



“FROM THE GM’S DESK 13TH FEBRUARY 2020



Community Consultation and Village Tours

Bourke Shire Council have commenced the 2020 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 also provide the opportunity for community members to build relationships with Councillor’s and senior staff to discuss any issues and ideas for the future.

The remaining meeting schedule is as follows: -

Enngonia	Monday, 17/02/2020	8.00am-9.30am	CWA Hall
Bourke	Monday, 17/02/2020	6.00pm-7.30pm	Bourke Shire Council Chambers

Council Meeting Date

The next meeting of Bourke Shire Council will be held on Monday, 24th February commencing at 9.15am. The Council 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, Executive Assistant by calling 02 68 30 8000.

Bluett Award

As previously noted; on Friday, 21st February 2020 the Chairman of the Bluett Award Trust Les McMahon and his fellow trustee Mike Montgomery, AM will be in Bourke to formally present Bourke Shire Council a commemorative plaque as the recipient of the 2019 Bluett Award for Rural and Regional Councils

RDA Summit

Regional Development Australia – Orana (RDAO) held an Inland Growth Summit on Thursday, 30th January 2020 and I attended both in my capacity as General Manager of Bourke Shire as well as a Board Member of Orana RDA.

There was a focus on water with the Chairperson being former Senator, the. Hon Fiona Nash who is now working with Charles Sturt University at Dubbo.

There were some excellent speakers including the Hon. Mark Coulton, MP, Member for Parkes, Minister for Regional Services, Decentralisation and Local Government and Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment.

Other Speakers Included the Member for Dubbo, Dugal Saunders, Steve Hinks CEO of Taronga Western Plains Zoo and Councillor Regg Kidd, Mayor of Orange.

The focus of water was not on the issues of flows within the rivers but what can be put in place to make our use of water more effective and sustainable and touched on water re-use, alternative supplies and recycling.

In Steve Hinks' presentation he highlighted how important water was to the Zoo and the fact that they used approximately 350 megalitres per year much of it in keeping animals in an environment they were used to but additionally the fact that water filled moats providing most of the barriers between the people and animals. As such the availability of water was essential. Steve said that the Zoo has worked with Dubbo Regional Council and a pipeline was going to be constructed between the Council waste water treatment plant and the Zoo so that the treated waste water could be used in the filling of the moats. It is not only a great example of water re-use but the Council working collaboratively with the community to overcome a problem to the mutual advantage of both parties. Well done to the Western Plains Zoo and Dubbo Regional Council.

Change in RDA Orana Chairperson

Following the resignation of long term Chair of RDA Orana John Walkom it was announced that Brad Cam had been appointed by the Minister to assume the role of Chair.

Brad is the General Manager of Mid-Western Regional Council.

At the meeting held in Dubbo on Friday the Committee also accepted the resignation of another long serving Member in Ian Stanford.

RDA Orana is a very active group, the staff are led by CEO, Megan Dixon and are very focussed in trying to promote the region and also attract businesses and employees to the area.

Road Closures

The recent rain has been extremely welcome but at the same time has led to the closure of a number of roads for varying periods.

I would ask that residents check with Council staff regarding the road closures and not drive on closed roads which will reduce the damage to the roads. Generally, closures are only for a relatively short period and the slight inconvenience cause to residents is far outweighed by the preservation of the road service.

Pool Tenders

Tenders for the upgrade of the Bourke War Memorial Swimming Pool Closed on Monday 10th February 2020.

The tenders received will now be assessed and a report prepared for council so that a decision can be made in relation to the successful tenderer and it is hoped that work will commence early March.

Welcome to Bourke Function

Welcome to Bourke Function will be held at the Port of Bourke Hotel on Wednesday, 26th February 2020. The welcome to Bourke Night is a joint venture of Bourke Shire Council and Bourke Rotary Club.

I would encourage all new residence to Bourke to attend the evening and get to know other residents and have the chance to get in contact with representative of the various sporting, cultural, community and social groups and service clubs within town.

Bourke Show

Whilst on the subject of community groups I am sure that the Bourke Show Committee would welcome the support of any new members.

The Bourke Show will be held on the 9th May 2020 with much of the setting up and preparatory work and judging being undertaken on the Friday, 8th May 2020.

The Bourke Show is highly regarded and is made possible by the efforts of a very dedicated group of volunteers and I am sure that President of the Show Committee, Ben Richie would appreciate the assistance of additional volunteers on and before Show Day.

It has been said that the Annual Show is a great barometer of the strength a community and the district and utilising this yardstick Bourke is travelling reasonably well with a very strong and active show committee. One of the pleasing things about the committee is the fact there a number of young people on the committee.

Bourke is renowned for its resilience and sense of community and the efforts of the committee to ensure that the Bourke Show goes ahead is a clear demonstration of this resilience and determination in the face of the adversity caused by the ongoing drought conditions which have impacted the district over the past few years.

