



“From the GM’s Desk”

30th JULY 2020



BOURKE DRIVE THROUGH TESTING CLINIC FOR COVID-19

The Western NSW Local Area Health District will be conducting a drive-through testing Clinic for COVID-19 from 10.00 am to 2.00pm today, Thursday, 30th July 2020.

The drive-through clinic will be held in Mitchell Street, opposite the Men’s Shed.

TOURISM NUMBERS AND ACTIVITY WITH THE SHIRE

Jandra Paddleboat commenced on the 29th June running twice daily from Monday to Saturday – 9.00am and 2.30pm and again on Sunday with a two (2)-hour cruise from 2.00pm. With the restrictions in place due to the need to comply with the Public Health Order, the numbers on the boat has had to be restricted.

These restrictions have meant reduced numbers than otherwise may have been achieved.

For the first 20 days of this month, the Jandra has run 37 trips of which 14 of these were 100% occupancy, eight (8) at 80% occupancy and three (3) at 60% occupancy.

The Crossley Engine is also working and commenced operations on the 29 June and is operating five (5) days a week, Monday to Friday from 12.00pm. The repair work on the Crossley has been undertaken with the Crossley now operating with both pistons.

Aboriginal Cultural Walks has also recommenced. The 45-minute walk delves into the authentic history of Aboriginal peoples’ heritage around Bourke.

Those people undertaking the Cultural Walks discover how Aboriginal people used valuable resources such as seasonal flora and fauna and how a personal connection is formed with the land.

Once again there has been positive reviews from those who have had the opportunity to undertake the walk.

Visitors numbers remain strong with many people who would have gone overseas or to other states within Australia have had their travel restricted and many are taking the opportunity to tour out west and see the numerous attractions that this part of the state has to offer.

MEETING OF THE FAR NORTH WEST JOINT ORGANISATION OF COUNCILS

The Far North West Joint Organisation of Councils (FNWJO), comprising the Councils of Bourke, Cobar and Walgett, met on Wednesday, 29 July 2020 via audio visual link.

Amongst the issues discussed at the meeting were the following:-

1. A review of the organisations Budget;
2. The allocation of funding made available by the Office of Local Government to a Tourism Marketing Strategy;
3. The potential for a Cross Border Tourism Strategy;
4. The Regional Roads Classification Review;
5. The Contaminated Lands Project; and
6. An update from a recent forum involving between Chairs of all the JO’s in NSW.
7. The FNWJO has a number of projects which are being undertaken on behalf of members, with the level of support and cooperation amongst members being acknowledged.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT WEEK 2020

During the period 3 - 9 August 2020, Local Government areas across NSW will celebrate the provision of Council services that extended beyond roads, rates and rubbish. These extended services include public libraries, childcare centres, sporting facilities, arts and culture, building and development, and much more.

The fact that Local Government provides such a vast range of services is undoubtedly the reason for the 2020 theme being **COUNCILS DO**.

Did you know?

- Local Government in NSW employs more than 55,000 people;
- Local Government in NSW looks after more than \$136 billion of community assets;
- Local Government in NSW spends more than \$1.9 billion each year on caring for the environment, including recycling and waste management, stormwater management and preserving and protecting native flora and fauna;
- NSW has 450 Council-run libraries that attract more than 34.8 million visits each year;
- Local Government in NSW is responsible for approximately 90% of the state's roads and bridges;
- NSW Councils manage an estimated 3.5 million tonnes of waste each year; and,
- NSW Councils own and manage more than 600 museums, galleries, theatres and art centres.

The level of services provided by each Council varies dependant on the location, size and demographics of the individual Council area and often Councils are required to fill voids when other tiers of Government or the private sector are unable to provide services.

Bourke Shire Council, for example, provides a number of non-traditional services including the provision of Doctors Surgery and Housing, the availability of a dental surgery, a heavy vehicle inspection station, an agency of Service New South Wales, the PV Jandra and other tourism facilities.

In providing services across the Shire, Council very much relies on the assistance of community volunteers to ensure maintenance costs are reduced and that the range of services is able to be continued.

The strong relationship between Council and the community has seen a range of service's able to be provided to improve the social amenity that would otherwise been unaffordable.

This year throughout Local Government Week, LGNSW will be using its own communications channels to share examples of best-practice Council projects from entries in this year's Local Government Week Awards. Winners will be announced during a special online ceremony at 1.00pm on Thursday, 6 August.

Bourke Shire has entries in two (2) divisions, and we await the outcome of these entries.

VISIT BY THE HON.MARK COULTON, MP

Always keen to be able to catch up with Councils within his electorate, the Member for Parkes, the Hon. Mark Coulton, MP visited Bourke on Monday, 20 July 2020 and meet with Bourke Council representatives.

Council had the opportunity to raise a number of issues with Mark and also thank him for his advocacy on behalf of Council on a number of issues including the improvement to mobile phone services within the area.

