



# “From the GM’s Desk”

## 28<sup>th</sup> MAY 2020



### CCTV NETWORK

Council is continuing to extend the CCTV security network in Bourke and this week contractors installed two (2) new cameras, one (1) at the western end of Mitchell Street and the other on the Mitchell Highway as you come into town from North Bourke.

These two (2) additional cameras were included in an application for funding from the State Government to enhance the coverage of the network.

The cameras are utilised by the Police on a daily basis and the footage has proven to be very useful. A visible security camera can serve as a deterrent that assists in preventing crime. Council will continue to expand the network in consultation with the Police as funding becomes available.

### COVID-19 RATES FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE POLICY

As part of the COVID-19 response and recovery initiatives Council is offering rate relief for community members and businesses suffering financial hardship. Council adopted at the ordinary meeting of Council on Monday the COVID-19 Rates and Financial Assistance Policy.

The Policy allows eligible Ratepayers to defer the next three (3) quarterly rate instalments and request a payment plan. In addition, Council has suspended interest charges to eligible Ratepayers for the period approved in the application to ease the burden on businesses and community members. We want our community to know we are here to support them through these difficult circumstances. Applications form are available on the Council webpage or contact the office on 02 68308000 and speak to Councils Revenue Officer

### BOURKE FILTERED WATER SUPPLY

For the period **25<sup>th</sup> May 2020 to 25<sup>th</sup> June 2020** the filtered water supply for Bourke and North Bourke will be utilising water from the emergency water bore system. The water will be subject to a trial desalination process from the recently installed desalination plant, which has been funded by the New South Wales State Government.

The operation of the desalination plant is designed to ensure that the sodium level in the town supply as a result of the desalination process is maintained at a maximum level 150mg/l. Previous testing of the bores shows the sodium concentrations range being from 289 mg/L to 353 mg/L.

**During the thirty (30) day trial period, it is anticipated that the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines (ADWG) of 180mg/l in respect of sodium levels may be breached for short periods as the plant is shut down during the trial period. This will allow for modification could enable any modification works required to be made to the plant to be undertaken.**

The Australian Drinking Water Guidelines (ADWG) provides a value of 180 mg/L as the concentration at which people are likely to taste sodium in their drinking water. NSW Health has previously confirmed that the bore water is safe to drink.

Anyone who may be concerned about the possible sodium in the water and the impact on their diet, should talk to their doctor for specific advice.

### **BOURKE CERAMIC FACILITY**

The newly completed Ceramic Facility at the Bourke Airport should be operational shortly. The project was an initiative of the Bourke Arts Community who was successful in obtaining State Government funding of \$60,000 for the project. The Bourke Arts Community undertook the work in conjunction with Bourke Shire. Housed in an existing but largely unused building has meant a major internal fit-out plus the purchase of equipment and the upgrade of electricity.

### **TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF RICHARD STREET**

A reminder that Richard Street is closed at the intersection with Darling Street to allow the installation of a new stormwater pump station. At this stage, it is anticipated that the intersection will be closed for approximately one month with the street scheduled to re-open on the 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2020.

The pump station is designed to allow the pumping of stormwater into the river when the height of the river is above the normal outlet pipes.

In times of high river flow, the outlet pipes need to be blocked to stop water from flowing into the town.

### **PLANS OF MANAGEMENT FOR CROWN RESERVES**

Council is currently drafting Plans of Management for the various Crown Reserves under its care and control. This is a State Government requirement under the Crown Land Management Act 2016. Part of the development of these plans includes seeking feedback from regular user groups. This includes any plans or suggestions for new infrastructure, upgrades to existing infrastructure and future maintenance or improvements on Crown Reserves. If you or your organisation regularly utilise a reserve, Council seeks your feedback about this matter.

Feedback can be submitted via email to [bourkeshire@bourke.nsw.gov.au](mailto:bourkeshire@bourke.nsw.gov.au) or via post to PO Box 21 Bourke NSW 2840 by **4<sup>th</sup> June 2020**.

