



“FROM THE GM’S DESK 20TH FEBRUARY 2020



Community Consultation and Village Tours

Councils round of Community Consultation Meetings finished on Monday night with the meeting held in Bourke.

The community meetings 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.

Councillor Barry Hollman, Mayor of Bourke Shire Council was pleased with the response from residents from within the Shire who took the opportunity to attend one (1) of the meetings to meet with Councillor and senior staff to discuss a range of issues. Roads and water figured prominently on the agenda of all meetings which is indicative of the importance of these two (2) issues in such a large shire area with a dry climate.

In addition to the evening meeting at Bourke evening meetings were also held in Louth and Byrock, whilst the meetings in Wanaaring and Fords Bridge were held in the afternoon and Enngonia Progress Association provided a breakfast at an early morning session in the village of Enngonia.

The meetings involve a lot of travelling but provide Councillors and staff the opportunity to have a good look at the villages and the road network.

Whilst involving a commitment of time and resources from Council it also requires a similar commitment from residents and Council acknowledges that commitment and trusts that all attendees benefited from the meetings and would welcome any suggestions on how the meetings could be better structured to meet the needs of residents including times and locations of the meetings.

Newly appointed Manager of Community Engagement, David Perry and Acting Manager of Infrastructure and Projects, Mark Riley are both now much more aware of the various locations within the shire and have a greater appreciation of the size of the shire area.

Council Meeting Date

The next meeting of Bourke Shire Council will be held on Monday, 24th 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 or by email at khoward@bourke.nsw.gov.au

Bluett Award

Friday, 21st February 2020 will see the presentation of the 2019 Bluett Award for Rural Councils to Bourke Shire Council by Chairman of the Trustees Les McMahon and Trustee Mike Montgomery AM

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 the Council Office 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

Council received three (3) tenders for the pool and the Council appointed Architect will be assessing those tenders and preparing a report to Council hopefully for the February Meeting.

It is hoped that work on the new pool will commence at the end of the month or early March.

This will mean that the pool will shut earlier than normal but I am sure the short term inconvenience will be far outweighed by the benefits of the new pool.

Annual Bourke Swimming Club Championships

The Bourke Pool will be closed to the general public this Sunday, 23rd February to allow the local Bourke Swimming Club to conduct their Annual Championship.

Council apologises for any inconvenience for other users of the pool.

Welcome to Bourke Function

The annual "Welcome to Bourke" function will be held at the Port of Bourke Hotel on Wednesday, 26th February. 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.

It would be appreciated if you are going to attend to contact the Back O' Bourke Centre on 68721321 so catering arrangements can be finalised.

Wild Dogs Control

Wild Dog Control has been a very hot topic over the past few months with many landowners expressing concern that unless more is done to control the growth in numbers the viability of a large number of grazing operations will be put at risk.

The problem in Queensland got so bad that a number of graziers were forced to build exclusion fences.

There are a number of landowner operated groups who are actively trying to control the growth in dog numbers and these are supplemented by Local Land Services who have worked with Councils to secure additional funding to institute a number of control measures.

A recent series of meetings regarding wild dogs convened by Local Land Services attracted large numbers of attendees which is indicative of the concern and interest in potential solutions shown by landowners. Council has formulated the following motion which it intends to table at the Annual Conference of the Western Division Shires.

1. **FROM BOURKE SHIRE COUNCIL-** That the State Government investigate additional strategy options and funding streams that may be available to assist landowners throughout New South Wales take action to reduce, and hopefully eliminate, the current wild dog problem that is significantly and adversely impacting on the viability of many grazing enterprises across the state and in particular in Western New South Wales

Note from Council

The State Government has allocated over \$35 million for the construction of a wild dog fence which will line the borders of much of Queensland and South Australia and that funding will assist in stopping the dogs from entering this State. This investment is welcomed and appreciated and will have longer term benefits to the grazing industry.

However, the issue at the moment is the large number of wild dogs that are within the impacted parts of the state causing havoc for graziers and breeding at an exponential rate.

Urgent action is needed to arrest this current problem to protect the viability of the sheep, goat and cattle industries.

Library News- Assistance with the use of iPads

The library is a Network Partner for the Be Connected Program. Be Connected is a free Australian Government initiative to help people get the most out of going online. As part of the program, Library staff visit Rivergum Lodge once a week to give the residents lessons in using iPads. Residents very much appreciate the program, and as a result one resident has obtained her own iPad to keep in contact with her family.

Group sessions are also held at the library on a regular basis, and these are open to anyone 50 years of age and over.

The Library staff are also able to offer one on one sessions if required, and are happy to help anyone. If you would like to attend a session, or would like more information, call in and talk to our friendly staff, or call on 02 68722 751.

