonie Brown
Acting General Manager