Western Division Conference

Council has prepared a number of motions for presentation to the 2020 Western Division Conference to be held in Broken Hill next month.

Water will no doubt again be a focus of the Conference with all Councils in the far west of the state keen to see water security improved and have welcomed the announcement of the Western Weirs Program. One of the motions proposed to be submitted by Bourke Shire Councils seeks to see work on the program expedited noting that the considerable amount of time required for the consultation and planning process which need to be undertaken before any construction work is considered.

There are a number of Ministers Parliamentary Secretaries and Shadow Ministers who have indicated their intention to be at the conference including:-

- The Hon Adam Marshall MP, Minister for Agriculture and Minister for Western NSW on behalf of NSW Premier the Hon. Gladys Berejiklian MP
- Hon Melinda Pavey MP - NSW Water Minister, Housing and Property
- Natasha Maclaren-Jones - Parliamentary Secretary for Health
- The Hon. Mick Veitch MLC - Shadow Minister for Industry and Trade, Rural Roads, Rural Affairs and Western NSW
- Paul Scully MP - Shadow Minister for Natural Resources
- Penny Sharpe MLC - Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council, Shadow Minister for Family and Community Services, Shadow Minister for Disability Inclusion
- The Hon Tara Moriarty MLC - Shadow Minister for Crown Lands, Shadow Minister for Mental Health

Easter Weekend

Plans are in train for another weekend of festivities over the Easter Long Weekend with a number of activities in the planning phase. Included in those activities will be a parade which this year will feature a number of trucks which have been a part of Bourke's Trucking History, The Wool Bale Rolling, a Blues Music afternoon and of course the Back O' Bourke Race Clubs Annual Race Meeting.

The highly successful and extremely popular Easter Egg Hunt will again be on and is sure to attract a large number of participants.

If you want to be part of the weekend or have an event planned for that weekend, please contact the Back O Bourke Exhibition Centre on 68721321

Wild Dogs Control Funding

Bourke Shire Council has again agreed to be the lead Council in another grant application to seek funding for the control of wild dogs. The growth in the number of wild dogs is threatening the viability of some grazing operations and we can ill-afford to see the problem increase.

There has been a considerable amount of funding provided for the construction of a new dog fence by the New South Wales State Government who have allocated in excess of \$30 million dollars to the project.

Once completed the fence should have a very positive impact, However, in the short term work needs to be undertaken to reduce the number of wild dogs that are already within the area.

Local Land Services are undertaking a series of meetings this week to detail to landowners the strategy they have in place for the control of wild dogs.

Water Flows from Queensland

Councils along the Barwon Darling supported New South Wales Minister, the Hon. Melinda Pavey MP in her request to the Queensland Government to take action to allow water from within Queensland to flow into the river system in New South Wales.

The New South Wales Government has placed an embargo on all extraction from the rivers in this part of the state to ensure that the flows that are currently within the system are given the best chance to flow along the rivers as far as possible in doing so both refreshing the river and providing a supply to those who are struggling with the low river levels.

The Minister for Water in New South Wales Hon Melinda Pavey is seeking the support of the Queensland Government in instituting a similar measure ensure that water that is located on the Queensland side of the border is able to make it into the system that flows through New South Wales and then onto South Australia.

The Councils have welcomed the efforts by Minister Pavey to ensure that there is enough water in the Barwon Darling System to meet the critical human needs and for stock and domestic purposes.

Kamilaroi Highway Promotion Committee- Newcastle Caravan & Camping Show

Bourke Shire Council's Manager Tourism & Events, Fran Carter and Ben Nott, Team Leader Back O' Bourke Exhibition Centre were among the team, from the Kamilaroi Highway group that promoted Bourke and the region as a destination at the Newcastle Caravan and Camping Show on the weekend.

The Newcastle Caravan and Camping Show is an ideal location to promote the attractions and towns along the Kamilaroi Highway. The target market for promoting travel along the highway are those from the lower Hunter and Newcastle areas, as well as Central Coast and Sydney residents. There was a high awareness of Bourke, with many mentioning the Jandra Paddleboat, Back O' Bourke Exhibition Centre and the Darling River.

Almost 25,000 attended the Expo, with over 400 information packs being distributed.

Byrock Water Supply

The water supply at Byrock is secured for sometime with the ground storage filled to capacity thanks to a storm which fell over the catchment.

Over the past couple of years the water supply at Brock has been depleted to such an extent that water carting had to take place. It is amazing how one well-placed heavy storm can change the fortunes of water supplies in this part of the state.

Water Restrictions

Water restrictions will likely be able to be lifted later in the week or next week as the river level rises thanks to the significant amount of rainfall received in the catchment in the north of the State.

Full details of the changes in the level of restrictions will be advised.

At the moment Level Three (3) Water Restrictions remain in place.

Quote of the week

*If you had to identify in one word the reason why the human race has not achieved and never will achieve its full potential; that word would be **meetings**.*

Dave Barry, American Author and Columnist

Ross Earl
General Manager