Mark has a number of Ministerial Portfolios as well as servicing by far the biggest electorate in New South Wales. Regardless, and to his credit, he still manages to maintain a high level of personal contact across his electorate and is readily contactable when needed and responds quickly to issues raised with him for advice and/or assistance.

Mark's Ministerial Portfolios includes Minister for Regional Health, Regional Communications and Local Government all of which are no doubt very busy portfolios which take in the whole of Australia. His ability to find time to visit Bourke on a regular basis is very much appreciated.

VISIT BY STAFF OF THE NEW DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL NEW SOUTH WALES

The Secretary of the new Department for Regional New South Wales, Gary Barnes, was to visit Bourke last Tuesday to introduce the new Department to Council and provide information as to the role of the new Department.

Unfortunately, Gary was called away to another engagement at the last moment, but the balance of the group was still able to visit and explain the role of the new Department.

The group included Michael Wright, Deputy Secretary, Department of Minerals, Exploration and Geoscience, Stewart McLaughlin from the same Department along with Ashley Albury, Director Regional Coordination for Central West and Far West. Ashley has been in this role for some time now and has provided an excellent link for Council with the various Departments of the NSW Government.

The Department, as the name suggests, will focus on the regions but importantly will have the bulk of their staff regionally based with offices to be established in Dubbo, Armidale, Coffs Harbour and Queanbeyan.

Previously the regional functions were located within the Department of Planning Environment and Industry.

The new Regional Department also includes Public Works Advisory and Local Lands Services and will have approximately 4500 staff. All of those staff, with the exception of some 100, will be regionally based.

LIBRARY NEWS

While services at the library are still restricted, there are many resources available for the community.

You may not be aware that the library contains much more than just books. It also has a big range of audio-visual materials. DVD's are available for loan for adults and kids, so if you are keen to binge watch Midsomer Murders or Downton Abbey, or all the Mad Max or Avengers movies, then the library is the place to go.

In addition, the library has a range of music CD's, audio books on CD and Play Away available for loan. Staff are currently working on adding new content to the library website as physical library services continue to be restricted due to COVID-19.

The first online escape room for kids has recently been added. More escape rooms for both kids and adults will be added over the coming weeks, along with the addition of games such as trivia challenges.

The library is keen to hear what you think about the escape rooms, so give them a try and let the library know your opinion. Go to www.bourkelibrary.com.au to access the escape rooms, as well as all the fantastic online resources. You can also download the Bourke Public Library app, available on the App Store and Google Play. If you would like any more information contact the library on 0268722751 or bpl@bourkelibrary.com.au, and one of the friendly staff will be happy to help you.

ROADS UPDATE

Officers from Transport for New South Wales (TfNSW) were in Bourke last week to review work required to be undertaken on the State Highways in the Bourke Shire. Under the Road Maintenance Council Contracts (RMCC) programme, Council undertakes the maintenance of the State Highways in the Shire as a service provider to the State Government.

Council works closely with TfNSW to ensure that the highways are maintained in excellent condition and major works such as reseals and shoulder widening are undertaken as, and when, required.

Bourke Shire is contracted to maintain the following State Highways:-

State Highway 7 North	Bourke to the Queensland Border	136 kms (Mitchel Highway)
State Highway 7 South	Bourke towards Nyngan	83 kms (Mitchell Highway)
State Highway 421	Bourke to Cobar	81 kms (Kidman Way)
State Highway 29	Bourke to Brewarrina	56 kms (Kamilaroi Highway)

FLOW IN THE RIVER

It is good to see the flow in the river being maintained, and although only small, the flow is still welcome with a flowing river being of benefit to all.

I had earlier thought that we would see the re-introduction of water restrictions by now, however the flow in the Bogan River has gradually made its way into the Barwon Darling river system and although flowing over the weir at all times, the water flow has sometimes been not more than a trickle.

OUTBACK ARTS

The Outback Archies Annual Art Prize and Exhibition is a long-standing project delivered by Outback Arts, now in its tenth year! The Outback Archies grows in anticipation with each year, shining a light on the diverse and talented creatives in the region.

This year the opportunity for entries to be submitted from across regional New South Wales has been extended. Entries will be accepted from not only from the Outback Arts region of Bourke, Brewarrina, Bogan, Cobar, Coonamble, Warren and Walgett Shires but also Warrumbungle and Gilgandra Shires, Moree Plains, Narrabri and the West Darling Arts region of Broken Hill City, Central Darling Shire and Wentworth Shire.

Outback Arts have also added an additional category to include young artists, dubbed the Young Outback Archies Prize. Young people under the age of 15 years can now enter in their very own category.

A curated selection of artworks will be hitting the road in 2021, touring the Outback Arts region and beyond. This is a great opportunity for the entire region to see what the Archies is all about, showcasing the amazing artists we have in Regional NSW as well as inspiring others in the community

ONGOING RISKS OF COVID-19

I again urge all members of the community and businesses to do everything they can to ensure compliance with the new restrictions in respect of COVID-19. By ensuring compliance can only serve to reduce the risk of spreading the virus within our communities.

