



# “From the GM’s Desk”

## 6<sup>th</sup> February 2020



### Street Light Upgrades

Bourke Shire have resolved to undertake an upgrade of the street lights within the Shire. The upgrade will see the current street lights replaced with LED lights which are much cheaper to run and offer a much better standard of lighting.

At this stage it is not proposed to install additional lights but some of the positioning of the existing lights will change.

The nett cost of the upgrade will \$330,000.00

Council staff have been working closely with Essential Energy on the project and also utilised the services of our long term Energy Consultants EMS in coordinating the upgrade.

### Community Consultation and Village Tours

Bourke Shire Council will again be conducting a series of community meetings across the Shire to both provide the opportunity for residents to have an input into the development of the 2020/2021 Operational Plan (budget) and also be provided with an overview and update of Council’s current operations and proposed works schedule.

The meetings have also provided residents with an overview and update of Council’s current operations and proposed works schedule. The meetings also provide the opportunity to build relationships with Councillor’s and senior staff to discuss any issues and ideas for the future.

The meeting schedule is as follows:-

Village/Location	Day/Date	Time	Venue
Louth	Monday, 10/02/2020	6.30pm-8.00pm	Louth Tennis Shed
Fords Bridge	Wednesday, 12/02/2020	1.00pm-2.30pm	Warrego Hotel
Byrock	Wednesday, 12/02/2020	6.00pm-7.30pm	Mulga Creek Motel
Wanaaring	Thursday, 13/02/2020	2.00pm-3.30pm	Wanaaring Hall
Enngonia	Monday, 17/02/2020	8.00am-9.30am	CWA Hall
Bourke	Monday, 17/02/2020	6.00pm-7.30pm	Bourke Shire Council Chambers

### Water Restrictions and River Conditions

As of Sunday, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2020 the Darling River was at 2.88 and the level of the water has been dropping at the rate of around one (1) to one and a half (1.5) centimetres per day.

This rate of loss increases as the weather heats up with the subsequent increase in evaporation.

The maximum temperature for Bourke during January was 40.7 degrees with high levels of evaporation naturally resulting.

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 1.5 centimetre per day it is likely that Level Three (3) Water Restrictions will remain in place for around the next four (4) weeks when a move to level four (4) will need to be considered if no further rain is received at Bourke or within the catchment.

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 to be responsible with their use of water during this time of extreme drought.

### **Council Meeting Date**

The next meeting of Bourke Shire Council will be held on Monday, 24<sup>th</sup> February commencing at 9.15am, the meeting will be preceded by a Public Forum at 9.00am.

The meeting will be held in the Council Chamber 29 Mitchell Street Bourke.

If you would like to take the opportunity to address Council during open forum I would invite you to contact Kai Howard-Oakman by calling 0268308000.

### **Resignation of John Walkom as Chair of RDA Orana**

Long serving Chair of Regional Development Australia John Walkom announced that he was resigning from the position effective immediately. John had been Chair of RDA Orana for nearly 10 years and has also been involved in the field of regional development for 20 years. During this time he also been involved at a National Level as the "Chair of Chairs " and made a great contribution, both to this region and regional development more generally.

John has given freely of his time and has been a great mentor to his fellow Board Members as well as the staff displaying a genuine desire to see the Orana Region grow and prosper.

I am sure that I join with all my fellow Board Members in wishing him well for the future and thanking John for his contribution to Regional Development over the past two (2) decades.

### **Bluett Award**

Bourke Shire Council was announced as the recipient of the 2019 Bluett Award for Rural Councils at the Gala Dinner held on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2019 as part of the Annual Conference of the Local Government New South Wales.

The A R Bluett Memorial Award has been awarded annually since 1945.

The Award is contested each year by councils in NSW recognised as being the most progressive in the state.

It is generally acknowledged that the Bluett Award is "*The greatest accolade a council can achieve*" and "*The pinnacle of local government achievement*".

Les McMahon Chairman of the AR Bluett Trust and fellow Trustee Mike Montgomery AM will be coming to Bourke on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2020 to make the official award presentation to Bourke Shire Council including the presentation of a plaque which will be erected as a permanent record of Council's achievement.

Bourke Shire Council will be hosting a function as part of the presentation with all staff invited, as the award recognises the achievements from the entire organisation.

This was only the second time that Bourke has won the Award with the previous time being in 1970 when the award went to the then Darling Shire which was the predecessor to Bourke Shire Council.

### **Balranald Shire**

Balranald Shire Council was last week dismissed and an administrator put in place until 2024 which will be the elections after the elections schedules for this September.

The residents of Balranald join the residents of Central Darling in not having an elected Council with the Administrator performing the role of Council.

### **Blue Green Algae (BGA)**

The Far West-Algal Coordinating Committee (FW-RACC) issued its latest report for the Far West Region on the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020. The following information is taken from that report.

The Far West Blue-Green Algal Reports are based on samples collected by various councils; Moree Plains, Walgett, Brewarrina, Bourke and Central Darling Shire Councils and WaterNSW.

