



“FROM THE GM’s DESK”

8th December 2011



Flooding in the tributary rivers and creeks which flow into the Barwon River is now resulting in rising waters moving downstream in the Barwon River, with the impacts becoming more evident every day. Over the last couple of weeks many roads to the east of Walgett have been closed by flood waters. These floodwaters have forced most of the long distance heavy haulage traffic which normally travels between Bourke and Brewarrina and beyond to divert through Cunnamulla.

On Tuesday evening this week the Kamilaroi Highway between Walgett and Brewarrina was closed just west of Walgett due to fast flowing water over the highway. As the peak moves downstream, we must anticipate that the highway may be closed for a period around Brewarrina, with a strong possibility of then being closed between Bourke and Brewarrina as Christmas approaches. From all of this speculation, it is important for people planning to travel north east for Christmas to monitor the situation and develop alternative travel plans.

Bourke Shire Council routinely publishes updated road reports on the Council website. Google www.bourke.nsw.gov.au, or Bourke Shire Council, and go to the link for road conditions, to obtain up to date reports. All western Shires in NSW and Queensland routinely close all unsealed roads in their shires when wet, not only for driver safety, but also to avoid the untold and expensive damage which can otherwise occur. Additional to website information, the following is a useful list of contacts for road condition reports for various Councils:

Council	Phone Contact	After Hours Contact
Bourke	0268 308 000	0419 722 055
Nyngan (Bogan)	0268 359 000	0428 239 491
Cobar	0268 365 888	1800 227 228
Brewarrina	0268 305 100	0427 392 101
Walgett	0268 281 399	
Cunnamulla (Paroo)	0746 558 400	0497 731 540
Hungerford (Bulloo)	0746 218 000	
Warren	0268 476 600 (24 hours)	
Wilcannia (Central Darling)	0880 915 155 (24 hours)	
Broken Hill (Unincorporated Area)	0880 826 660 (24 hours)	
RTA Live Traffic	132 701 (24 hours)	
Qld Road Information	1300 130 595 (24 Hours)	

Consideration of driver safety associated with these floodwater conditions is paramount, not only in selecting the safest routes to travel, but also in appreciating why roads may need to be closed. I understand that the current flooding of the Barwon River around Walgett is associated with much faster flowing water than what is normally experienced in this river. We must assume similar fast flows will be experienced as the water makes its way into the Darling River and transverse the Bourke Shire. All people who use any inland waters for leisure purposes need to take special care and be aware of and address the risks.

Bourke township should not be at any risk from the current levels of flow which are predicted. The predicted peak, due between Christmas and the New Year, is approximately 1.5 meters below last summer peaks. No doubt some rural roads will experience the effects of flooding. Further, the rains occurring this week may result in changed predictions.

The Jandra paddleboat has finished regular cruises for this calendar year, which is timely given the rising river flows. A number of Christmas functions are booked with the last cruise for the year expected to be in the evening on the 14th of December. By the end of this calendar year close to 9,000 passengers will have experienced this popular Council facility.

With the significant downturn in tourism numbers, the Back O' Bourke Exhibition Centre incorporating the Tourist Information Centre has also modified its hours for the summer period. The Centre will open 5 days per week, Monday to Friday from 9am to 4pm.

Arrangements are on course for an initiative of a twilight shopping bonanza in Bourke on Wednesday, 14th December. People will be able to enjoy a night out in the centre of town, and find those last minute Christmas presents. Shops in the main street and at the wharf precinct will be open until at least 7pm, and an evening market will also run at the wharf with live music, food and local stalls. Turn up to shop, eat, greet Santa, and relax.

Two of our local radio stations Rebel FM and Breeze FM will be off air for about another week due to the replacement of a receiver damaged by storms last week. Bourke and western NSW generally are fortunate to have such diversity of radio stations, with both 2WEB and 2CUZ being locally based and broadcasted.

On Thursday this week Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir AC CVO, Governor of NSW, will perform the official dedication of the Arthur Hall VC Way at Coolibah. This name is being given to the road from Coolibah to Brewarrina in honour of the late Arthur Hall, who won a Victoria Cross whilst serving for Australia during the First World War. Bourke Shire Council is being represented at the ceremony by Mayor Andrew Lewis and Councillor Wal Mitchell.

Remember that time is running out for nominations for the various Citizen of the Year Awards which are presented on Australia Day. Council requires all nominations by the first business day in January, but preferably before Christmas.

Congratulations to all school students who are receiving special awards through the annual end of year school celebrations currently occurring. Irrespective of whether you receive an award, knowing that you have done your best is a great result. This is a time for all students to reflect on their achievements for the year, and on the support provided by teachers, school support staff, parents and citizen organizations, parents and carers.

This week in history:

The War Memorial Swimming Pool in Bourke was officially opened by Hon J. B. Renshaw on 2nd December 1960. Hon. Renshaw served as both NSW Premier and the Local Member for this region. What happened to the coach from Bourke to Dubbo when it was near Narromine on 14th December 1866?

Muhammad Ali said: "Friendship... is not something you learn in school. But if you haven't learned the meaning of friendship, you really haven't learned anything".

Cheers for now,
Geoff