



“From the Acting GM’s Desk”

22 October 2020



HEALTH SERVICES TENDER:

Council has continued to make representations regarding proposals by the Western NSW Local Health District (WNSWLHD) to potentially only provide an on-site doctor at the Bourke Multipurpose Service for only five (5) days a week from 8.00am-6.00pm. Interest in these proposals has increased significantly in recent times with the Sydney Morning Herald reporting that Bourke Mayor, Barry Hollman, “slammed the proposal as abhorrent.”

LOCAL ROADS AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM:

In May 2020 the Australian Government announced a new \$500 million Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program (LRCI Program).

Through the 2020–21 Budget, the Australian Government announced a \$1 billion extension of the LRCI Program, following strong community and local government support.

This program supports local Councils to deliver priority local road and community infrastructure projects across Australia, supporting jobs and the resilience of local economies to help communities bounce back from the COVID-19 pandemic.

I am happy to advise that the 10 projects identified by Council in respect of its near \$1.2m allocation under this program have now been approved.

Some of the projects to be undertaken include an upgrade of both the Pool and Golf Club carparks; construction of a shelter shed to protect the historic railway scales at Bourke Railway Yards; the relocation to of the Information Board currently at Percy Hobson Park; and the replacement of the existing toilet facilities at Rotary Park with a modular building.

Further to these projects funding has also been provided for the purchase and planting of 100 advanced shade trees as per Councils Tree Replacement Plan. Footpath improvements consistent with Councils Disability Action Management Plan; the development of a Health and Wellbeing Facility at the Back O’ Bourke Park and also the construction of some 4kms of compressed granite pathway to improve pedestrian and cycleway access from Bourke to North Bourke.

These are all exciting projects for Bourke and Council thanks the Australian Government for their initiative in providing this important funding.

COVID-19:

Western NSW Local Health District held another COVID-19 pop up testing clinic in Bourke this week. Whilst this clinic has obviously moved on for now, should residents have a runny nose or scratchy throat, cough, fever or other symptoms that could be COVID-19, please stay at home and do not go to work and arrange to get a COVID -19 test. You can contact the Health Direct Helpline on 1800 022 222 (Free Call) and speak with registered nurses who are available 24 hours, 7 days a week. For the latest information on COVID-19 please visit the NSW Health COVID-19 website (www.health.nsw.gov.au). This website contains a significant amount of useful information on the COVID-19 issue.

CONSTRUCTION OF BOURKE'S NEW WATER TREATMENT PLANT:

Construction of Bourke's new Water Treatment Plant remains "on time" to be completed in late March 2021 and "on budget" with 50% of the \$10.5m construction budget for this important project having been expended to date.

Some features of the progress of construction follow:

- The new concrete clarifiers are now waiting for pipework to be joined to the filters;
- Construction of the control room for the plant has the concrete pad laid and the walls erected;
- Water from the old plant has been connected to the new plant in readiness for changeover;
- The desalination plant is ready to be incorporated into the build of the new treatment plant;
- All power has been laid into position; and
- The sludge ponds have been constructed.

CONSTRUCTION OF NEW WATER RESERVOIR:

As part of Council's overall water strategy, a new water reservoir to replace the existing reservoir located in Charles St, Bourke is to be constructed. Tenders for the design and construction to replace the Charles Street Reservoir have now been invited. Tenders will close in November 2020 with a view to construction being undertaken in 2021.

COLIN BUCHANAN IN BOURKE:

Former Bourke resident and Golden Guitar winner, Colin Buchanan, will present a concert at the Back O' Bourke Centre on Wednesday 28 October 2020 commencing at 7.30pm.

Best known for his song writing and country music, Colin was previously also a regular presenter on ABC TV's Play School. In addition, for some 20 years he hosted QANTAS' in-flight audio entertainment, predominantly "Big Country", pioneering the guest co-host format eventually adopted across all QANTAS inflight audio channels.

It will be great to see Colin back in Bourke as he grabs his guitar and along with "Outback Historian – Paul Roe, you can sit around the campfire and hear the stories and sing along. Tickets are limited and available at the Back O' Centre or by calling 68721321.

COVID restrictions will be in place for this event.

BOURKE SHIRE SUPPORTS "SMALL BUSINESS MONTH":

Don't forget that October is "Small Businesses Month". Through the work of Michael McDowell and the Bourke Aboriginal Employment Prosperity Scheme, a seminar for local businesses will be held on Tuesday, 27 October 2020 at 5.30pm at the Back O' Bourke Exhibition Centre to celebrate the month.

