



“From the GM’s Desk”

9th JULY 2020



NEW WATER TREATMENT PLANT

The Contractors undertaking the construction of Bourke’s new Water Treatment Plant are progressing well, with a considerable amount of work having already been undertaken on this \$11 million project.

The works require a considerable amount of concrete to be utilised and this has meant the installation of an onsite batching plant, which is being operated in conjunction with local suppliers.

Construction of sludge lagoons at the northern end of the treatment plant complex are well underway whilst the southeastern corner of the site is being prepared for the construction of the main water treatment building.

The works are programmed to be completed in mid-2021.

DESALINATION PLANT

It has been necessary to suspend the trial of the Bourke Desalination Plant due to Councils existing water treatment plant being unable to treat bore water to the required standard to allow the water to then readily go through the desalination process.

Council and the Bourke community is fortunate that at the moment there is sufficient water within the weir pool to enable this source of water to be utilised for at least the next six (6) months, even without further rain.

The focus at this stage has turned to planning for the incorporation of the desalination plant into the new water treatment plant. The technology within the new plant will allow the water to be treated to a standard that will allow the desalination plant to readily further process the water.

Whilst the delay is unfortunate, it will mean a better outcome in the longer term.

LIBRARY

The Bourke Public Library is now open from 11.00am – 5.00pm, Monday to Friday. Whilst programs are still not able to be presented in the Library, the Library has a significant level of resources available to assist in keeping children occupied during the July School Holidays. Why not check out the Library’s junior non-fiction collection, assist your children to develop their computer coding skills, do some simple but fun science experiments or enjoy some cooking or craftwork? The Library has a great range of titles for all of these topics, and many more. The Library also has a large collection of DVD’s available for borrowing, including Disney movies, LEGO Star Wars, LEGO Friends, Barbie, Mister Maker and heaps more!

During the holidays, the Library will be making take-home craft kits available. If you would like a kit, register at the Library by phoning 68722751, or email bpl@bourkeLibrary.com.au. Do not forget to check out the fantastic online resources. Try Story Box Library to watch story time sessions with a range of popular readers. Our Borrow Box and RB Digital apps have lots of kid’s eBooks and eAudio that you can borrow without having to leave home. RB Digital also has kids’ eMagazines available. Just download the apps and register with your Library card number.

If you would like any more information, contact the Library and one of the friendly staff who will be happy to assist. Do not forget to like the Library’s Facebook and Instagram pages to get updates on what is happening at the Library.

ROAD CLASSIFICATION REVIEW

In the company of fellow representatives from the Far North West Joint Organisation (FNWJO), being the Councils of Bourke, Cobar and Walgett, a meeting was held last week with the Independent Panel formed by the NSW Government to oversee a review of Road Classifications and Regional Road transfers in NSW.

The meeting with the Panel, which is chaired by Ms Wendy Machin, was held via audio-visual link.

This Review is a most important initiative of the NSW Government and follows a commitment at the 2019 State election to transfer up to 15,000 km of regional roads to State management. In addition, this is a very important matter for Bourke Shire. Currently in the Bourke Shire, there are some 570kms of regional roads, which includes the Wilcannia Rd (via Louth and Tilpa), Hungerford Rd, Wanaaring Rd and Cobar Rd.

Whilst Council has been successful in obtaining grant funding from Government to undertake, for example, the sealing of the Wanaaring Rd in recent years, ongoing maintenance costs for these regional roads are funded by Council. Such maintenance requirements are not sustainable into the future for Council. A similar situation is applicable in both Cobar and Walgett Shires.

Given this, the Joint Organisation will be taking the necessary action to engage an engineering consultancy to prepare a submission to the Panel on its behalf. The preferred outcome from the submission is for respective Regional Roads being transferred to the NSW Government. In pursuing this outcome, the JO members would also be seeking to enter into a contract with Government which would see the Councils continuing to undertake both improvement works and the necessary programmed and emergency maintenance works on the roadways. In this regard, Council acknowledges the responsiveness and the wider economic benefit generated by employing road crews to undertake these works.

In addition to the FNWJO presenting a submission, Council will also present a submission specifically in respect of the Bourke Shire.

ROAD WORKS

Councils Road Construction Crew has recommenced reconstruction and sealing works on the Wanaaring Road this week, being the Goonery to Barakee section of the roadway. Councils aim is to complete the remaining 8km left on the of the Wanaaring Road by October 2020, at a total cost of \$5million.

Following the completion of the Goonery to Barakee section, the crew will then commence work on the 5th section of the upgrading of the Wanaaring Road project, being the Romani to Wangamana section. This section of the road involves 22.7 km of new seal. Council has programmed to complete this section by July 2021 at a cost of \$10.15m. These works include the drilling of a new water supply bore at Tringadee.

Once the Romani to Wangamana section is completed, only some 35 km of unsealed road between Bourke and Wanaaring will remain. Council is currently in the process of applying for funding to seal these remaining 35 kms of road and if successful, will result in the Bourke to Wanaaring Road being totally sealed; something that was very much a distant dream only three (3) years ago.

Council's maintenance crew has now completed roadworks on the Bundy Road and are now moving to the Twin Rivers Road to start maintenance grading. The team will then be aiming to complete maintenance grading on all roads around Enngonia by October 2020.

