



# “From the GM’s Desk”

## 20<sup>th</sup> August 2020



### CULTURAL COMPETENCY TRAINING

The Department of Regional NSW have been working closely with Maranguka in Bourke to deliver cultural competency training in 2020.

This cultural competency training is being sponsored by Gary Barnes, the Secretary of the Department of Regional NSW and forms part of his commitment as the NSW Government’s champion for Maranguka.

This training consists of a day of classroom content and experiential on Country learning and a day of language immersion and on Country learning. Participants are required to complete both days as part of the overall training package.

The introduction of the training follows the successful delivery of the pilot Maranguka Cultural Competency training session held in Bourke in December last year for Government employees and the subsequent reporting back to the Central West Orana and Far West Regional Leadership Executive who have supported the project.

All the training courses are to be delivered in Bourke and already there have been two (2) courses conducted, albeit with reduced numbers due to the restrictions brought about by COVID-19. The attendees at the courses held to date have come from a wide range of Government Departments with staff at all levels within those organisations attending.

Maranguka are to be congratulated on their initiative in this matter. Not only does the training fill an important void in relation to ensuring that staff of all organisations servicing communities with a significant level of aboriginal population are aware of the cultural issues that may impact on service delivery to those communities, but the training also brings to Bourke a number of people who may otherwise not have had that opportunity.

### FLOW IN THE RIVER

The strong flow of water in the Darling River continues with the current flow helped by localised falls of rain late last week.

The height of the river last Friday was 4.19 metres with a flow of 770 megalitres per day. The flows look likely to continue for some time yet which is great news for the health of the river and also for those downstream of Bourke who will hopefully see sustained flows.

### RAINFALL IN THE REGION

I noticed the following article on the “Weather Zone” website and thought it may be of interest for those who follow rainfall and weather records.

*“After widespread falls last week, another rain band swept much of NSW during Friday, making monthly totals already exceed the average in some places.*

*Bourke and Cobar collected 13mm from this last rain event, which makes the total rainfall so far this month exceed 30 and 40mm, respectively. Although these amounts may sound modest, they represent the*

*highest monthly rainfall for August since 2014 and 2016, respectively. It is also remarkable that these figures are achieved in only the first two (2) weeks of the month.*

*Wanaaring, on the Paroo River, has now technically had its wettest August on record (68mm), previously set in 1960 with 67.8mm. It is worth mentioning that the measurements in this town started as far back as 1884. “*

## **LIBRARY NEWS**

National Science Week is on this week. To celebrate, the Bourke Public Library has some great activities available online at its website, [www.bourkelibrary.com.au](http://www.bourkelibrary.com.au)

In addition, on Friday, 21 August 2020, the Library will have an on-line science “trivia night”.

As part of the event, some 20 science related questions will be posted on Friday onto the libraries Facebook page and onto its website. The first 10 people to reply with the correct answers will win a prize.

For further details on how to participate please, talk to the library staff.

Colouring-in sheets are also available in the library throughout the week, and there will be prizes for the best colouring completed. Sheets need to be returned by Friday, 28 August 2020.

The slogan “libraries more than books” is certainly appropriate as the Bourke Library staff continue to offer a variety of additional services to those traditionally delivered by libraries.

There are plenty of other fantastic online resources available on the libraries website, including Ancestry, Britannica Library and World Book Online. All you need is a library card. 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](mailto:bpl@bourkelibrary.com.au), and one of the friendly staff will be happy to help you.

## **COUNCIL ROAD CLOSURE REPORT**

Council staff have developed a new map to be included with all road closure notifications.

The map is colour coded and clearly identifies the status of each of the roads within the Shire and certainly makes it much easier to explain closures to the travelling public.

An advertisement appears in the edition of the Western Herald to be published on the 20 August 2020 and is also available on Councils website [www.bourke.nsw.gov.au](http://www.bourke.nsw.gov.au)

Council tries to maintain its road condition report as up to date as possible, however, given the large area cover by Bourke Shire it sometimes takes a little while to collate accurate information prior to publication of the report.

## **ROADS UPDATE**

Council has completed slashing works on the Bourke to Queensland Border section of the Kidman Highway and this will ensure that visibility on the side of the roads is maximised.

The road construction being undertaken on the Bourke to Milparinka Road (Barakee Section) is progressing well and on schedule for sealing works to begin in October.

As noted last week, Council's Road Maintenance Team has been conducting grading operations in the Enngonia area of late. Once they have completed this section of the road network, they will start the push west to continue grading the roads around Fords Bridge and the Yantabulla areas.