Mick has worked with Megan Dixon from Regional Development Australia-Orana (RDAO) in coordinating the seminar and has been connected with Gabriel Faponle from Findex Accountants in Dubbo, who will present the seminar.

Gabriel, who has over 14 years' experience in providing and overseeing financial accounting, internal audit, external audit, consulting and risk management services, will work with local business owners and advise on how to make your superannuation work for you, not you working for your superannuation.

To register go to: www.businessmonth.nsw.gov.au/activity/building-better-business-in-bourke/

Alternatively contact Mick by email, aes@bourke.nsw.gov.au or by phone, 0428 892 210.

VISITOR ACTIVITY:

The month of September was a very busy period for visitors travelling to and through Bourke, with the influx of visitors coinciding with the school holiday period, the easing of COVID-19 travel restrictions and beautiful weather in Bourke during the month.

At the Back O' Bourke Centre, Council's Manager of Tourism & Events, Fran Carter, has advised that staff at the Centre happily attended to 3,325 visitors in September 2020. Whilst these numbers were slightly down on the number of visitors at the same time last year, when the numbers were 3601, interestingly tourism product sales were up 383%! This was off the back of the PV Jandra operating this year, as opposed to last year when the river was essentially dry, and a large increase in the number of visitors attending the Back O' Bourke Exhibition Centre. Well done to all the staff at the Centre for their efforts during this busy period.

With passenger numbers on the Jandra currently reduced to 45 passengers per trip in line with the vessels COVID Safety Plan, the Jandra made 56 trips in September.

Tourism activity in Bourke and the far west will only continue to grow. With the sealing of the Broken Hill to Tibooburra road and the ongoing sealing of the Bourke to Innamincka road progressing, the vision for a sealed Nyngan/Bourke/Tibooburra/Broken Hill/Nyngan circuit is coming to fruition. The ability for tourists to access the outback and experience "corner country" via sealed roads will undoubtedly be of great benefit to Bourke.

Already, Councils road construction staff have commented on the number of vehicles and caravans using the Wanaaring Road as the caravanners head west.

CULTURAL COMPETENCY TRAINING

Maranguka in Bourke last week delivered its third (3rd) "Cultural Competency" training session to officers from a range of NSW Government Departments.

Sponsored by Gary Barnes, the Secretary of the Department of Regional NSW and training 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.

The training fills an important void in relation to ensuring that staff of all State Government 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. The training also brings to Bourke a number of people who may otherwise not have had the opportunity to visit in the past.

With all the training courses being delivered in Bourke, Council is also taking the opportunity to meet with relevant Departmental Offices in person to discuss issues relating to Bourke. Last week it was good to meet with Graham Attenborough, Executive Director, Water Programs and Services and Edward Couriel, Director, Manly Hydraulics Laboratory both from the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment. DPIE Water was of great assistance to Council during the drought, both in terms of funding and advice, and it was good to be able to acknowledge their contribution to these officers in person.

NEXT MEETING OF COUNCIL

The next Ordinary Meeting of Bourke Shire Council will be held on Monday, 26 October 2020.

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. By 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.

RABBITOHS HEADING WEST:

I was interested to read that the South Sydney Rabbitohs will play a competition game in Dubbo's as part of the 2021 and 2022 seasons. Of all the teams in the NRL competition, I would suspect that the Rabbitohs have the largest following by fans who reside in the west of the State.

Whilst it has yet to be announced as to who the Rabbitohs will be playing, undoubtedly many rugby league followers from Bourke, or for the matter from across the western area, will make the trip to Dubbo to view the game.

AUSTRALIA DAY NOMINATIONS

At the September Ordinary Meeting of Council determined not to hold a Council meeting in January 2021 bringing this meeting forward to 14 December 2020. One of the major matters traditionally considered by Council in conjunction with its January meeting is the determination of the recipients of the Annual Australia Day Awards.

The Australia Day nominations will now need to be completed and sent to Council by 7 December 2020 and voting on the nominations will take place at a workshop after the December Council meeting.

This year's categories include:-

- Citizen of the Year
- Young Citizen of the Year (18 and under)
- Emergency Service Volunteer of the Year
- Shire Village Community Service
- Sports person of the Year
- Young Sports person (18 and under)

Nominations are now open, details on how to nominate are available on Councils website or by calling into the Council Office at 29 Mitchell Street Bourke.

Please take the time to nominate someone and ensure that the unsung heroes within our community are recognised.

Don't say "someone" will nominate a person, be that "someone"!

QUOTE OF THE WEEK!

"It is impossible to live without failing at something, unless you live so cautiously that you might as well not have lived at all, in which case you have failed by default."

J. K. Rowling

Leonie Brown
Acting General Manager