



**BOURKE  
SHIRE  
COUNCIL**

**“From the  
General Manager’s Desk”  
11 February 2021”**

This is my initial column as General Manager for Bourke Shire Council. Whilst I have been working at Council for the past 12 months in a project management capacity, I commenced as General Manager on Monday, 8 February 2021 for a 12 month period. For those of you who don't know me I commenced my local government career in 1983 and undertook the role of General Manager at Dubbo City Council/ Dubbo Regional Council for a period approaching 14 years. During my time at Dubbo Council I very much appreciated the importance of the western region to the economy of Dubbo. For example one only has to stroll the main street of Bourke to see that most of the cars have been purchased from Dubbo based dealerships. I look forward to working with the Mayor, Councillors and Staff of Bourke Council to continue the good work that the Council does for its community.

I must say that when I saw the time invested in preparing the weekly Column by past General Manager, Ross Earl, I had early thoughts of potentially abandoning the weekly column, or at best making it a monthly publication.

All that was shattered when I was talking to a former Louth resident, who now is a law practitioner in Dubbo, who was quick to tell me, in the company of others, that he “gets the Bourke Herald every week” and that on receiving his weekly copy of the Herald, he “goes straight to the General Managers Column”. Now I am not suggesting that the GM's Column is the be all and end all in terms of local news, however his comments bought home to me the importance of getting the message out to the Bourke Community as to what is going on at Council. Accordingly it would be my intention that the weekly column continues during my time as General Manager. I will also continue Ross's practice of providing a “Quote of the Week!”

**PASSING OF LILLIAN BRADY, OAM:**

As I write this column I note the sad news received on Sunday morning that Lillaine Brady, OAM, had passed away overnight. Lilliane has been the Mayor of Cobar Shire for some 20 years and a Councillor for 40 years. Lilliane was a strong advocate for Cobar and the Western Division making many successful representations to Ministers, at both State and Commonwealth level, for funding and improved services to our regions.

I am sure the community of Bourke join with Council in offering condolences to Lillaine's family and the community of Cobar.

**ROADWORKS:**

The MR 405 sealing project, Bourke to Milparinka Road, will recommence next week on the Romani – Wangamana section. Council is hopeful to complete the final 16 kilometres of this section of road by Easter, with this goal obviously being dependant on the weather. The unsealed section of road has recently been graded.

Council has applied for funding to complete the remaining 36 kilometres to finalise this important project. It is pleasing to hear reports from residents that live along or at the end of this road and how it has improved their access to Bourke.

Other road works that Council is currently undertaking include;

- Grading of washouts on MR 68, Louth to Tilpa;
- Patching of shoulders on HW 7, North Bourke to Enngonia; and,
- Shoulder grading on HW 7, Nth Bourke to Enngonia in progress for widening.

The resealing crew last week completed heavy patching on MR 421, Bourke to Cobar Road, and resealing of various town streets with those being Tudor, Sturt, Darling and Meek Streets.

### **KERB AND GUTTER UPGRADES:**

Council has received funding of \$140,000 to undertake the continued renewal of kerb and guttering in Bourke. Funding for this project has been made possible through the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program, an Australian Government initiative to assist a community-led recovery from COVID-19.

Work will commence in the coming weeks to improve access from the CBD to the hospital, with the works including new footpath and laybacks strategically placed for improved community and wheelchair access.

Council has a Pedestrian Access Mobility Plan (PAMP) with this Plan providing a framework for developing pedestrian routes and infrastructure to cater for the needs of all pedestrians. The proposed works are in line with the Bourke PAMP.

### **WESTERN WEIRS PROGRAM:**

The importance of increasing the capacity of the Bourke Weir Pool is very much to the fore. Whilst Council was prepared to fund the costs of undertaking an options study in respect of a new heightened weir at Bourke, at this stage this has not proceeded given that the NSW Government commissioned its Western Weirs Program. It is acknowledged that the process for this Strategy is comprehensive, however Council is concerned at the extended timeframes for the development and completion of this Strategy, let alone any ultimate construction in respect of a revised weir at Bourke, should that be the outcome.

Council met with representatives of the Western Weirs program on Wednesday and discussed the projects progress, town water security and the methodology adopted to inform options and the forward schedule of the project.

Council will continue to lobby for an increase in the height of the Bourke weir to increase the capacity of the weir pool to secure town water supply.

