



“From the General Manager’s Desk” 10 February 2022”

Charles St Water Tower

Back in 2018, the existing Charles St Water Reservoir structure ruptured with the required repairs undertaken. At that time a condition report was completed for Council by Public Works Advisory (PWA) with the conclusion being that the water tower required replacement. Council subsequently engaged PWA to undertake the design and tender process for a replacement reservoir for this project which was the last piece of the “Drought Proofing of Bourke” project.

At the closing of tenders, it was found that there was a \$520,000 price variance between the estimate provided by Councils consultants and the tender price. Whilst of obvious concern, pricing estimates for civil construction projects elevated rapidly in 2021 and this project was an obvious example. Following representations by Mayor Barry to the then NSW Minister for Water, the Hon. Melinda Pavey, MP and discussions by Council staff with officers from the Local Water Utility Infrastructure Program (formerly Safe and Secure Water Program), Water Infrastructure NSW, Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, funding to meet the unexpected price increase was provided by the NSW Government.

With the funding issue resolved, Council in May 2021 accepted a tender for the construction of the new water reservoir. The successful contractor was Brockman Engineering with work proposed to commence in October 2021. However given the outbreak of COVID at the time, it was agreed that on site work would be delayed till the new year.

Whilst the fabrication of tank components has commenced at the Brockman Engineering workshop located in Norlane, Victoria, works in Bourke will commence on 15 February 2022 when Brockman’s piling contractor (Murray Constructions) will be mobilised on site. These piling works will be completed by the end of February. From there, the civil works contractor (Lukas Building and Excavation) will be commencing the foundation works from the second week of March. It will be good to see the project come to fruition.

Lifblood

In my GM’s Column of 18 February 2021, I wrote that Council staff were overseeing the installation of a new presentation in the theatre at the Back O’ Bourke Exhibition Centre, which was titled ‘Lifblood.’ This 20 minute animated film about Bourke’s history and ancient identity, was written in collaboration with locals, Aunty Dot Martin and Phil Sullivan with Nick Tory from Ample Projects undertaking the production. I noted that over the period of development more than thirty-five artists, technicians, designers, animators, photographers and illustrators had worked on the project. The crew included a

group of 16 animation students from the Design Department of the University of Technology Sydney, who took part in an internship program, created to be a genuine part of the production process.

As an update 12 months on, this 20 minute animated film has literally travelled the world and achieved major success at Film Festivals around the Globe. As a snap shot it has won awards at Film Festivals in Catalina, Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, Arizona, Indianapolis and Palm Springs in the USA, Tokyo, Manchester England, Berlin, Rome, Munich, Singapore, India, Taiwan, Montreal, and New Zealand and at awards in Canberra, Sydney, Perth and Melbourne in Australia. Wow! Congratulations must go all all involved in the development of this film and I would encourage locals to head to the Back O Bourke Exhibition Centre to view this most interesting production.

Australia Day

As mentioned in last weeks column, marathon swimmer James Pittar was the Australia Day Ambassador at the 2022 Australia Day Celebrations in Bourke. Councils Manager of Economic Development, Mel Milgate, last week received a note of thanks from James and his family as follows:

"I would like to say thank you to you and the Council for a brilliant time on the 25th and the 26th of January in Bourke. Thank you for all of your assistance with making everything work with the Dinner on the night prior to Australia day and our accommodation and everything working well on Australia day. It was great to meet you all and the people in Bourke.

We did get out to Fred Hollows grave as well on our way to Dubbo.

Also thank you for finding my daughters shoes.

Could you please also pass on our thanks to the Mayor Barry Hollman.

Bourke is a great place and we will certainly drop in and see you when we are next time in Bourke.

Thank you again from Jenny, James and Annica."

It was certainly a pleasure for Council to host James and his family and hear his stories and learn of his background. Like all tourists, the Pittars will be most welcome when they return to Bourke.

Wild Dog Baiting Program

The Western Local Land Services (WLLS) have commenced the necessary planning for their next seasonal baiting program of wild dogs which is aerial baiting to commence late March/early April with ground baiting to then follow.

Wild dogs are a massive issue in the northwest of NSW and I was interested to recently read some information from the WLLS in regard to the baiting program. From such information it is noted that WLLS have conducted aerial baiting for the control of wild dogs in the region for a number of years. WLLS run two programs per year, complemented by ground baiting following the program.

Aerial baiting makes use of dried muscle meat injected with 0.2ml of 1080 poison. The muscle meat used is predominantly kangaroo with other meat species utilised as necessary. Offal isn't used in the aerial program as it doesn't dry as well and is more difficult to handle. For the upcoming program, aerial baiting will cost rural landholders \$1.80 per bait noting that this price is after LLS have provided a 50% subsidy.

Aerial baits are dropped from a fixed wing aircraft at a rate of 10 baits per km. i.e. 10km of baiting is 100 baits. To undertake aerial baiting, landholders need to be a member of a pest group and also undertake ground baiting activities. Aerial baiting is undertaken on those area of properties that are classed as 'inaccessible'. LLS just don't grid an entire property, rather have distance restrictions that the plane needs follow much like ground baiting activities. These include, they can't bait within 300m of the property boundary, within 1km of public roads and they need a minimum buffer of 1km around houses/sheds. In addition, as part of the program, Landholders are required to display "1080" notification signs

and also notify their neighbours. They are also required to complete a consent form to allow WLLS and the aerial pilot to conduct a program over their property.

If rural landholders wish to get involved in the upcoming program, they are best to contact the WLLS [Regional Pest Animal Coordinator](#), Brooke Anderson on 0436 475 814. From there Brooke will email out a blank map of your property to allow you to begin marking where you want bait lines flown. Once the map is returned WLLS will GPS the markings and let you review it for final approval of costs and kilometres flown. If you do not wish to go ahead with aerial baiting this year, you can simply reply that you are no longer interested this round.

Local Emergency Management Committee

Since the COVID outbreak in August 2021, the Bourke Local Emergency Management Committee (LEMC) was most active with extraordinary meetings of the Committee initially being held on a daily basis, over an extended period of time, ending up as a fortnightly meeting. The last scheduled extraordinary meeting was held on 2 February 2022. In all, the Committee met on 51 occasions during the period August 2021 to February 2022 to discuss and address COVID, and then also flooding, issues in Bourke. The meetings proved to be an excellent opportunity for agencies to both update and be updated regarding the ever-evolving COVID and flooding situations and address matters requiring action in the community. Again, a big thank you to all involved.

Recruitment of General Manager

Following the retirement of Council's previous General Manager, Ross Earl, I was engaged as Council's General Manager for a period of 12 Months from February 2021. This period was extended by some 3-4 months given the delay in the conduct of the 2021 Council elections. Recruitment of a long term General Manager for Bourke Shire Council has now commenced with the advertising of the position having commenced on 4 February 2022. Advertisements have been lodged in a variety of traditional and electronic formats to promote the availability of the role far and wide. Applications for this important role close on Monday 28 February 2022. From there, applications will be shortlisted for first round interviews, with final interviews ultimately being held with the full Council at an extraordinary meeting on a date yet to be confirmed. The aim is for the new General Manager to commence in May. For me, retirement beckons!

Quote: "So if I can encourage any young boys or girls to pick up a racquet and have a go, that would be brilliant." Australian Open Tennis Champion, Ash Barty on winning the Open. Bourke and Louth have excellent synthetic grass courts - so get in and have a go!