



**BOURKE
SHIRE
COUNCIL**

**“From the
General Manager’s Desk”
10 November 2022”**

Levee Funding

In last week's Column, I wrote regarding the flooding of the Darling River and expected river heights in Bourke Shire during November 2022. I noted that major flooding was also occurring at Louth with a height of 13.50 metres predicted for late November 2022. I further noted that “in anticipation of these levels, work to increase the height of the levee at Louth are underway.”

Such a simple statement, but the flurry of activity that was behind undertaken these works and similar works at the levee that protects the Alice Edwards Village here in Bourke, is worth reflecting on. Once it was identified that the levee heights required increasing as a result of the expected river levels, machinery to undertake the works was not the concern. Rather it was a case of how such works would be funded. Initial contact was made with Gerry Collins of Regional NSW (RNSW) seeking funding assistance. As NSW Public Works Advisory (PWA), a branch of Regional NSW, were familiar with both levees, Gerry suggested that contact be made with Gavin Priestley who is the Regional Manager for PWA. Gavin is a regular visitor to Bourke in his role and was straight onto his colleagues to address the funding issue, with John Bevan, also from PWA, in contact with Council seeking information on requirements and offering assistance, with Chris Hangar from RNSW ultimately signing off on the funding in a most timely manner for the Louth levee and Ken Harrison from Resilience NSW for funding the works required on the Alice Edwards Village levee. Ben Walker from the office of Minister for Western NSW, Dugald Saunders, also provided support and followed up that the funding was forthcoming. Gerry, Gavin, Ken and Ben have all followed up to also make sure Council is being supported for the expected flood event. All the efforts of those mentioned are very much appreciated.

Funding was forthcoming and, as mentioned, the works are proceeding. I also extend my thanks to the Deputy Premier, the Hon Paul Toole, who is also the Minister for Regional NSW and for who the majority of the above-mentioned people work. It is through the Deputy Premier that the culture of the various Departments is set and the staff’s responsiveness to the issues raised is so very much appreciated. Co-incidentally, Minister Toole is also the Minister for Police and I am pleased to advise that the Development Application for a redeveloped Bourke Police Station was lodged last week. Council will now proceed to assess the application before it is ultimately submitted to a Council meeting for determination.

Centenary of NSW CWA

I was privileged on Saturday, 29 October 2022 to travel to Enngonia and be part of the celebrations of a 100 years of service by the NSW Country Women's Association. The CWA was formed in 1922 when country women were fighting isolation and a lack of health facilities. Within the first year, the Association was a unified, resourceful group that was going from strength to strength. The members worked tirelessly to set up baby health care centres, fund bush nurses, build and staff maternity wards, hospitals, schools, rest homes, seaside and mountain holiday cottages - and much more. The women of the CWA have been initiators, fighters and lobbyists. They have made localities into communities by providing social activities and educational, recreational and medical facilities.

The CWA is the largest women's organisation in Australia and aims to improve conditions for country women and children. The Association achieves that aim in various ways including lobbying for change, helping the local community, creating a network of support and meeting together in towns and cities. Women from the country and the city in NSW meet together to connect with others in their local area, fundraise and help set policies which are lobbied for at a state level. Members also enjoy cooking, handicraft, art and creative writing competitions as well as teaching skills to others. Yes, there is a lot more to the CWA than just cooking scones!

CWA of NSW is a member of the international organisation Associated Country Women of the World, and through this organisation, they support rural women world-wide. As an aside, a lady by the name of Ruth Shanks AM from Dubbo was elected as the President of this world-wide organisation, leading it for some 5 years ending her term in 2019. Ruth is a bowler and would be known to the ladies at the Bourke Bowling Club having competed there in the past.

Despite a small population base, the Enngonia Branch of the CWA has sister branch in Bourke in the Bourke Shire with both doing a super job for our community. I congratulate the Association on their achieving 100 years of helping the various communities across the State.

John Reading

My husband and I sent our children to boarding school for their senior schooling and for my boys, like so many boys in the Western Region, they attended St Joseph's College in Hunters Hill. For anyone who has had any association with the College over the last fifty or so years, the name John Reading would be a familiar one. After being a student himself at the College and then having served the College in various roles for 46 years, John will shortly retire with his most recent role at the College being as the boarding coordinator. Over the years he has been an economics teacher, the Year 12 academic coordinator and 1st XV rugby coach. John also had a great passion for rowing having rowed in the Joeys 1st VIII in 1971 which won the Head of the River, rowed back in those days on the Nepean River at Penrith. John is a very genuine and personable character who had the innate ability to remember peoples names, where they came from and their family connections. Over the years, John has had a great affinity with families from the Bourke area and was always keen to work with parents who wanted to send their boys to the school, despite family resources being limited. It never ceases to amaze me where copies of the Western Herald are distributed to so on behalf of parents and former students of Joeys in the Bourke region, I take the opportunity to wish John a long and happy retirement and thank him for what he has done for so many boys and families in the west.

Brad Hazzard

Speaking of people retiring, the current NSW Minister for Health and the Ministerial Champion for Bourke, the Hon Brad Hazzard, MP has announced his retirement from state politics come the March 2023 NSW State Election. Minister Hazzard's contribution to Bourke dates back to 2015 when then Premier, the Hon Mike Baird, appointed him as the Ministerial Champion for Bourke. Author, journalist and radio and television presenter, Peter FitzSimons, recently interviewed the Minister following his retirement announcement for the Sunday Herald. Mr FitzSimons asked Minister Hazzard to nominate his most satisfying times in Politics. Of all his achievements and actions during 32 years of political life, the Minister nominated "working in Bourke empowering the Aboriginal community to re-direct money to improve social outcomes – the Maranguka project – reducing the need for funding to law and order issues." Back in 2015 when appointed the Champion for Bourke, the Minister acknowledged that there needed to be a different way of addressing social issues and his support of Bourke and Maranguka has not wavered. The fact that he retained the role of Ministerial Champion for Bourke despite Ministerial portfolio changes that saw him responsible for Social Housing, Family and Community Services and ultimately Health and Medical Research, speaks well of his desire to achieve change in our community.

The Mayor has written to the Minister to recognise his retirement and his assistance to Bourke. In doing so, the Mayor is hopeful that Minister Hazzard will visit Bourke one more time in his role as Minister prior to his retirement. Notwithstanding, best wishes are extended to the Minister for his future endeavours

Draft Far West Regional Plan 2041

The draft Far West Regional Plan 2041 is an update of the Far West Regional Plan 2036, being the NSW Government's vision for the future of the Far West Region. The draft Plan is now on exhibition until 21 November 2022. Community members are able to make a submission via the following website: <https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/draftplans/exhibition/draft-far-west-regional-plan-2041>

There is also an opportunity to be part of a community facilitated information workshop as part of the consultation program. You can attend one of these sessions to be held on Thursday 10 November or on Monday 14 November, both from 6-7.30pm. Registrations for these above workshops are available at: <https://draftFarWest2041.eventbrite.com>

Quote: "I am not retired. I still haven't really thought about [retirement]." Tennis Champion, Serena Williams recently. Am I missing something?