Council has also engaged local contractors to complete road maintenance grading in the southern section of the Shire. The contractors have started the grading of the Bourke to Louth Road and the Tooralé Road is nearing the end of completion.

The recent rainfall has pushed some of our grading works past the planned finishing dates, but will assist in the provision of a better-finished road surface.

### **NEXT MEETING OF COUNCIL**

The next monthly meeting of Bourke Shire Council will be held on Monday 24 August 2020.

At this stage, the meeting will again be conducted on a face-to-face basis with the public only being able to participate by following the meeting via a webcast. Councillors have the option not to attend in person but to participate remotely via an Audio-Visual link.

The restrictions on space and the need for social distancing have meant that some staff are also unable to attend in person and are also utilising the Audio – Visual platform, however, such staff are both able to follow the meeting and comment on any reports they may have submitted, as required.

### **TELECONFERENCE ON THE IMPACT OF THE QUEENSLAND BORDER CLOSURE**

Each State Government within Australia is taking the steps that they feel necessary to contain the spread of COVID-19 within their state boundaries.

One of the measures taken has been the closure of state boundaries whereby people are not able to cross-state borders except under strict conditions and with a few exemptions. In most instances, it would appear that persons wishing to cross borders are required to self-isolate for 14 days at their own expense. There are exemptions in place for some border communities, however, there a number of people who are still required to commute from outside of these areas.

Council's Manager of Corporate Services, Leonie Brown, attended a teleconference meeting hosted by the New South Wales Cross Border Commissioner, James McTavish, last Thursday. At the meeting, Council representatives from along the NSW/Queensland Border had the opportunity to hear about the latest developments, plus bring to the attention of the Cross Border Commissioner some of the problems being faced by residents of the border communities.

All the Local Government Authorities along the border were invite to participate in the teleconference, with Bourke being included. Other Local Government areas included Brewarrina, Walgett, Moree Plains, Gwydir, Inverell, Glen Innes Severn, Tenterfield, Kyogle, Byron, and Tweed Councils with the unincorporated area also included.

The teleconference was also attended by the Local Members of Parliament whose electorates also take in the border communities with our Local Member for Barwon, Roy Butler, MP. Also in attendance was the Minister for Western New South Wales, the Hon. Adam Marshall, MP whose electorate covers Councils along the border.

Some of the issues identified were:

- School teachers, Police and health workers living in Queensland but working in NSW and vice versa;

- Access to schools and health services by border communities;
- The likelihood of difficulties being encountered by harvesting contractors when crossing the border;
- Key NSW staff who live on the coast in Queensland;
- Contractors who normally work both sides of the borders being unable to do so without having to self-isolate.

While the above is not an exhaustive list, it does highlight some of the issues that have to be considered and each has an impact on communities and individuals.

The impacts obviously need to be considered in light of the overall objective of suppressing the virus.

Border Communities have for a long time highlighted the problems created by the fact that NSW has daylight saving and Queensland doesn't and this causes confusion when arranging meetings and appointments.

From my days in Moree, I recall having to schedule meetings in Boggabilla to ensure that the time suited both those who worked in Boggabilla and those who worked across the border in Goondiwindi so that everyone has the opportunity to attend.

Similarly, in Mungindi, the bulk of the town is in New South Wales including the Medical Practice but the hospital is across the border in Queensland.

There are another two (2) teleconferences scheduled for the week beginning 17 August 2020 to allow all those Councils along the border to be made aware of any amendments to the restrictions and have the opportunity to highlight particular difficulties being encountered by residents

### **ONGOING RISKS OF COVID-19**

It is imperative that at this critical time the community continues to work together to keep Bourke and NSW safe.

The advice from the NSW Governments website (<https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/what-you-can-and-cant-do-under-rules>) is that the following rules have been proven to be the most effective to stop the spread of COVID-19:-

- Stay 1.5 metres apart from others – when that's not possible, wear a face mask;
- Practice good hand washing hygiene;
- Stick to the rules about visiting other households;
- Get tested immediately if you have any symptoms and stay home while waiting for results; and,
- If you go out to a restaurant, café or pub, the maximum group size is 10 and you must sign in.

NSW Health have advised that 18-35 year olds have the highest rate of COVID-19 infections, with this coming as a surprise to me. Given this NSW Health have put a "shout out" for help to reach members in the community are in this age demographic so that they are aware of their potential for infection. COVID-19 is not just an aged person's virus.

If you are, or know someone who is in this age group, you can help get the message out on social media.