For more information on the Western Weirs Program and to see previous project updates, go to the project website

page: <https://www.waternsw.com.au/projects/new-dams-for-nsw/western-weirs-program>

### **OSTEOPATHY CLINIC:**

I am advised that the Student-led Osteopathy Clinic currently been held at the Bourke Multipurpose Service from 1 – 12 February 2021 has been well received. The Clinic comprised of free 45min sessions conducted by Southern Cross University 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> year Osteopathy Students who are fully supervised by qualified staff.

Osteopathy is a way of diagnosing, treating and preventing health problems by moving, stretching and massaging a person's muscles and joints. Osteopathy is based on the principle that the wellbeing of an individual depends on their bones, muscles, ligaments and connective tissues all functioning smoothly together.

The Osteopathy Clinic, along with the Exercise Scientist program provided by students from University of Sydney currently running in Bourke, are free. The community is lucky to have the opportunity to participate in both programs and get healthy.

The Exercise Scientist program is tailored to person of all ages and fitness, it is currently running Monday, Wednesday and Friday from the CWA rooms at 6am.

Further information contact Charlene Noye, Student Facilitator at North West Academic Centre on 02 68702665.

### **TWO (2) HOUR PARKING IN THE CBD:**

The issue of the possible introduction of time limited parking in the CBD has again been raised and was subject of a report at the December meeting of Council. A suggestion had been made that the time be limited to a maximum of two (2) hours.

Council elected to note the two (2) hour parking proposal and try other options including:

- Contacting the Bourke Police requesting they monitor the use of the disabled parking spaces in Oxley Street. On occasions vehicles without Disability Parking Permits displayed are parked in the parking spaces;
- Writing to all businesses and offices in Oxley Street CBD asking that staff park off street rather than in the CBD; and,
- Writing an article to appear in the local newspaper on the issue.

A number of people tend to park in the CBD for extended periods effectively preventing others the opportunity to park close to shops and be able to readily transfer goods and in the case of the elderly, easily gain access to the shops.

The issue of restricted parking is always an emotive one and one that will see divided opinions.

Council encourages those persons who work in the CBD to park in the side streets to allow the available parking to be utilised by the elderly and customers of the CBD businesses.

### **PROMOTING BOURKE AND DISTRICT**

The updated Bourke Mudmap promotional books are about to be reprinted in time for the new tourist season. Council staff will be in contact with all business to seek their support in advertising in the new booklet in the coming weeks. This is an opportunity for business to promote what they have to offer to visitors to our Shire.

The revamped booklet allows a number of different options for advertising including full page, half page and quarter page advertisements. The cost of each advertisement is dependent on the size. Further details of costings will be provide when the staff make contact with businesses.

If you are not currently advertising in the booklet but are interested in doing so, please contact the Bourke O' Bourke Exhibition Centre on 68721321 , or email [info@backobourke.com.au](mailto:info@backobourke.com.au) , and one of our staff will get back to you.

### **RATES INSTALLMENTS**

As part of the COVID-19 response and recovery initiatives, Council offered rate relief for community members and businesses suffering financial hardship. Council adopted the COVID-19 Rates and Financial Assistance Policy in May 2020.

The Policy allowed eligible Ratepayers to defer the three (3) quarterly rate instalments from May 2020 to December 2020 and request a payment plan. In addition, Council suspended interest charges to Ratepayers for the period July 2020 to December 2020 to ease the burden on businesses and community members in accordance with section 566(3) of the *Local Government Act 1993*.

From 1 January 2021 to 30 June 2021 , interest on outstanding Rates and Charges will be 7% per annum.

Land owners are reminded that payment of the next rates instalment is due by 28 February 2021 .

Should ratepayers have any queries in respect of their rates they should contact Councils Revenue Officer during normal working hours Monday to Thursday.

### **TOURISM UPDATE**

The Jandra Paddleboat and Crossley Engine are currently undergoing servicing and necessary repairs in preparation for the 2021 Tourist Season.

As we head into our tourist season there will be increased hours of operation for both the Visitor Information Office and Back O' Bourke Exhibition Centre. Hours of operation from Monday to Friday from 15 February will resume to normal operating hours, opening at 9.00am and closing at 5.00pm.

A bumper tourism season is expected this year with domestic tourism travel expectations very high due to inability of people to travel internationally given COVID. Already a number of bookings for both the Jandra and Function Centre have been taken.

### **GRANT OPPORTUNITIES:**

In the case of many grants the lead time from the announcement of the grant to the lodgement of the application is relatively short. Given this it is important that Council has projects which are "shovel ready" to maximise the opportunities that are presented.

