



**BOURKE
SHIRE
COUNCIL**

“From the
General Manager’s Desk”
11 August 2022”

Road Funding

The Minister for Regional Roads and Transport, the Hon Sam Farraway, MLC, recently announced that applications for Round 4 of the State Governments Fixing Local Roads Program are now open with applications closing on Friday, 9 September 2022.

Bourke Shire has been a very happy recipient of significant funding under the Fixing Local Roads Program since July 2020 when it was announced that Council had received funding of \$4.6m for the reconstruction and sealing of a large section of Caronga Peak Road under Round 1 of the Program, as jointly funded by the State and Federal Governments. In August 2020, then Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales, the Hon Adam Marshall, MP, visited Bourke. As part of this visit, the Minister advised that the State Government would be funding a further five (5) rounds of the Fixing Local Roads Program. With this advice, Councils then Roads Manager, Mark Gordon, set about submitting a report to Council recommending the prioritisation of road projects for submission to Government when applications for funding under future rounds of the Fixing Local Roads Program were invited. Council adopted the priority list and since then, such list has been the “bible” as Council submitted its applications under Rounds 2 and 3 of the Program. These applications have seen Council receive funding to complete further sealing works on Caronga Peak Road and sealing works on Tooralé Road, Weelong Road, Weir Road, River Road and Parkdale Road. Councils application for Round 4 will be for funding to seal a further section of Toorale Road.

As the name of the funding program suggests, this current round of funding is for local roads. The Bourke – Wanaaring Rd (MR405) is classified as a Regional Road for which Council receives funding from the State Government to manage. Council continues to seek capital funding from the State Government to complete the sealing of this roadway.

Stronger Country Communities Fund

In more grant funding news, applications from Councils under Round 5 of the NSW Government’s Stronger Country Communities Fund (SCCF) opened last week. The Fund will aim to boost the wellbeing of communities in regional areas by providing new or upgraded social and sporting infrastructure, or community programs that have strong local support.

The SCCF has been a very well received funding source for Councils across regional NSW with the fund in Rounds 1-4 having invested \$500 million over 1,900 projects in every local government area in regional NSW. In Round 1, \$100 million was invested to improve community facilities such as town halls, recreation areas, shared paths and playgrounds. Round 2 saw a further \$200 million invested to provide community and sports-related infrastructure. Round 3 provided \$100 million for community projects with over half the total funding dedicated to youth related projects, including indoor sports programs, creative arts and culture projects, mentoring and skills training services.

In Bourke, funding under Round 3 included the erection of new fencing around the Coolican and Davidson ovals. Round 4 of the Stronger Country Communities Fund delivered \$100 million to support 435 projects to improve the lives of people in regional NSW with almost half the investment going towards projects supporting female participation in sport. Bourke Council received funding for ladies change rooms at the Renshaw and at Davidson Oval. \$160 million in funding is available under Round 5 to regional councils for projects that focus on community and sporting infrastructure, enhance accessibility for people with disability, and improve outcomes for Aboriginal people.

Council officers will now proceed to review the Funding requirements with a view to submitting a report to Council for it to determine what projects Council will apply for under this latest round of funding.

Foot and Mouth Disease

At a meeting last week of the Bourke Local Emergency Management Committee (LEMC), the opportunity was taken to discuss plans in the event of Foot and Mouth disease (FMD) arriving in Australia. FMD affects all cloven-hoofed animals including cattle, sheep, goats, deer and pigs. It can be carried by live animals as well as in residual soil left on shoes, clothing and equipment.

I obviously do hope that such a situation never arises. From the meeting, should the disease arrive, the control method is to lock down the movement of animals around Australia and to control the disease through culling. The meat industry would stop – with Australia losing most of its meat export markets for a significantly extended period. In Australia we only consume about one third of the meat the country produces. The other two thirds are exported. With no exporting it would be expected that the value of livestock would become close to worthless. With the current high prices of all forms of livestock, it has been estimated that the economic impact to the Australian agricultural industry of an FMD outbreak would be in the region of \$80bn with this estimated amount including control costs

What was evident to me from the LEMC meeting is that Government Agencies have been “planning for the worst and hoping for the best” as it prepares and remains on standby in respect of its FMD risk management strategy. In NSW, Government Agencies have been working hard to bolster biosecurity to keep the agricultural sector safe, with record investment to drive active surveillance, rapid diagnostics and effective traceability systems to monitor, track and respond to threats. Primary producers, Stock and Station Agents, Livestock Transporters and the like are all being encouraged to engage in detailed contingency planning, to be overly cautious with people who come into contact with their livestock and monitor closely for signs of FMD in livestock which include blisters in and around the mouth area, drooling and limping. If you see livestock exhibit any unusual signs consistent with FMD, the signs must be reported immediately to the Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline on 1800 675 888.

If you are travelling to Bali for that long-awaited post Covid holiday, you are urged to do your bit to prevent the highly contagious disease from reaching Australian shores. The message to travellers is simple: if you’re heading to Bali or somewhere that may have been affected by FMD for a holiday – or know someone who is – do the right thing when you return to Australia. That means declaring where you’ve been, making sure any clothes and shoes you bring in are clean and free from soil and manure, avoiding encounters with livestock on your travels and staying away from farms or anywhere there might be livestock for seven days when you get home. My understanding is that one dirty pair of shoes could devastate an entire industry.

Far North West Joint Organisation

The Far North West Joint Organisation (FNWJO), comprising the Councils of Bourke, Cobar and Walgett, met last week to undertake a strategic planning session to revise its Statement of Regional Priorities. As

part of the process, the Mayors and General Managers of each of the member Councils assisted the JO's Executive Officer, Ross Earl, analyse what is the current status of the JO; where the JO wants to be by the end of the current planning cycle ending 2030 (ie. the JO's strategic objectives); how will the JO achieve these objectives (ie. strategies and activities) and how will the JO know it is on track (ie. measures of progress and performance).

With a focus on transport (ie. air services), tourism and liveability matters, including health, education, housing and law and order initiatives, the planning session was most worthwhile. As an example of a successful Joint Organisation, it is important that the FNWJO plans and articulates its direction for the future on behalf of the communities it represents.

Commonwealth Games

Australia has certainly performed extremely well at this year's XII Commonwealth Games winning a raft of medals against the other 53 sovereign nations and 18 territories who competed at the Games. Share a thought however for locations like Gibraltar who have gone 16 Commonwealth Games without a medal or Sierra Leone who have attended 11 Games without a medal. There are another eight (8) countries/territories that have attended between three (3) and (ten) Commonwealth Games without winning a medal. To these locations they are winners simply for "having a go."

Quote:

"More and more Australians are suffering longer term, multi-system disorders that prove hard to diagnose and treat." - Federal Health Minister, Mark Butler, talking on the effects of long Covid and the need for a national response.