Two simple steps:-

1. Take a video on your phone about why you got tested or would get tested for COVID-19 and post on your social channel
2. Use the hashtag #Itest4NSW so Health can find your video.

Increasing the testing rates of young people continues to be vital in the fight against COVID-19 in NSW.

Remember, please follow the rules and stay safe.

### **REINVIGORATION OF CROSS BORDER TOURISM INITIATIVE**

For some time now, the possibility of a cross border tourism promotion initiatives has been discussed focussing on those Councils in the Far North West of New South Wales and those in South West Queensland.

A meeting was held in May 2018 and there was general agreement to proceed with a Memorandum of Understanding developed but not signed by all parties.

Those Councils who attended the meeting from Western New South Wales were Bourke, Walgett, Cobar and Brewarrina Shires whilst from South West Queensland were the Paroo, Bulloo and Balonne Shires.

The Far North West Joint Organisation of Councils (FNWJO) is now keen to progress the establishment of the cross border tourism promotion and to this end would like to gauge the interest of all Councils previously involved.

To further progress the proposal and reinvigorate the concept, Bourke Shire Council has offered to host an audio-visual link up with all Councils with that meeting to involve the Chief Executive/ General Manager of each Council plus the Manager of Tourism or their respective delegates.

All members of the FNWJO have received funding to improve infrastructure within their towns and are developing a strategy to improve tourism within the area.

While the State borders and access are currently a prohibitive factor in promoting the initiative there is a lot of work that can be done while we wait to see an end to the current Pandemic situation created by COVID-19.

### **STREET LIGHTING IMPROVEMENTS**

The upgrade of street lighting in Bourke is all but complete with the lights in Yantabulla having also being replaced early last month. It has been a big job but the benefits of improved lighting are obvious across the shire.

I recently had a conversation with a resident from Enngonia who said that the lights were tremendous.

The additional improved lighting is just one of a number of improvements being rolled out for the village of Enngonia over the past few years and I am sure that a similar sentiment would be expressed across all villages each of which has seen a significant injection of funds.

### **MURRAY DARLING ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

The Murray Darling Association (MDA) is an organisation of local Government Councils across all sections of the Murray Darling Basin.

Their conference this year like many others will be a “virtual Conference” given the restrictions in numbers able to attend functions being introduced to assist in the reduction of COVID-19. The conference will, none the less, be as important as conferences held in previous years. Council is a member of the Murray Darling Association and has been represented at the annual conference in previous years.

The MDA has been able to attract some excellent speakers this year including the Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon Michael McCormack MP, Mr Tim Costello of the Australia Climate Council and Ms Fiona Simpson from the National Farmers Federation.

Whilst it is a Local Government focused conference, all those with an interest in the Murray Darling Basin Issues will find it interesting.

Details of the conference can be obtained by accessing the following link: <https://web.cvent.com/event/>

### **PV JANDRA MARKS 20 YEARS IN THE WATER**

20 August 2020 marks 20 years since the PV Jandra first sailed the mighty Darling River. Initially built by the Mansell Family it has been owned and operated by Bourke Shire Council for the past 13 years.

The Jandra is a great tourist drawcard for the town of Bourke and adds significantly to the town's tourism product. The boat has been extremely popular over the years and has been the floating venue for many exciting events, including welcome functions, civic receptions, farewells and Christmas parties. One of the functions held on the Jandra involved the loading of a baby grand piano with guests all dressed in formal attire as they enjoyed a nighttime cruise and listened to the tunes from the baby grand.

After missing last season's tourism season as a result of the lack of water in the Darling River and then a delayed start this year due to COVID-19, the Jandra was "relaunched" in late June 2020. Passenger numbers on the boat since recommencing its travels have been most pleasing with many a visitor to Bourke taking the opportunity to cruise and witness the beauty of the mighty Darling River.

### **PIPERS RECOGNISE THE END OF WORLD WAR TWO**

Annette joined with hundreds of pipers and drummers across the country and North America at 9.30am last Saturday, 15 August 2020 in playing VP75- Lest We Forget, a tune specially commissioned by Pipe Bands Australia and written by Melbourne composer Mark Saul for the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the end of World War 2.

The lament honours all Australians who served at home and abroad and particularly those who did not return from the theatres of war and prisoner –of-war-camps.

Pipers are required to learn each of the tunes they play and don't have the benefit of music whilst they are playing.

### **QUOTE OF THE WEEK!**

*"Your talent determines what you can do. Your motivation determines how much you're willing to do. Your attitude determines how well you do it."*

*Lou Holtz*

Ross Earl  
General Manager