### **COVIDSafe Phone App**

I would ask residents to please consider the option of downloading the Australian Governments COVIDSafe phone app. It is suggested that you research the issue and then make your own decision as to whether you download the App. Information on the App is available by visiting: [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)

### **MOTOR VEHICLE REGISTRATION INSPECTIONS**

As part of COVID-19 restrictions, Council previously announced the cessation of it undertaking Pink and Blue Slip Inspections for motor vehicle registrations "until further notice". Given the recent relaxation of Public Health Orders associated with the Pandemic and following a review of available private providers available in Bourke to undertake registration inspections, it is advised that **Council will no longer be undertaking Pink Slip Inspections at its Workshop. Council will continue to undertake Blue Slip inspections.** Council will also continue to review the availability of private providers to undertake such Blue Slip inspections with a view to ultimately leaving both types of inspections to the private sector to undertake.

Pink Slip Inspections can be booked at the following Authorised Inspection Stations:-

- Bookings for Garfield's can be made by calling 0427721136.
- Bookings for R & R Motors can be made by calling 68723100.
- Bookings for Simmo's Outback Repairs can be made by calling 68722217

Bookings for Council to undertake Blue Slip Inspections can now be made by phoning the Council Office on 68308000, noting that in undertaking such inspections, Council has in place procedures to ensure social distancing and hygienics practices are maintained.

### **GRANT FUNDING**

Bourke Shire Council will be the recipient of \$1,199,903 in grant funding announced by the Federal Minister for Local Government and Federal Member for Parkes, the Hon. Mark Coulton, MP this week.

The funding announcement includes the establishment of a new \$500 million “Local Road and Community Infrastructure Program” that can be utilised by Councils across Australia for a wide range of initiatives, with the intent to stimulate the economy and buy locally to assist in the recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Local road projects to be delivered under the Program include, but are not limited to, constructing or improving bridges and tunnels, street lighting, and heavy vehicle facilities, such as rest areas.

A broad range of community infrastructure projects will be eligible including new or upgraded bicycle and walking paths, community facilities, and picnic shelters and barbeque facilities at parks.

Council staff have always tried to be on the front foot when it comes to having shovel ready projects. To this end, staff have recently met to identify potential projects when next applying for funds to ensure that projects as submitted align with Councils Community Strategic Plan and Delivery Program.

Once the Funding Guidelines are provided, it is proposed that a workshop with Councillors be held so that the strategic priorities can be further determined and finalised.

### **PLANNING FOR SPORTING AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES IN BOURKE SHIRE**

Back in July 2017, Council convened two (2) community /user group sessions in respect of planning for the future needs for Bourke’s sporting and recreational facilities.

These sessions were facilitated, at the request of Bourke Shire Council, by the Office of Sport – Western Office, as an independent facilitator. Sessions were attended by the Mayor, Councillors and staff of Council along with community members, sport club representatives and interested community members. A total of 47 community members contributed to the two (2) planning sessions.

The sessions were designed to gather information from the community, outlining in terms of Sport and Recreation in the LGA, what is done well and what is not done well.

In addition, what infrastructure is good and what infrastructure is not good and or further needed, what future opportunities exist for expanding sport and recreation participation, holding of events, training and upskilling of community members to better manage their sporting environment into the future.

As a result of the workshops, it was determined:-

- 1. Increased cooperation and coordination between sporting groups*
- 2. The community is seeking to increase access to support structures, training and athlete development and volunteer training and recruitment. (Perhaps a volunteering recruitment/marketing program specifically targeting Bourke).*
- 3. That there may be opportunity to seek cost savings through alternate sport participation models.*
- 4. That continued upgrades and maintenance of the Cooligan Oval, Davidson Oval and Central Park precinct remains the highest priority for the community.*

5. *That the Pool, although a high cost item, is in need of significant works which is strongly supported by the community as its second most important works to be undertaken.*
6. *That the Central Park precinct, toilets (which also supports the tennis/netball clubs) and shade for skate park and sport groups to train under during hot/wet weather is the third most important space for attention.*
7. *Although only supported by one group (the to be formed Dragon Boat Club) a pontoon for multiuser groups at the wharf is achievable and would encourage greater river usage by the public and tourists.*
8. *That the boat ramp requires some upgrade.*

The above were the identified as key needs of the community.

Whilst there is still some work to undertake in relation to getting the various sporting groups to work together, all the infrastructure identified as being in need of repair, replacement or in need of being constructed on the priority list, have been improved.

It is a credit to the community who worked collaboratively to identify the projects and to Council who looked at the strategic priorities and utilising both its own funds and grant funds to bring the priority “wish list” to a reality in a very short period of time.

