

**TOORALE**  
**FUTURE OPERATIONS**  
**and**  
**STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENTS**  
**to deliver**  
**SOCIO-ECONOMIC OFFSETS**  
**for**  
**DE-COMMISSIONING the IRRIGATION.**

## **FUTURE OPERATIONS OF TOORALE**

- **DESIRED OUTCOMES for TOORALE**
  - Irrigation water returned to environment and irrigation area usage decommissioned but infrastructure maintained as historic site
  - High value conservation areas maintained
  - Multi-purpose objectives established across whole property
  - New land managers contributing to the total community
  - Maximise the diversity of outcomes available from this diverse property
  - Minimise the negative consequences of a single purpose property
  - Minimise ongoing operating costs to Government
  
- **FUTURE MANAGEMENT AND USE OF TOORALE**
  - **Establish Toorale as an Arid Zone Climate Change Research, Training and Demonstration Centre**, and manage the property to address a mixture of outcomes
    - Aim for a variety of responsible, compatible, multiple purpose objectives
    - Identify critical areas to be managed for conservation (in accordance with the commitment that some purchase funds were to establish a national reserve).
    - Maintain the “McCaughey scheme” as both cultural history and as a conservation area for the species which have colonized in the area during over a century.
    - Decommission the modern irrigation to an extent that it does not adversely impede natural water flow, but keep the remaining irrigation structures as a long term history of modern farming.
    - Use the funds which would otherwise have been spent on totally levelling the irrigation development for more constructive socio-economic outcomes.
    - Allow selected areas of the property to be used for controlled grazing
    - Accommodate other uses, such as tourism, fishing, mining and quarrying
    - Use the property as a significant site for cultural and skills training.

**STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENTS  
to deliver  
SOCIO-ECONOMIC OFFSETS  
for  
DE-COMMISSIONING the IRRIGATION.**

- **DESIRABLE OUTCOMES**
  - Deliver an integrated regional strategy to address social, cultural, and economic needs in parallel with environmental needs.
  - Priority focus on increasing employment
  - Minimise negative impacts to community
  - Minimise negative impacts to Shire
  - Maximise the opportunities to simultaneously address the social problems in the Bourke community
- **STRATEGIES TO OFFSET COMMUNITY IMPACTS**
  - **Re-establish irrigation properties with permanent plantings around Bourke to generate employment.**

**Action:** Commonwealth and State Governments work with private enterprise and local community to re-establish the irrigation properties with permanent plantings around Bourke which have been most water efficient users and largest employers of unskilled labour on the Barwon Darling River system. (Eg Back O' Bourke Fruits, Back O' Bourke Packers)

- Use these enterprises as a major employer of the aboriginal community of Bourke.
- Commonwealth Government explore opportunities to implement existing employment strategies, or pilot new ones, particularly focused on Indigenous employment (ie Aboriginal Employment Strategy).
- State Government waive Stamp Duty on purchase, and waive payroll tax, to assist in re-establishment of the enterprise.
- Employ renowned sound management skills (non indigenous) available in the district
- Use these enterprises, in association with Toorale, as training centres for skills and cultural development, particularly for indigenous people.
- Use the enterprises for tourism.
- *No estimate has been made on costing.*

- **Establish an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Centre to generate tourism and employment and to provide education.**

**Action:** Fund the construction and fit-out of a fifth building as part of the Back O'Bourke Exhibition Centre, to be used to display a dedicated Aboriginal Cultural Heritage exhibit.

- This should be of a similar standard to equivalent facilities in Kakadu National Park in Northern Territory, and would be the only building of such a standard in south eastern Australia, most proximate and accessible to at least 75% of the Australian population.
- Use the facility as a major draw card for tourism.
- Use the facility, in association with the Back O' Bourke Fruits complex, Toorale and local National Parks to provide packages for tourism and education.
- *An application for a \$4m grant through the Infrastructure Australia program has been submitted.*

- **Construct a Goat Abattoir to generate employment.**

**Action:** Commonwealth Government provide funding for construction of a Goat Abattoir at Bourke.

- This would provide significant employment opportunities for both unskilled and skilled people, as well as for livestock and meat carriers.
- Incorporate into guided tours.
- *Estimated cost in the order of \$15m to \$20m.*

- **Build a low care, aged care addition to the Bourke Multi Purpose Service Hospital.**

- There is an essential need for this facility, as the facility which currently provides the service is totally unsustainable.
- Relocation of low care aged care community members out of the Bourke community to far distant alternative facilities is not an option, as it is contrary to the culture of Aboriginal members, and socially dysfunctional and economically unachievable for most of our community.
- This is a practical example of a far more critical use of limited State Government funds than spending to flatten the irrigation area.
- *Estimated cost in the order of \$1.5m to \$2m.*

- **Implement a Socio- economic Zone Trial to utilize Government funding for more effective outcomes**

**Action:** Implement as a pilot in Bourke the Socio- economic Zone Trial proposal developed by the Barwon Darling Alliance.

- The Deputy Prime Minister's Office has recently requested more information regarding this trial proposal, with a view to considering a delegation to meet with the Deputy Prime Minister.
  - The delegation elected involves Sam Jeffries, Chair, Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly, and the Mayor and General Manager, Bourke Shire Council.
- *No estimate of cost has been made here, but for whole of Murdi Paaki Region is in the order of \$5m pa.*

- **Have land acquired for National Parks pay Local Government rates, to avoid cost shifting to Local Governments.**

**Action:** Have land acquired since January 2008 for National Parks or for part of the National Reserve System be subject to payment of Local Government rates, to avoid ongoing cost shifting to Local Governments.

- The starting date should be identified to coincide with the date that the current Commonwealth Government has initiated an alternate funding strategy for acquisition of lands for the National Reserve System.(Say 1<sup>st</sup> January 2008)
- Avoid the debate about retrospective payments for all existing National Parks.
- Prevents the frustrations of ongoing cost shifting from State and maybe Commonwealth Governments to the community members who have to pay Local Government rates.
- *Current cost shifting to Bourke Shire Council and to Bourke community is \$46,000 pa.*

- **POTENTIAL SIGNIFICANT CONSEQUENCES**

- Increased possibility of maintaining the valued skills of some of the current property management
- Aboriginal employment
- Skills development
- Education
- Tourism
- Cash flow to local (struggling) businesses
- Pilot a trial of redistribution of financial support
- Integration of Government investments within the Shire
- Precedent for Governments and communities to study for intervention impacts on other communities.

- Maintain rating base for Council.
- NEXT STEP
  - State and Local Governments approach Commonwealth Government:
    - to address future use and management of Toorale, and
    - for financial assistance to implement the strategies to address the structural adjustments to offset the community impacts following the decommissioning of the Toorale irrigation.

## **THE NEW LOOK BOURKE**

**Toorale Arid Zone Climate Change Research, Training and Demonstration Centre**

**Back O'Bourke Irrigation and Packing Efficiency Enterprises**

**Back O'Bourke Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Centre**

**Back O'Bourke Goat Abattoir**

**Low Care, Aged Care addition to the Bourke Multi Purpose Service Hospital.**

**Socio- economic Zone Trial pilot in Bourke**

**Future National Parks pay Local Government rates**

## **OUTCOMES**

- **Employment**
- **Training**
- **Skills development**
- **Education**
- **Cultural awareness**
- **Tourism**
- **Aged care**
- **Food production**
- **Conservation**
- **Reconciliation**