



“FROM THE GM’S DESK” 16TH APRIL 2020



APRIL MEETING OF COUNCIL

The New South Wales Government has acted swiftly to change the legislation relating to the conduct of Council meetings as a result of social distancing requirements associated with COVID-19. Up until a few weeks ago, Councillors had to attend meetings in person and their involvement by audio visual or teleconference participation was not permitted.

Legislation has now been enacted that allows Councils to conduct their meetings by Audio-Visual Link such that Councillors and staff can be remote from the Council Chamber yet still participate in the meeting.

The April Ordinary Meeting of Bourke Shire Council will be held on Monday 27th April commencing at 9.15am. Council staff will be trialling the audio visual links this week so that all will be in readiness for Councils initial monthly meeting to be held by Audio-Visual Link.

In line with social distancing laws, members of the public will not be able to physically attend the Council meeting. Council will continue to webcast its meetings by audio recording them and then making the recording available on its website. In addition, the meeting will **NOT** be preceded by a Public Forum session which, in the past has commenced at 9.00am. Should a member of the public wish to make representations to Council prior to the meeting on a matter included on the Meeting Agenda, they may provide a written submission to the General Manager by 8.30am on the morning of the meeting.

Council is required to make a copy of the Business Paper available to the public prior to the meeting and, as is normal practice, this will be available on the Council website www.bourke.nsw.gov.au

ANZAC DAY SERVICES

The dangers posed by the potential spread of COVID-19 are being mitigated by the Government by the enforcement of Public Health Orders which in part prohibits public gatherings of over two (2) people.

The requirements of the Public Health Order, resulted in the cancellation of traditional Easter Church Services for all denominations. Many Churches took the opportunity to either live stream services or post pre-recorded services on their websites which, although not quite the same as being able to participate in person, did provide a very real connection with the meaning of Easter.

The Local RSL is keen to ensure that the spirit of ANZAC in Bourke is not diminished in any way and has plans in place to pre-record a Dawn Service and a Morning Service, both of which will be broadcast by 2WEB.

The Dawn Service will commence at 6.00am with residents asked to stand in their driveways for the duration of the service and follow the service via the 2WEB broadcast. The morning service will commence at 11.00am and again residents are asked to show their respect for those who served our country in the various conflicts across the globe by standing in their driveways and following the service on 2WEB.

LOCAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (LEMC)

The LEMC continues to meet on a regular basis and provides the opportunity for representatives to be updated in relation to the strategies being implemented to control the spread of COVID-19 through the community. There is, of course, a strong focus on how these strategies are being applied and enforced locally.

COUNCILS DRAFT OPERATIONAL PLAN (BUDGET) 2020/2021

The draft of the Operational Plan for 2020/2021 was presented to the Ordinary Meeting of Council on Monday 23rd March 2020 where it was approved for advertising.

The Operational Plan had previously been subject to review and amendment by the Corporate Planning Committee of Bourke Shire Council at its meeting held on Monday 16th March 2020.

All submissions are required to be considered by Council prior to the adoption of the Operational Plan and this will be done at the May 2020 Council Meeting.

As part of the community consultation process, copies of the Draft Operational Plan for 2020/2021 were to be available at the Council Offices and the Library. Public access to both of these locations is now not available, however residents and rate payers are still able to review the document online at www.bourke.nsw.gov.au .

If for some reason, you are unable to access the document online and would like to review the Operational Plan, arrangements can be made for a copy to be made available to you. Please contact Councils Office on 02 68308000.

INFORMATION FOR BOURKE RESIDENTS IN RELATION TO COVID-19

The Bourke Local Emergency Management Committee (LEMC) has established a COVID-19 Facebook information page for the Shire.

The idea is to provide a single source of up to date information in relation to COVID-19 and its impact on the Bourke Shire community.

The information will also be provided via a link on Councils Website: <https://bourke.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/>

The Facebook page is being managed by staff at the Shire and those who have access to Facebook should go to Bourke Community COVID-19 Information

It is important that the messaging that is given to the public is both accurate at the time of release and consistent with the messaging provided by Health Authorities.

If you have any queries in relation to COVID-19, websites have been established by both the Federal and State governments and should be accessed in the first instance. The links to these sites appear on Council's website

MOTOR VEHICLE INSPECTIONS -SERVICE NEW SOUTH WALES

There have been a number of changes put into place regarding registration of motor vehicles and renewal of licences as a result of the restrictions of movement and the closure of some Service New South Wales Offices, including the agency operated by Bourke Shire Council.

Some three (3) weeks ago, Council flagged with the Member for Barwon, Roy Butler MP, some of the difficulties that may be experienced if people were not able to drive to have their vehicle inspected or those inspection facilities were not available as a result of the ongoing concerns regarding COVID-19.

Roy Butler has followed through on the issue and advises that he has received the following information:

"I have been advised by Service NSW that for customers who are required to obtain a safety inspection (pink slip) to renew their vehicle registration, but can't due to travel restrictions associated with COVID-19, a deferral may be available.

The deferral is for registration renewals that are due to expire on or before 02 May 2020 or those that have expired (up to 3 months from the expiry. If expired more than 3 months, the vehicle's registration will need to be re-established)

All light vehicles (with a GVM of 4.5 tonne or less) are eligible, except for vehicles with an outstanding defect notice or failed inspection report.

I am seeking further information on safety inspection checks for Caravans. I'll update you when this information becomes available.