The large increase in cases in Melbourne and parts of Victoria are of considerable concern as are the outbreaks in Sydney. They clearly demonstrate just how quickly the virus can spread and the need for vigilance by all members of the community.

SEMINAR TO ASSIST IN IMPROVING THE ADMINISTRATION AND COORDINATION BETWEEN SPORTING GROUPS

Regional Coordinator - NSW Sport and Recreation, Mark Horton, has agreed to come to Bourke to facilitate a meeting of interested persons with a view to improving the three (3) items identified below with the support of the local community.

The three (3) items were among the priorities set following workshops conducted in 2017 regarding the improvement of sporting facilities and associated and ancillary facilities in Bourke.

The other priorities largely related to the improvement of facilities including the Bourke Pool. I am very pleased to say that all the all those priority areas have now been addressed with the exception of the following:-

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. The pursuit of opportunities to seek cost savings through alternate sport participation models.

Mark has indicated that the Office of Sport is available to assist clubs and community groups pursue the above matters by facilitating discussions and identifying options to streamline club administration.

Interested parties wishing to attend the seminar to be held at the Back O' Bourke Conference Centre commencing at 6.30pm on Thursday, 30 July 2020 are requested to register by either calling the Council office on 6830 8000 or e-mailing David Perry at mce@bourke.nsw.gov.au

For the purposes of catering and to ensure that the seminar is able to be conducted in accordance with COVID-19 restrictions and plans, registration is required.

USE OF COUNCIL FACILITIES

Anyone who wishes to utilise Council facilities should book with Councils Engineering Support Officer to ensure that the facilities are ready to use and there are no clashes of dates with other organisations. Simply call Council on phone 6830 8000 or email bourkeshire@bourke.nsw.gov.au

This particularly applies to those participating in regionally based competitions.

Those making bookings should ensure that they are aware of the need to ensure that all activities are conducted in a COVID-19 safe environment and that a COVID-19 Safety Plan has been developed. All requirements in relation to restrictions on numbers and social distancing are to be met including the one person per four (4) square metre guidelines.

Council staff can assist with the provision of signage and copies of the COVID-19 Safety Plan templates if required.

SHOWGROUND IMPROVEMENTS

Works have commenced at the Bourke Showground (JB Renshaw Sporting Complex) on the new ablution block. Council received funding through phase 1 of the NSW Showgrounds Stimulus Program to build a new ablution block, upgrade works to the men's and ladies showers and undertake the installation of an automatic irrigation system.

The new ablution block will see a vast improvement on the current facilities with accessible and ambulant access toilet facilities included as part of the upgrade.

Installation of the irrigation system will be starting shortly and once completed, a large part of the complex will be watered through an automatic sprinkler system. This will bring with it better watering efficiency to maintain the grounds and trees.

Council has lodged an application for projects to be funded in the State Government's Phase 2 Stimulus allocation and is currently awaiting the outcome of this application.

BOURKE CERAMIC CENTRE

Visiting ceramic artist, Nerida Barber of Narromine, conducted a workshop in Bourke last week. Nerida was very impressed with the new Ceramic Centre Building and the facilities that it also contains.

The facility is a result of some very hard work by members of the Bourke Arts Community incorporated and Council and of course the State Government which provided the funding to bring the facility to a reality.

LOCAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (LEMC)

The Local Emergency Management Committee continues to meet on a fortnightly basis to discuss the rapidly changing situation with COVID-19 to both ensure that all members are briefed in regard the current situation and the safety of the community is safeguarded as best as possible.

Due to leave and other commitments there have been representatives involved on the LEMC on a temporary basis whilst undertaking acting roles and I would like to thank them for their contribution and the seamless way they fitted into the organisation and their preparedness to assist and actively contribute.

The LEMC has provided a strong level of communication amongst all agencies and has provided the opportunity for frank discussion and further allows for the dissemination of information from both the Regional and State Emergency Management Committees.

ACTION OF VANDALS

The recent mindless vandalism involving the destruction of plantings in the main street is hard to understand. Why people would seek to destroy the good work undertaken to make our town look good and enhance its appeal to

both locals and visitors alike is hard to fathom. In undertaking the plantings, it is hoped that the processes have a positive impact on the economy and employment opportunities within the town which Council and other members of the community work so hard to achieve.

Vandalism comes at a significant cost to the community. Council unfortunately has to spend thousands of dollars each year to undertake remedial works as result of the mindless actions of vandals. Expenditure of these funds results in money being taken away from other projects that would benefit our community.

I urge residents to report acts of vandalism to either the Bourke Police (Ph:6870 0899) or direct to Council (Ph:6830 8000) so that it will hopefully result in those responsible being caught and punished.

AUGUST COUNCIL MEETING

The next Meeting of Bourke Shire Council will be held on Monday, 24 August 2020.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK!

"It is health that is real wealth and not pieces of gold and silver."

Mahatma Gandhi

Ross Earl
General Manager