A summary is as follows:-

- Darling at Louth is now on **Red Alert**
- Bogan River at Gongolgon is on **Red Alert**
- Darling River at Wilcannia is on **Red Alert**
- Barwon River downstream Brewarrina Weir is on **Red Alert**.
- NOTE: Water users on the Darling River at Tilpa and Rose Isle should apply a high level of caution and avoid using the water if it looks green or algae scums are present.
- Barwon River at Brewarrina Weir is on **Amber Alert**.
- Barwon River at Mungindi and Collarenebri are on **Amber Alert**.
- Darling River at Bourke is on **Amber Alert**

**NOTE:** Due to the expanse of the Darling River, there are many areas for which we do not have BGA results. Therefore, **water users should treat the Barwon - Darling River with caution**, especially when conditions for algal growth are favourable such as low river flows combined with persistent hot and sunny weather conditions. Use the closest sites that have results as a guide to your location of interest.

A brief description as to the issues associated with each level of alert and the precautions to be taken are as follows:-

#### **RED ALERT**

*These alert levels represent 'bloom' conditions. Water will appear green or discoloured and clumps or scums could be visible. It can also give off a strong musty or organic odour.*

*Algae may be toxic to humans and animals. Contact with or use of water from red alert areas should be avoided due to the risk of eye and skin irritation. Drinking untreated or boiled water from these supplies can cause stomach upsets. Alternative water supplies should be sought or activated carbon treatment employed to remove toxins. People should not fish when an algal scum is present. Owners should keep dogs away from high alert areas and provide alternative watering points for stock.*

#### **AMBER ALERT**

*Blue-green algae may be multiplying and the water may have a green tinge and musty or organic taste and odour. The water should be considered as unsuitable for potable use and alternative supplies or prior treatment of raw water for domestic purposes should be considered. The water may also be unsuitable for stock watering. Generally suitable for water sports, however people are advised to exercise caution in these areas, as blue-green algal concentrations can rise to red alert levels quickly under warm, calm weather conditions.*

## **GREEN ALERT**

*Blue-green algae occur naturally at low numbers. At these concentrations, algae would not normally be visible, however some species may affect taste and odour of water even at low numbers and does not pose any problems for recreational, stock or household use.*

Further Information and Contacts

**Refer to the WaterNSW Algal Website** <http://www.waternsw.com.au/water-quality/algae> Or **Call** NSW algae hotline 1800 999 457

### **Water from Dignity Water**

I had a telephone call from Lanz Priestley of Dignity Water who indicated that he had a truck coming through Bourke and wanted to know if could utilise some pallets of bottled water.

Given the situation at Louth and the fact that the drinking water supply in the villages is dependent on rainfall I took him up on the offer with water to be delivered to Louth Enngonia and Byrock.

### **Byrock Water Supply**

I was talking to Mick Knight of Byrock regarding the status of Byrock Water supply and he was pleased to be able to report that Byrock has been the beneficiary of a couple of storms which has seen good inflows into the ground water tank. This should be enough to ensure the village has sufficient supply for the next six (6) months. This is great news as Byrock water supply over the past few years has been problematical and water has needed to be carted from Bourke on a number of occasions.

### **Reporting Streetlight Outages**

By reporting broken or faulty streetlights you are helping Essential Energy create and maintain a street lighting system that is reliable, energy efficient and safer for your community.

If you are aware of a damaged or non-operational streetlight in your area, Essential Energy would appreciate you letting them know.

If reporting faulty night vision lights, please call [13 20 80](tel:132080) (24 hours / 7 days a week).

For reporting via a mobile phone we recommend downloading the NeatStreets app which is available for [iPhone or iPad](#), [Android](#), and [Windows Phone](#).

### **Belvedere Bore**

Work on the Belvedere Bore will commence on the 17<sup>th</sup> February 2020 and hopefully will be finished and fully operational in the first half of March. Council has obtained all necessary approvals and licence allocations and should be well placed to meet the immediate filtered water requirements of Bourke and North Bourke.

The completion of the new bore will be in plant of time to allow the emergency water network to be connected to the desalination plant which is expected to be installed during April.

### **Meeting with Brian Bonham**

Together with the Mayor, Councillor Barry Hollman and Manager of Corporate Services, Leonie Brown, I met with Brian Bonham the General Manager of the Northern Sector of Western New South Wales Local Health District and Pat Cauty, the Bourke Health Services Manager to discuss issues relating to the delivery of Health Services in Bourke.

It is proposed that the meetings will be held on a quarterly basis.

### Local Emergency Management Committee

In my capacity as Chair of the Local Emergency Management Committee I attended the quarterly meeting of the Committee of Tuesday, 4<sup>th</sup> February at the Rural Fire Service Offices at The Airport.

The committee has representatives from all agencies based locally who provide services and assistances during times of emergency. The need to have a coordinated approach and an appreciation of the capability of the emergency services within the region has been very evident during the recent and ongoing bushfire crisis impacting on the state.

The conduct of the meetings is to make all agencies aware of current issues and to ensure that if required the agencies can come together to address any emergency situations as they arise.

Bourke is indeed fortunate to have a good deal of cooperation amongst all emergency services some of whom rely on the efforts of volunteers to undertake their responsibilities and do so in a very professional manner.

A number of members of both the Rural Fire Services and New South Wales Fire and Rescue have travelled away to assist in the fire-fighting efforts and at the time of writing I understand that there are local RFS volunteers currently on deployment.

### Quote of the week

*Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope and confidence.*  
*Helen Keller*

Ross Earl  
General Manager