Please note the following will apply:-

- The vehicle will need to pass a safety inspection at a later date*
- Transport NSW will be in contact with the new inspection due date and instructions on how to provide the safety inspection report*
- Registration suspension or cancellation may occur if a passed safety inspection is not carried out or reported to Transport NSW*

If you wish to have your inspection deferred, please ensure your CTP insurance is purchased and then either call 13 77 88 between 7.00am – 7.00pm Monday to Friday, or attend Service NSW to have your registration renewed manually.

Arrangements have also been put in place for the renewal of licences and details for these can be obtained from the Service NSW Website.

Link: <https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/covid-19> "

I take the opportunity to thank Roy for his assistance in this matter.

ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR WANAARING ROAD

The Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, the Hon Paul Toole MP has announced that Bourke Shire Council will receive a further \$9.45m in funding under the Fixing Country Roads initiative of the NSW Government to continue work on the reconstruction and sealing of Main Road 405 between Bourke and Wanaaring.

In welcoming the announcement Mayor Barry Hollman said he could not thank the State Government enough for their commitment to this project and the social and economic benefits it brings.

The new section of work to be undertaken is a 29.17km section of road between Romani and Wongamana.

The Fixing Country Roads Funding will be supplemented by \$800,000.00 from other sources, making this stage of the project, \$10.25m in total.

Including the funding received via the recent announcement Council has now received a total of \$26.362m in funding for the reconstruction of the Wanaaring Road.

Council construction crews will shortly commence the finalisation of the reconstruction of an 8km section between Goonery and Barakee in preparation for sealing. It is anticipated that this work will be completed by the end of August 2020, whereupon the Romani to Wongamana works will commence.

Once the Romani to Wongamana section is completed in 2021, only three sections of the Wanaaring Road, totalling 36.39 km, will remain to be reconstructed and sealed.

With the new funding being made available it will mean that a total of 95 km of the Wanaaring Road has been subject to reconstruction and sealing since the introduction of the Fixing Country Roads Program by the NSW Government.

FUNDING UNDER FIXING COUNTRY BRIDGES PROGRAM

The Minister for Roads, the Hon. Paul Toole, MP, has announced that Bourke Shire Council will receive \$1.515m under the Fixing Country Bridges Program to widen two (2) bridges on Main Road 68 South (Bourke to Wilcannia) to two (2) lanes from the current one (1) lane width that currently exists.

The two (2) bridges are located at Jandra Creek No 2, 20km from Kidman Way, and the bridge over Compadore Creek, 148.3km from Kidman Way on Main Road 68 South.

The funding will be supplemented by \$400,000 from other sources, making the budget for the bridge widening projects, a total of \$1.915m.

COUNCIL IS MAINTAINING ALL ESSENTIAL SERVICES

During the uncertain times associated with COVID-19, it is advised that Councils essential services are currently being maintained including, water and waste water, garbage collection, street and gutter cleaning, road maintenance and construction, public toilet maintenance and cleaning and waste management facility.

BOURKE SHIRE COUNCIL'S CONTINUITY MANAGEMENT TEAM (CMT)

The CMT is chaired by the General Manager and involves all the managers plus other relevant staff of Council and is involved in reviewing such matters as they impact on Council's operations should the level of restrictions on movement be significantly increased

For the past four (4) weeks, the CMT, which was established as part of the Bourke Shire Council Business Continuity Plan, have been meeting three (3) times per week to ensure that the action being taken by Council are meeting legislative requirements as well as the practical requirements of Councils operations.

ALTERATIONS TO COUNCIL PROVIDED SERVICES

In keeping with the directive to limit gatherings to two (2) people, all tourist facilities have been temporarily closed, the Bourke Public Library is temporarily closed, the Council offices are closed to the public (but staff are continuing to work), all playground equipment and the skate park are closed, halls and community centres are closed except for use for the provision of health services. Parks can be used for exercise but only in accordance with the social distancing rules.

SIGNIFICANT CHANGES TO CONFERENCE AND TRAINING SCHEDULES

All conferences and training have come to a standstill as a result of the introduction of the social distancing provisions and restrictions on gatherings.

Some planned events have been cancelled whilst others have been deferred indefinitely. However, with the uncertainty surrounding just how long the current restrictions will need to be in place, it is likely that many planned conferences will not be held.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE EFFORTS OF OUR FEDERAL AND STATE LEADERS

Those tasked with the decision-making processes in relation to the control of COVID-19 have got an unenviable task as they try to put in measures that will both protect the health of the people and at the same time consider the long term economic impact of these decisions.

The leaders of our Nation act on the best advice available, including strategies based on the action taken by other countries where COVID-19 gained a foothold much earlier than it did in Australia.

There is no textbook to follow as we are basically in uncharted territory and the scale of the decisions required to be made are enormous and would no doubt place a huge degree of stress on all those concerned.

Our leaders have families and friends all of whom are as equally impacted by their decisions as the rest of the community and we need to have confidence and faith that the decisions made will be in the best long term interest of the country. However, the directions given can only be effective if they are followed by everyone. I believe the Quote of the Week, as detailed below, is appropriate to the current situation. I also note that there has been, generally, a bipartisan approach to most of the initiatives with few differences of opinion. Times like this are not a time for political statements but a time for unity and collaboration which seems to be what is occurring and this can only be of benefit to Australia as a nation.

Quote of the week!

"Individual commitment to a group effort - that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilisation work."

Vince Lombardi

Ross Earl
General Manager