Council for the past two (2) years has adopted a "Growing Bourke Plan 2021" that outlines projects and activities that require financial assistance or funding to progress

the projects. Management have recently updated the Plan and will present the finalised document to the February 2021 Council meeting for endorsement.

“The Growing Bourke Plan 2021” is a plan to be read in conjunction with Bourke’s Community Strategic Plan and is an plan to be circulated to community, potential investors and government.

The “Growing Bourke Plan 2021” is a living document and provides the opportunity for amendment and re-adoption at any time.

### **BOOKING COUNCIL FACILITIES:**

Should you wish to book a Council oval or park for a function, sporting events or other activities, community groups and individuals are requested to ensure that a booking is made through Councils Engineering Department.

Such bookings will allow grounds to be prepared in accordance with the requirements, appropriate facilities are made available and fees determined.

Please contact Council on 02 68308000, or email [bourkeshire@bourke.nsw.gov.au](mailto:bourkeshire@bourke.nsw.gov.au) attention for Lynette Gooch. Lynette will be in contact with you to ensure the booking and answer any questions you may have.

### **EASTER WEEKEND:**

The DRAFT programme for the “Bourke Easter Festival” weekend over Easter is in the final stages for release.

On the Saturday there will be a parade, followed by a wool bale rolling competition and the markets. There will also be a number of other events on the Saturday including bowls and football.

Now is the time for organisations to start thinking about a float for the parade and for all those intending competitors in the wool bale rolling, to get into full training.

The Back O’ Bourke Race will be run on Sunday and the races are again expected to draw a large crowd. Other events will be provided once the final program is completed.

### **WESTERN DIVISION CONFERENCE:**

The 2021 Western Division Councils Conference will be held in Broken Hill from 19-21 April 2021. Last year’s conference was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The theme of the 2021 Conference is “The Four Pillars of Sustainability” – Human, Social, Economic and Environment” The Western Division forum represents an excellent opportunity for Councils to network, and offers firsthand experience regarding issues each community faces.

The conference is expected to attract in excess of 150 delegates including Mayors, Councillors, General Managers and senior staff across 16 Councils in Western NSW.

## **GENERAL MANAGERS FORUM:**

The next meeting of the Western Regional General Managers Forum will be held in Nyngan on 5 March 2021. The meeting provides the opportunity for region wide Council General Manager's to exchange ideas and information and build relationships which is an essential element in undertaking the role of General Manager.

## **COMMUNITY MEETINGS:**

As advertised separately, Council will next week be conducting a series of community meetings across the Shire to both provide the opportunity for residents to have an input into the development of the 2021/2022 Operational Plan (budget) and also be provided with an overview and update of Council's current operations and proposed works schedule.

The meeting schedule is as follows:-

<b>Village/Town</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Day</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Venue</b>
Bourke	15/02/2021	Monday	5.30pm - 7.00pm	Back O' Bourke Function Centre
Louth	16/02/2021	Tuesday	8.30am - 10.30am	Louth Tennis Club
Wanaaring	16/02/2021	Tuesday	1.00pm - 3.00pm	Wanaaring Hall
Byrock	23/02/2021	Tuesday	12.30pm - 2.30pm	Mulga Creek Motel
Enngonia	24/02/2021	Wednesday	8.30am - 10.30am	CWA Hall
Fords Bridge	24/02/2021	Wednesday	12.30pm - 2.30pm	Warrego Hotel

Enquiries in relation to the meetings can be directed to Kai Howard-Oakman on 02 68 308 000. I look forward to meeting many residents across the Shire as part of this busy schedule of meetings.

## **Welcome to Bourke**

Whilst talking about meeting people, the "Welcome to Bourke" function at the Back O' Bourke Exhibition Centre to be held on 24 February 2021 is rapidly approaching. All people who have moved to Bourke in the last year are invited and encouraged to take the opportunity of being hosted by Bourke Council and Bourke Rotary Club at this free evening function. For catering purposes, it is important to express your intention to attend by 19 February, by contacting the Back O' Bourke Exhibition Centre on 0268 308 000 or email to [info@backobourke.com.au](mailto:info@backobourke.com.au)

## **THANKS:**

It would be remiss of me not to publicly thank and congratulate Councils Acting General Manager since the retirement of Ross Earl, Leonie Brown. The transition from Ross to Leonie was seamless with many successful outcomes delivered during her term.

## **Quote of the Week**

*"Don't call it a dream, call it a plan".*

- Unknown

Mark Riley  
General Manager