Maintenance grading will also commence on the Amaroo and Avondale Roads west of Louth this week.

WORK AT RENSHAW OVAL

Work will shortly commence on the installation of the new toilet block and underground watering system at Renshaw Oval.

These works will see a continuation of the significant amount of improvement works that have already been undertaken in this precinct making the facilities much more attractive and user friendly.

WORK AT BOURKE COMMUNITY CENTRE

Work on the renovation of the Bourke Community Centre (formerly the Senior Citizens Centre) has all but finished and regular users of the facility will be pleased with the outcome.

The facility was in need of the renovations which were undertaken, and the improved facilities will provide an ideal location for community groups to meet.

SWIMMING POOL RECONSTRUCTION

The upgrading of the 50 metre pool at the Bourke Memorial Swimming Pool is progressing well, with the first pour of concrete, comprising the deep end section of the pool, having been undertaken last week.

The filtration room and filter system have also seen significant works completed with a new state of the art backwash system installed and over 30 tonnes of filter media lifted into the tanks. This system will see a significant saving to water usage from the old system. Formation works are currently being carried out on the accessible ramp and the shallow end of the pool with concrete expected to be poured early next week.

IMPROVEMENT OF SPORTING FACILITIES AND COORDINATION OF SPORTING GROUPS IN BOURKE

Following a series of workshops held in May 2017, facilitated by Mark Horton, Regional Coordinator - NSW Sport and Recreation, a number of priorities were identified in relation to suggested improvements to sporting facilities in Bourke. As a result of this prioritisation project and through the allocation of funding, including loan and grant funding, the majority of these improvements have now been undertaken.

There were, however, three (3) items which relate to administrative and operational functions, relating to sport in Bourke, which were identified as in need of improvement. These are as follows:-

1. Increased cooperation and coordination between sport groups;
2. Increased access to support structures, training and athlete development and volunteer training and recruitment. (This potentially includes volunteer recruitment/marketing program specifically targeting Bourke); and
3. Pursuit of opportunities to seek cost savings through alternate sport participation models.

Mark Horton has indicated that the Office of Sport is available to assist clubs and community groups pursue the above matters by facilitating discussions to streamline club administration options, as long as it has the support of the community.

Mr Horton has agreed to come to Bourke to facilitate a meeting of interested persons with a view to improving the three (3) items identified above and has tentatively made himself available on the evening of 29 July 2020. It would be hoped that a meeting can be hosted by Council on the night aimed at working with sporting and community groups towards developing a strategy to achieve a positive outcome to the above three (3) identified areas.

NOMINATION FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AWARDS

Bourke Shire Council has submitted nominations for annual awards which are conducted by both the Local Government Professionals and Local Government New South Wales.

The awards recognise outstanding achievements in various sections of the local government sector and are extremely competitive however, as they say, unless you put in an entry you have no chance of winning. The awards will be announced over the next few weeks. Normally the awards are presented at an awards function hosted by each of the organisations but this year, with COVID-19 and the resultant restrictions on large gatherings, the awards for both will be conducted via audiovisual means.

It is important that we recognise and celebrate the achievements of our industry and those who strive to make a difference in the way local government delivers services to the community.

BOURKE SHIRE TOURISM NUMBERS CONTINUE TO INCREASE

Tourism numbers within the Bourke Shire have increased dramatically over the past couple of weeks with large numbers of caravaners travelling.

The Back O' Bourke Exhibition Centre and Tourist information Centre have been extremely busy and bookings on the Jandra have been at capacity on a number of days. The numbers on the Jandra are restricted due to the regulations surrounding COVID-19 but are still very good.

Caravan Parks and the National Parks all have had good numbers and the town is generally seeing an influx of visitors.

My old friend Bill Elliott from Wilcannia who writes a small article for distribution to those in the tourism industry across the far west of the state each week, has said that the increase in travellers is right across the Far West with little towns like Ivanhoe apparently seeing record numbers of caravans.

The uncertainty surrounding the opening of state borders has seen those travelling look for alternative destinations and this has been good for the western part of the state. Bourke has built a reputation as a tourist destination. With its iconic status in Australian folklore, Bourke is a popular spot for visitors, and it is important that we are able to provide our visitors with a unique experience and the variety of activities available goes a long way to achieving this objective.

All tourism attractions in Bourke are again operational and Council has embarked on a programme to enhance the tourism product within the Shire including better signage, increased facilities and the provision of tourism information by the use of both QR codes and displays.

Work is continuing on the renovations to the Back O Bourke displays.

Work has been undertaken on the old part of the Bourke Cemetery with the assistance of Paul Roe and Andrew Hull, both of whom have a strong interest in Bourke and a wealth of knowledge in relation to the history of the area.

With air travel across the globe likely to be restricted for at least the next 6 months, many people who would have elected to go overseas will now look to travel domestically. This will ultimately result in an ongoing increase in visitation.

ONE YEAR AGO THIS WEEK

As of Thursday, 9 July 2019, the Darling River had stopped flowing over the weir at Bourke for 325 days.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK!

"It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it. If you think about that, you'll do things differently."

Warren Buffett

Ross Earl
General Manager