Flow in the River System

The flow in the Darling River is expected to see between 55,000 and 83,000 megalitres go across the Bourke Weir in what will be the best flows for a number of years.

The 55,000-83,000 megalitres is a preliminary estimate based on known water flows to date and there is every chance that the amount could exceed this level.

Bourke Shire Council advises all residents of Bourke and North Bourke that the filtered water supply for Bourke will be switched to Bore Water early in the week beginning 17th February 2020 in preparation of the receipt of the anticipated large flow in the Darling River expected to arrive in Bourke on or around the 20th February 2020.

The first flush is likely to contain water of poor quality with both high levels of turbidity and high salt content and the switch to bore water will enable the water to be treated much easier and also provide a better quality of water until the first flush passes.

Bourke Shire Council is fortunate that Council had the ability to switch to a bore supply and this was a result of the proactive work by Council utilising funding provided by the State Government for drought security but also be of benefit when we experience periods of poor water quality which is expected to occur this coming week.

Council is extremely appreciative of the funding made available by the State Government.

PV JANDRA set to cruise when conditions are favourable.

The Council owned and operated paddle boat the PV Jandra has been in dry dock undergoing its scheduled maintenance and will be ready to again start cruising once the river level reaches the right height.

Interestingly the low levels in the river have prevented the operation of the Jandra and it is likely the higher river may again stop the PV Jandra for a short period. However once the river settles to a reasonable height it will start operating for the first time in eighteen months.

The boat requires suitably qualified captains and crew to be able to operate legally and Council has been fortunate to be secure the services of suitable staff who are ready to start once the river levels is at the required height.

The fact that the Jandra was unable to operate has proved a disappointment to many tourists who had been looking forward to a trip on the Darling and a number of local tourism operators will be looking forward to the Jandra re-commencing as it means an increased visitation stopover for many tourists

Easter Weekend

A meeting to start the coordination of the Easter Weekend Program and provide an update on plans to date was held the Council Chambers last Tuesday with a very good attendance from within the community and most organisations who propose to hold a function or event over the Easter Weekend were represented.

Preservation of Cemeteries

At the Western Division Conference in Broken Hill Bourke Shire Council intends to move a number of motions including the following on funding for the preservation of cemeteries.

FROM BOURKE SHIRE- That the State Government via the Office of Environment and Heritage be requested to institute a funding stream to allow the preservation and maintenance of historic cemeteries across the State.

Note from Council

Our cemeteries are a very important part of our history and often give an insight as to the conditions and circumstances that were being experienced at certain periods of that history.

Unfortunately, the upkeep of these important parts of our history are beyond the financial capacity of many Councils and the community groups that maintain the cemeteries. Many graves have suffered subsidence and significant weathering and in need of repair and if possible, restoration.

Many cemeteries are no longer used but still need ongoing upkeep and in some instance the fencing is almost non-existent.

Quite often the graves that are in need of repair and or protection are those belonging to those who were both famous and infamous in Australian History.

The provision of funding and with the cooperation of Councils and other agencies will hopefully go a long way to addressing the issue.

Return and Earn Scheme

Since the inception of the Return and Earn Scheme in Bourke over 1.1 million cans and bottles have been recycled.

Not only does this mean that these cans and bottles don't end up in landfill it means \$110,000.00 dollars has been generated throughout the community through the refund of deposits.

The Bourke Laundry Services operated the return and earn in Bourke and it has also been a good additional income stream for that organisation as well as providing employment opportunities.

Drought Communities Fund

Council has received another one million dollars from the Australian Government as part of Round 2 of the Drought Communities project aimed at Councils impacted by the drought.

Bourke Shire Council has allocated \$100,000 of the funding to allow Community Groups to upgrade infrastructure and/or purchase furniture. The grants to community organisations are capped at \$7500.00. Cash or in-kind contributions and provide the biggest bang for bucks will be considered more favourably. Additionally, it is hoped that all goods would be purchased were possible from local providers in keeping with the overall aim of stimulating the local economy.

Council Branding

Council is currently working on new branding initiatives for the shire that include developing a set of guidelines for signage that can be used in the fabrication and installation of new place branding signage across the local government area. The guidelines will outline appropriate materials, design and placement in order to achieve a uniform look and feel across the LGA.

In consideration of the new brand and design possibilities, the Council has developed an array of mock concepts in order to garner feedback from the community. The concepts vary in styles, colour and brand usage and have for the past week have been delivered at Council's Community Consultation Meeting at Enngonia, Louth, Wanaaring, Fords Bridge, Byrock and Bourke.

Quote of the week

"Commitment is what transforms a promise into a reality."

Abraham Lincoln

Ross Earl
General Manager