The three (3) items that remain outstanding follow:-

- *Increased cooperation and coordination between sport groups;*
- *The community is seeking to increase access to support structures, training and athlete development and volunteer training and recruitment. (perhaps a volunteering recruitment/marketing program specifically targeting Bourke); and*
- *That there may be opportunity to seek cost savings through alternate sport participation models.*

The above matters are seen as being very important and it is proposed that through the assistance of Mark Horton of the New South Wales Office of Sport, to have another facilitated session to see how some of these outstanding items can be achieved.

It is often said that the success of sporting clubs is based on strong and collaborative committees and administration and the training of both coaches and volunteers who act in numerous capacities seen as a crucial step in developing sports in rural areas.

### **ACTIVE KIDS PROGRAM**

The NSW Government is helping children to get active with the Active Kids Program.

The Active Kids Program provides two (2) \$100 vouchers for parents, guardians and carers of school-enrolled children to use towards sport and active recreation costs each year.

Voucher One (1) is valid for the period January to December and Voucher Two (2) is valid from July to December.

The vouchers may be used with a registered activity provider for registration, participation and membership costs for sport, fitness and active recreation activities.

To use a voucher, find a [registered activity provider](#) and present your voucher when you sign up.

The Active Kids program is one of more than [70 NSW Government rebates and savings](#) that help with your cost of living.

Mark Horton will during his next visit to Bourke explain how to access the Active Kids Vouchers to Parents Guardians and also the various sporting groups.

The vouchers are designed to ensure all school aged children have the opportunity to participate in sport recognising that the costs can be quite high if individual children want to play multiple sports.

### **ENERGY ACCOUNTS PAYMENTS ASSISTANCE**

If you're having difficulty paying your household energy account due to short-term financial issues or an emergency, such as unexpected medical bills or reduced income due to COVID-19, you could be eligible for Energy Accounts Payment Assistance (EAPA) \$50 vouchers.

EAPA vouchers are sent electronically to your energy retailer and used to credit your home electricity or gas account. EAPA vouchers can't be used to put your energy account into credit.

Applying for EAPA vouchers involves an eligibility assessment. EAPA voucher limits apply and are based on your assessment.

In terms of eligibility, applicants must:-

- have an electricity or natural gas account for a NSW residential supply address, which is your primary place of residence
- be the electricity or natural gas account holder (your account and bill must be in your name)
- be experiencing a short-term financial crisis or emergency that has impacted your ability to pay your current residential energy bill (in full or in part) due to financial hardship.

The link for applying for EAPA is: <https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/transaction/energy-accounts-payment-assistance-eapa-scheme>

### **CENTRAL PARK**

Looking at Central Park over the weekend, I was impressed with just how good it is looking and what a difference the availability of water plus a couple of inches of rain makes. The park is utilised considerably and caters for a wide array of users. The past few years have seen the fencing around the tennis courts repaired, the installation of the covered children's playground equipment, the tennis clubhouse repaired, outdoor gym equipment installed, work on Poet's Corner undertaken, the skate park constructed, new toilets, a half-court basketball court with lighting, and a number of new seats and tables erected. Shade sails have been erected over the skate park and further sails will be erected over the gym equipment in coming days.

Further work is planned for around the Cenotaph and Poets Corner, along with repairs to the rotunda. These works will be undertaken with funding provided by the NSW Government as part of the extended CBD Beautification Plan.

### **ABC NEWS COVERAGE OF BOURKE, LOUTH AND BREWARRINA**

Bourke, Louth and Brewarrina were the subject of a brief three-part series on the ABC News over the weekend with a focus on the Darling River.

Dubbo based ABC journalist, Lucy Thackray, together with producer, Jen Ingall from Tamworth, put the series together and drove out to Bourke and the other towns to interview local people to get a feel for the impact of the drought and the change that has occurred since the river started to flow again.

The focus was the revival of the river and the resulting change in dynamics of the respective communities and associated agriculture, showcasing how after such a long period of drought and no flow in the river, the outlook has now dramatically improved.

After such a long period of drought related stories, it is good to see a shift in focus to positive changes in the environment and the resilience shown by the flora and fauna which have bounced back brilliantly. Hopefully, these and like stories will inspire people to come and visit and provide a boost for our tourist industry. From reports there has been some positive indications this will be the case, so well done and thank you to Lucy and Jen.

**QUOTE OF THE WEEK!**

*"The will to win, the desire to succeed, the urge to reach your full potential...  
these are the keys that will unlock the door to personal excellence".*

*Confucius*

Ross Earl  
General Manager